
Adolescent Male Survivability in Jamaica

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Summary

For far too long, men had been secondary, even coincidental, subjects of analysis in gender-based studies, particularly those focused on Reproductive Health and Sexuality. By and large they had been studied as contributors to or directly responsible for the challenges faced by women, or as the means to the well being of women and children.

Recent studies are gradually transforming the thesis and research methodology, with the result that men are being viewed as an important subject of analysis in their own right. This Review, pulling from existing studies of this type, analyses the life chances of the adolescent male in the challenging socio economic and cultural environment of Jamaica. The study seeks to highlight and clarify critical issues that could be instructive for meaningful policy and program discussions. In the process, foundational assumptions that have instructed the gender paradigm have been challenged; some have been

corroborated; fresh theses are raised for examination.

Among the challenges raised were concerns regarding the status quo of gender programs. The review concludes that single gender programs have been counterproductive to developmental targets for either gender, and calls for appropriate support systems that are need based rather than gender focused.

This needs based approach, particularly if applied to education should be implemented concurrent with re-socialization programs for those who contribute to the marginalization of the male in the educational system, the review concludes. For the purposes of this review, this would mean working with the boys as well as their families simultaneously in order to ensure that boys are released into the work force later; are properly trained and allowed to enjoy their childhood. In this regard, the family emerges in this

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paper as one of the key agents for bringing about this re-socialization due to its significant role in shaping the life of youth.

The review recommends as its first pillar for reform, the development of a systemic approach to delaying the entry of young males into the labor market, while qualifying them for their social and professional roles. Proposals to make schools more attractive for boys are offered as an important plank in this objective. The review recommends curricula re-design in line with the needs of the labor market and in line with the technical predilections of male youth. It also addresses the current methods employed to teach boys in order to remove psychological barriers to male achievement including low expectation by teachers.

The second pillar of reform concerns high risk and life threatening issues facing adolescent boys, including neglect, violence, drug abuse and poor sexual conduct. The review identifies the emerging issue of sexual abuse of boys as largely ignored and under represented, and proposes specially tailored programs to help victims. As a support recommendation, the review advocates for gender equal enforcement of child prostitution laws to protect not only girls but boys as well.

The review suggests that this and other processes of change should be managed by an alliance of concerned agencies and civil society, backed by and involving the

media. The review concludes that the multi agency collaboration united with the media would prove to be powerful agents of transformation.

Key Findings

Overall, there was a paucity of research on adolescent males, resulting in information gaps, some critical for policy and program development. However, the existing information provided valuable signposts for this comprehensive literature review, and has been organized into key discussion points that are high impact areas for male survivability. These include employment, education, crime and violence, substance abuse, as well as masculinity, sexuality and reproductive health. Some of the key findings emerging from these studies, and which were the building blocks for this paper s recommendations follow:

- The adolescent/young baby father was ranked second on a scale of difficulty of survival behind the baby mother , but the male got less help than the female and was perceived as being able to handle himself.
- Socialization of boys to prove they are powerful and in charge may lead them to make irresponsible sexual decisions, get involved in violent activities, and attend school poorly.
- Families are more likely to support girls than boys of the same age and to help them acquire basic skills before entering the work force.

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- Unemployed male youth are more likely than females forced to join the labor force below the radar , i.e., the hustlers and jugglers .
- An inner-city male youth with five CXC's is often relegated to menial jobs due to area stigma. However, area stigma does not affect females in the same way.
- Girls may outnumber but they do not necessarily outperform boys in the educational system.
- Boys constitute the majority of the out of school population and were less literate than girls in the same category.
- Males are disadvantaged in the classroom, and this translates into higher benefits for girls than for boys.
- One-fifth the perpetrators of crime and violence in Jamaica are 20 years of age and younger; of this number, the vast majority are committed by

male youth against other adolescents.

- The don can be a forceful agent of socialization in the life of poor inner-city youth.
- Society has made drugs more available to boys.
- Many youth have already initiated sex by the time of introduction of family life education.

These findings will prove instructive for additional research to plug the gaps and to lay the foundation for meaningful intervention. As such, this review does not position its conclusions as conclusive for policy and program development. Rather, it seeks to lay a foundation for the kind of interventions that would enhance life chances of the young male, as well as impact gender relations in a mutually reinforcing manner.

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INTRODUCTION

Men: Under-researched, Misunderstood

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Men are they bad or hopelessly bad? ¹

In 1993 the largest study ever done in the Caribbean on male socialization commenced with funding from UNICEF. It emerged out of a deep concern that males were being marginalized, especially in the education system. This had come two years after Errol Miller (1986) published a second edition of his well-debated thesis on the *Marginalization of the Black Jamaican Male*. The Gender Socialization Project, as it was called, carried three phases and ran for five years. It covered five countries, but with a special emphasis on Jamaica, where the only inner city community was studied. Prior to this study, very little effort was made to understand Caribbean males, and, bluntly speaking, a number of issues have been raised concerning most of the earlier literature. Some of the very early works in gender in Jamaica included Edith Clarke's *My Mother Who Fathered Me* (1957); Stycos and Back's 1964 pioneer work, *The Control of Human Fertility in*

Jamaica; and Tony Whitehead's 1978 thesis, *Men, Family and Family Planning: A Male Perception on Performance in a Jamaican Sugartown*. The fact is that prior to the 1980s, gender studies in Jamaica tended not to treat men as the unit of analysis. The work of Tony Whitehead and others who took such an approach was more an exception to the rule. Prior to the Miller debate, which commenced in the 1980s, male perspectives in gender studies were at best afforded a chapter or section in the works of Jamaican scholars.

According to Patricia Mohammed in her discussion of the history of feminism in the Caribbean, the popular notion was that Caribbean women had always been liberated. The early emphasis of the feminist movement was on improving women's access to such amenities as education and political rights. Not until the 1970s did the feminist stance in the

¹A question asked by a young man during the discussion of a presentation at the International Fatherhood Conference, New York, May 2000.

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Caribbean turn towards challenging the existing status quo and the status of men within Caribbean society. The movement became more militant in the 1980s when, due to structural adjustment, the plight of women became acute. As Mohammed (1995) explained however, despite being influenced by feminism in developed countries, feminism in the region had to relate to the fact that colonization and racism had affected black men and women alike in the region and that there was urgent need for both men and women to work together. It is not surprising, therefore, that the 1990s saw a change in the stance of scholars of gender to acknowledge that there is a connection between the plight of poor men and that of their poor female counterparts.

The problem of men being under-researched and misunderstood is not peculiar to the Caribbean region. Much of the North American literature, especially that written by feminist scholars, has presented male behavior as bad but somewhat repairable, and thus a great deal of effort has been spent, on attempting to change male behavior using pre-set and subjective frames without first understanding men.

The most objective research efforts focused on men have been in the area of economic activities. Studies in the area of male sexuality and reproductive health have been largely problematic. The unit of analysis has always been women. Many of these studies often include a section in

which men are discussed, often as problems or as contributors to women's inability to make decisions regarding reproductive health, or as directly responsible for the hazards associated with female reproduction. Dixon-Mueller (1993) acknowledged that contraceptives were seen first as a source of liberation for women liberating their bodies from the control of nature and more importantly from the control of men. The paradox though is that while liberating women, contraceptives afforded men unlimited sexual access to their partners while not having the trouble of worrying about how to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Feminists later interpreted this as men once again having control as they could now be sexually irresponsible and blame the consequences of their actions unwanted pregnancies on women. Feminists were also concerned that men in policy-making positions were more concerned about reproductive health as a population control measure rather than as an individual, autonomous act of empowerment for women.

It has long been recognized that men stand to benefit immensely from reproductive health interventions. Banks and Banks (1964) were lauded by Dixon-Mueller (1993) for highlighting this reality. Nonetheless, relatively few attempts have been made to understand how men view their reproductive health. Very few scholars have tried to avoid treating men as anything but a means to an end the end

being the well-being of women and children. What is the logic for treating males as the focus of a comprehensive research effort and attempting to understand them with an open approach? First, men need to have their side of the story told as to why they behave the way they do. They know this story better than any other group. Secondly, men participate in reproduction and make decisions that affect their families, communities and societies whether or not we understand them well. Rather than stress the negative consequences of male behavior, it is better to design research to gather information from which to construct programs to educate men as to how best they can change the practices that jeopardize themselves, their women and their children. Such research should also highlight and develop those good practices in which men have engaged. It is laudable that a few recent studies (including Chevannes and Gayle 2000 which was commissioned by PAHO) have attempted to address the study of men from the perspective that men are sufficiently important as a unit of analysis. This is in fact the only ethical manner in which to treat a subject of study.

Youth

Youth are an integral part of society. Whatever is happening in the wider society will have an impact on them, and whatever

they do certainly shapes the direction the society goes. To put this in Giddens structural frame,² youth transform the very engine of the society whilst society constrains or shapes their behavior. Erik Erikson (1968) has outlined and explained many of the dilemmas of this period and the depth of support that the adolescent needs to wrestle with the problems of identity and insecurity that come with them. Blank (2000) rightly claimed that Jamaican adolescents are at immense risk, most lacking the support and guidance from family, schools and society needed to ensure a smooth transition through adolescence. Blank described youth at risk as one of the most pressing concerns of the government, civil society, and the international community working in Jamaica. She described the problem as complex, caused by a multitude of underlying factors that affect Jamaican children and adolescents at various developmental stages. Blank also presented five interrelated issues worth noting:

1. Poor quality of education and high rates of attrition from school
2. Lack of employment opportunities
3. Poor reproductive health and high rates of teenage pregnancy
4. Unstable home environments, poor parenting, lack of supervision and guidance

²See Giddens (1984).

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5. High levels of crime and violence, including domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Blank's rationale for stressing the need for urgent focus on the youth of Jamaica is summarized in Box 1.

Box 1: Fact Sheet on Jamaican youth at Risk

25% of all Jamaicans are between the ages of 12 and 24

26% of Jamaicans living in poverty are between the ages of 12 and 24

Over one third of all young people between 15 and 16 are no longer enrolled in school: over 60% are out of school by age 18

46% of youth between the ages of 14 and 19, and 30% of youth between the ages of 20 and 24 are unemployed

30% of all births are to teenage girls. Every year more than 14,000 babies are born to teenagers, and teenage fertility rates are increasing

The number of reported new HIV infections among adolescents has doubled each year since 1995

Over half of all major crimes are committed by youth (mostly males), and 30% of inmates sentenced to adult correctional facilities are between the ages of 17 and 24

Source: Blank, Lorraine, *Youth-at-Risk-Note*, December 2000

Blank (2000) was correct in recognizing that the most vulnerable youth are the poor. Even among the poor, the largest group of vulnerable youth at risk is those below age 19. As the 1998 Survey of Living Conditions (PIOJ and STATIN, 1999) showed, despite the significant reduction in national poverty from 35.2 percent in 1992 to 15.9 percent in 1998, the age structure of the poor remains unchanged with more than half in the 0-18 age group.

Adolescent Males

*Young men are the most powerful group in a society. Sometimes I wonder if they know how powerful they are, or in fact if the Authorities know this fact. The young men can destroy this city and nation or they can make it into a place people crave to visit.*³

Everyone knows about the power and potential of young men in this country, but very few groups target them as the force of change. Groups such as Children First, Area Youth Foundation, Fathers Incorporated, and Youth.now are more the exception than the rule. It is most interesting that a number of traditional female institutions have come to recognize that for too long the society has ignored young men and their plight. In the past few years we have seen moderate to dramatic changes in the way female programs are run. Probably the most interesting case here is the move made by the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation a few years ago to include a programme for fathers of young babies. Today the program is called Men at Risk and includes not only young fathers but also adolescent males who recognize the need for guidance or who simply need to talk.

Chevannes (2001), Levy et al. (2001), and Brown and Chevannes (1998) illustrate an interesting paradox: Despite the obvious potential and power of adolescent males and the lack of support facilities that suggests they are without needs, young

³Professor Barry Chevannes speaking at the National Peace Conference held at Craig Town in November 1999.

males are in fact more vulnerable than their female counterparts to the challenges of adolescence.

Only in the case of sexual abuse are black adolescent females in this city (London) more vulnerable than adolescent males. Compared to teenage girls, adolescent males are more likely

- To be outnumbered and outperformed in school
- To be physically abused at school and home
- To be on the street and out of school
- To experience domestic accidents
- To experience violence and other such trauma
- To use harmful drugs
- To commit suicide and not just attempt to do so
- Not to be adopted but remain in safe houses
- Not to receive support from parents, relatives, educators, agency personnel
- To be below the radar, unseen, unnoticed, unattended

And yet, if they survive, the lessons they have to teach are priceless. Then again, sadly sometimes society does not know how to value the wealth of the knowledge the youth have. How do you put a value on the complex matter of staying alive as a male

adolescent? What price tag do you put on the knowledge of surviving on the streets? Maybe the best we can do is to employ them to guide those who have not yet crossed the pit of adolescence. And even so we most often prefer to employ persons with degrees who will have to be taught by the very same boys who did not qualify to do something considered productive. ⁴

The situation for black adolescent males in London seems to be quite similar to that of the Jamaican male youth. It is important to note also that Jamaican adolescent males are disproportionately below the radar and overwhelmingly in crisis in London. This was clearly brought out in the presentation from which the statement above was taken. All adolescent males do not have the same experiences. In London, black, and to a lesser extent Asian male youth face more of a crisis than their white counterparts. In Jamaica, like in most other countries in the West, the problems experienced by adolescent males regarding survivability are differentially distributed along lines of class and or color/race. The lower the stratum to which the male youth belong, the more exacerbated their problems.

It is commendable that a number of scholars have come to recognize the importance of focusing on adolescent males. An understanding of their perceptions and behavior at this stage can certainly help us plan for a future of which

⁴ Below the Radar , paper presented by Patrick Lewis, Director of the Social Inclusion Unit, Brent, London and Chairman of BEARS Youth Challenge, at the Accessing Hard to Reach Youth Seminar, June 18, 2001, College of North West London.

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they will still be a part. Information on male youth survivability, socialization, sexuality and reproductive health in Jamaica can be best described as insufficient. There is clearly a need for more detailed, especially qualitative studies that will yield material of the quality necessary for policy formation and action regarding youth development. Nonetheless, it is only logical that we begin by pulling together and discussing the literature and statistics that already exist. This effort, we hope, will give us a foundation on which to build.

Outline

Chapter 1: *A Discussion of Adolescent Male Survivability*

This is an introductory chapter in which we briefly examine the meaning of survivability as illustrated in the Jamaican public. A qualitative comparison of adolescent males and females in terms of survivability is included. Also, inevitably, there is a brief discussion of the thesis of male marginalization.

Chapter 2: *Adolescent Male Involvement in the Economy*

Here an attempt is made to locate adolescent males in the economy. We examine their involvement in the labor force as well as in the informal or hustle economy, including working children. A discussion of the implications of the findings is included.

Chapter 3: *Adolescent Males and the Educational System*

Much effort is spent in this chapter to examine the extent to which adolescent males are marginalized within the educational system. The debate on whether or not males are out-numbered and out-performed in schools is given full attention, and the recommendations available in the literature presented and discussed.

Chapter 4: *Crime and Violence*

Unfortunately, this is clearly the most researched area on young men in the region. As we know, more than two-thirds of all recorded crimes of violence committed in the region are blamed on young men, meaning males below the age of 30, and at least a fifth of those are committed by adolescent males. In Jamaica the problem of young male violence is overwhelming. Here we provide an overview of the country's situation in terms of crime and violence, the latitude of violence in Jamaica with emphasis on the level of young male involvement and finally explanations for our unique situation.

Chapter 5: *Patterns of Substance Use and Abuse among Adolescent Males*

This very short chapter is critical. It closely examines data from the recent *National Adolescent Students Drug Survey* and compares information from this source with others.

Chapter 6: Masculinity, Sexuality and Reproductive Health

This very special chapter focuses on a wide range of social and health-related issues including the following:

Masculinity

The focus here is on the various issues surrounding what is regarded as masculinity and the factors, including class and socialization, that shape the various definitions or changes in these definitions.

Sexuality

A range of issues is examined in this chapter including:

- Sexual debut:* attitudes, myths and reality;

- Sources of information on sexuality and manhood;

- Performance and anxieties;

- Knowledge and use of contraceptives as a means of family planning and preventing sexually transmitted diseases;

- Homosexuality.

Relationships

We examine the kinds of relationships that are formed during the life of a young male and the value of each. An attempt was made to examine male youth perceptions on issues such as marriage, common law, visiting and other forms of relationships.

Male Bonding and Grouping

Very little has been written in the Caribbean on this topic. Nonetheless it is far too important not to include. The focus here is on male-male relationships and the homophobia dilemma and the social gatherings of young men at the bar, the mall, and the street corner.

Early Fatherhood and Family Planning

Despite the downward trend in the fertility rate and a consistently high out-migration, the Caribbean remains a young region. This is because parenting begins quite early in the region. A number of issues are important here:

- Early Fatherhood as a mark of manhood;

- Issues of child rearing e.g., readiness, support systems available to young fathers including the extended family and agencies;

- Paternity, i.e., the dilemma of ownership or jacket.

Chapter 7: Summary and Recommendations

This policy and implication page does more than summarize the data. Recommendations are made including those found in the literature. The discussion here is focused on the direction we should go in terms of national policies and community projects to ameliorate the problems of the adolescent male and to guide him to ensure a greater level of survivability and contribution to society.

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Methodology

Research Aim

The research aims primarily to help inform work with young men in Jamaica. It is also hoped that by identifying specific gaps in the literature the review can be used as an academic sign post or guide to the areas that need most attention.

Age

The discussion is aimed at the age group 10 to 19. Nonetheless, it is not always possible in the literature to separate this group from the larger youth group. Some material therefore included young adults ages 20 to 30 years. This is not necessarily a problem; in fact, comparison often strengthens data.

Time period

Scholarly work on gender and reproductive health issues in Jamaica can be said to have existed from the pre-independence era. Nonetheless, it was not until the late 1970s that these issues came to be seen as critical to development. Whilst not ignoring the classics, the study will draw on literature written since 1975. This practical limitation will save effort without missing critical data.

Data Collection

Very little attention has been paid to the effective use of content analysis as an important research tool. Documentary investigation requires a systematic and disciplined search for knowledge. Two main problems exist in carrying out an effective document search: access and quality. The first can easily be solved through effective negotiation; the second is more complex. In order to relate to the latter, we usually ask four questions of the material we collect throughout the research process. If the answers to these questions are negative, we have grounds to refuse including such materials.

- *Authenticity*: Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?
- *Credibility*: Is the evidence free from error and distortion, and, if not, can the distortions be measured?
- *Representative*: Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its atypicality known?
- *Meaning*: Is the evidence clear and comprehensible? In other words, do I have the skill to interpret the data, or should I seek assistance to do so, and is this assistance available?



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CHAPTER 1

A DISCUSSION OF ADOLESCENT MALE SURVIVABILITY

Male Survivability

The term survivability is used here in sociological terms to mean life chances. It involves all those issues that directly affect the quality of life one can be expected to have and the quality contribution one can be expected to make to the development of a society based on the quality of those life chances. For those of the lower strata, upward social mobility and the maintenance of life at some socially acceptable level are critical, whilst for those of the upper strata, it is the ability to remain in good health and within the top quintiles that are critical. Life chances are clearly measured among other variables in terms of: health care and the practice of a healthy lifestyle, of education, of degree of security (including support and protection) and of economic opportunities.

Definitions of survival change with the circumstances of people. As found by Chevannes and Gayle (1998) and Gayle (1996) in studies of the urban poor in Jamaica, at the most desperate stage it is food security that is most important. In their solid waste management study, Chevannes and Gayle (1998) clearly showed that

where there was a concern for food security, the environment became a secondary issue. It is important to note that the ability to send one's children to school was considered the second most important issue of survival followed by the quality clothing one was able to wear. Gayle (1996) rank ordered the critical issues of survival to the poor for both men and women as follows:

1. *Food*
2. *Education* the better the school and the higher the level, the greater the chance or expression of survival
3. *Clothing* to look good to the public, to hide the effects of poverty
4. *Payment of bills* to be able to pay utility bills, to live in an area where this is done, or to be able to pay one's bills rather than to bribe or emotionally blackmail the utility men (p.24) who come to disconnect the source
5. *Housing* if it is even a clean one-bedroom house with a little bed (p. 25)

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6. *Health* to be able to visit the doctor when needed

In the research in Kingston, Gayle (1996) found that three factors were critical in the ability of a person to survive: age, gender and employment (the availability of work, as well as the person's willingness and ability to work). The most destitute were therefore:

1. Old and disabled without relatives or family members who care
2. Women whose man dead or in prison and whose sons are too young to hustle
3. A few middle-aged persons who are without jobs and are afraid to hustle
4. A few youth, mostly males, whose parents have died or are in prison or have abandoned them

Levels of Difficulty in Surviving in Working Class Areas

In all social settings some persons have to do more to survive. In Gayle (1996), seven adolescents (three boys and four girls ranging from age 12 to 19) were asked to provide a ranking and scoring table to help the researcher understand the levels of difficulty involved in the survival of different groups of people in working class settings,

selected by age and gender. After some discussion the table below was produced.

Table 1.1 Ranks and Scores of Difficulty of Survival by Groups, 1996		
Group	Score	Rank
Single Mother	10	1
Baby father	9	2
Mother with man	7	3
Young man	7	3
Middle-aged couple	6	4
Schoolers (boy)	5	5
Young girls	3	6
Old people	3	6
Schoolers (girl)	2	7

Source: Gayle (1996).

The adolescents felt that a single mother had the hardest life, because she can't always work, especially if she goes to bed hungry more often than anyone else for many times after she ensures that her children are fed she remains hungry. Unlike the man she is not able to hustle in every way and sometimes she doesn't have the mind to catch a man (page 38).

The baby father was considered second to the single mother. The baby father has a lot of responsibility more than anyone else. He may even die in trying to help his family survive. His life is often on the line, but if he makes it he has a good chance of surviving and even moving out or seeing his children come to something, especially if his baby mother or baby mothers is/are ambitious and help him. His life is scary but not as bad (page 38).

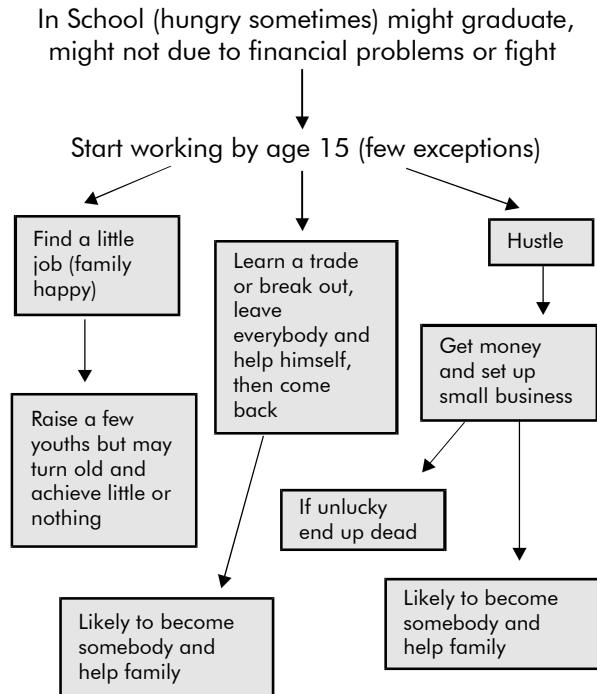
It is important to note that there is an awareness amongst adolescents that

young females rank much lower in terms of levels of difficulty in surviving. As pointed out by the females in the group, a girl a go school is de last fi suffer cause everybody a put out dem best fi see her through (page 38)

The most profound statement, however, came from a young man attending evening classes at a high school in Kingston. Look pon we who nah finish school. Yu no see seh we get only five but we have fi produce 50 while de women dem get 25 and dem ask dem fi produce only 25 - no wonder some a we tief." He had got up from the group and left; tears filled his eyes. There was no agreement or disagreement but a hush after he got up (page 39).

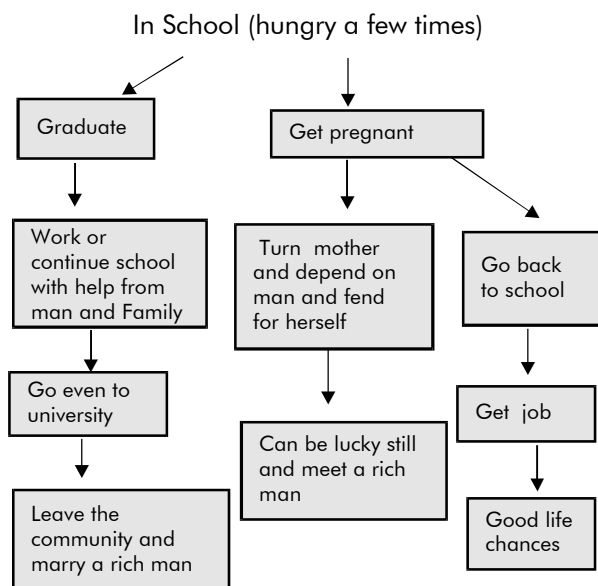
The following flow charts were done by a group of three male and four female youths ages 12 to 19 (Gayle 1996 : 40-41). Their aim was to map the life chances of a male youth in the community compared with those of a female his age. Notice that the charts show clearly that the boy is perceived as being alone in his struggle to survive, unlike the girl. Notice also that the achievement of a university degree was listed for girls and not for boys. Instead, the life prospects of the male seemed filled with the hope to find a way to provide for his family, including the extended one.

Figure 1.1
Flow Chart Showing Life Prospects of a Male Youth



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Flow Chart Showing Life Prospects of a Female Youth



In Chevannes and Gayle (2000), adolescent males of suburban communities reminded the researchers on numerous occasions that they were secure and did not feel as threatened as their inner city counterparts in any way, whether in terms of food security, male identity, or securing the skills, including education, necessary for maintaining a quality life. For this group therefore, the concerns of survival had to do with the separation of their parents, with doing well in school, and with acceptance from friends, among other factors that could threaten their present state of well being. Unfortunately, very few research efforts in the Caribbean region have concentrated on the middle class adolescent male. It seems to be taken as a constant in discussions of adolescence that

the middle class male is not in need of help. There is, therefore, need for research in this area even if the urgency remains with the adolescent male of the poor and working class.

The Issue of Male Social and Economic Power: Implications for the Adolescent Male

In terms of economic power, the data overwhelmingly support recent statements by Dr. Glenda Simms of the Bureau of Women's Affairs and Dr. Patricia Mohammed of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies that, it's still a man's world (*The Gleaner*, March 15, 2000, page 2).

The corridors of real power are still largely male dominated. While there is a large army of men being outclassed by their female counterparts in several areas, the status quo men in charge of the critical areas of decision making in the society remains intact, said Dr. Simms (*The Gleaner*, March 15, 2000, page 2). In the same article, Dr. Mohammed held that men controlled jobs that offer the best remuneration. In other words, whilst women had come to dominate middle management and the University of the West Indies in terms of numbers, many of their efforts did not lead to lucrative professions.

Many scholars, including those outside of the fraternity of feminism, do not share the view that males are as marginalized as suggested by Miller (1996). Aspects of Errol Miller's work have received more acceptance than others. He is, in fact, praised for raising the concern that a particular group of men is experiencing some degree of crisis. He is even more lauded for highlighting the plight of males in terms of education. Chevannes (1999) does not accept that males are marginalized not if the main factor considered is power. Despite the increasing percentages of women at the University of the West Indies, it is men who get elected to the seat of student power. At the community level, whether the issue is dons or youth club leaders, there is no marginalization of males, and as far as the churches are concerned, women's over-representation in the membership and ministering groups but under-representation in the leadership echelons is well-documented (Austin-Brooks 1997, Toulis 1996).

It was Dr. Simms who raised the critical point that while it is still a man's world in Jamaica, life for a particular group of men the young and poor had actually got worse compared to their female counterparts. As she explained, what has changed is that poor young men are doing so badly. Boys who perform poorly in school tend to be underprivileged and more often fail to get maximum benefits from the education system. This group is also more likely to get involved in violent

crimes and are usually the ones further down the track to be dragged before the family court for failing to support their children.

The above discussion can be treated as part of the series of responses to Errol Miller's powerful thesis in 1986 on the *Marginalization of the Black Jamaican Male*, further developed in his more recent *Men at Risk* (Miller 1991). Despite the debate, Miller maintains that due to the requirements of patriarchy, men throughout history have played a marginal role in the family and so exist outside the sphere of kinship support. More important though is the fact that in Jamaica, the children of slaves, especially males, were deliberately robbed of the tools of upward social mobility including education so as to reduce their ability to threaten the men of the ruling class. For Miller (1996), male marginalization in Jamaica is quite complex and goes beyond the issue of economic power. He used a number of cases to illustrate a variety of ways in which young black males are marginalized. The following points were raised in those cases.

1. A number of men, having failed to achieve their socio-economic goals through the education system or other means, attempt to regain confidence through sexual prowess. With this behavior, Miller contends, young men further marginalize themselves.
2. The dominant role of the mother can make the father and son feel

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marginalized from family life. The reality is that for many households it is the mother who is the central figure and the man simply a figurehead.

3. The male is socialized to think of himself as powerful but realizes that the political system is far too powerful for him to use his male power as a working-class person.
4. In cases where the female is not only more educated but also earns a higher income, a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly common in Jamaica, the male often feels that he has lost his position of dominance.

Psychological Aspects of Male Marginalization

Miller argues that the marginalized male is often excluded or deprived of the materialistic basis of power. This therefore leads him to turn to violence. Violence among marginalized men is often targeted at other marginalized men due to greater accessibility to such persons, to the desire to be recognized by the power-holders who contribute to such marginalization, to the desire not to be the only one to remain in a disadvantaged position, (displacement of aggression) and finally as a resort to life-taking power. Marginalized men often seem to display self-destructive tendencies. Miller links this to their need to accelerate their own doom. The most extreme

demonstration of this tendency is suicide, though less extreme means of self-destruction are perpetuated by the average marginalized man. This can be seen quite clearly in substance and alcohol abuse. They may also engage in high-risk behaviors. If there is success they will be glorified; however, death is a greater possibility. This inclination to seek their own deaths has been explained in two ways.

1. Seeking to be responsible for their own deaths may be taking away the power of destruction of their lives from powerful men.
2. Suicide diminishes the power of powerful men by depriving them of the victims' productive capacity.

Marginalized men often turn to religion and to religious beliefs that reinforce patriarchal values and norms, for instance Rastafarianism or Christianity. The contradiction is that the religious beliefs adopted utilize out-dated modes of behavior in order to effect future change. Marginalized men seek to challenge the position of powerful men but not patriarchy, as they themselves want to occupy the position of patriarch. Powerful and marginalized men in this sense hold on to the past with the intention of maintaining patriarchal values, symbols and status a past which is obsolete. Men therefore believe in their right to dominate, and those unable to dominate are deemed to be failed individuals.

Sexual Prowess and Parental Irresponsibility

The concept of machismo is of crucial importance here. Traditionally in Jamaica machismo has been a correlate of power demonstrated by the number of children and wives a man has, but it is also linked to the protection of and provision for such wives and children. Men adopt promiscuous lifestyles as a means of demonstrating manhood, even though they do not adhere to the protection of and provision for children and wives. The matter of ignoring the provision for and protection of children further marginalizes the man as the sense of responsibility, which is fostered by the uniting of biological and social roles of the father, is not fulfilled and hence he does not benefit from the sense of fulfillment that accompanies the responsibility. This aspect of male marginalization is often referred to as irresponsibility.

According to Miller's thesis, the marginalization of men and indeed the undesirable characteristics which are argued to be intrinsic parts of being a Caribbean male are just reflections of the social systems in which we exist. Boys are socialized to prove

that they are powerful and in charge and above all to make sure that others acknowledge this. This often develops a sense of insecurity in the male as he has to continuously try to prove himself. This sense of insecurity is not shared by the female who, if she fails to prove herself strong, will still be accepted as a woman. If she is successful and powerful, she is deemed to be like a man. Hence the sense of failure that a man feels when he cannot live up to societal expectations is often quite strong. His attempt to gain power and respect can also be extreme and increases with the level of perceived threat to his masculinity. The man faces a further problem due also to the role that he has been socialized to play. The man is told that he is the one who is in control, and yet when he tries to control his destiny, he realizes that societal structures are in place which prevent him from doing so. If taken seriously, the implications of this myth of male power Miller speaks about are profound for adolescent males of the lower strata. At this critical stage of identity, boys need men around them they can use as role models. Unfortunately, it would seem that much of what they see simply helps to make them feel more insecure and restive.

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CHAPTER 2

ADOLESCENT MALE INVOLVEMENT IN THE ECONOMY

Male Survivability

Adolescent Males in the Labor Force

With the help of statistics, this section examines the level of participation of adolescent males compared to their female counterparts in the Jamaican labor force for the years 1998 and 1999. It is important here to define labor force. A labor force is comprised of all the persons in a country who are working, who possess a job and who are seeking a job and are available for employment. It does not include those who are legally too young to work, those who voluntarily decide not to work or those who are unable to work due to disability or age. A person can be a student and be part of the labor force at the same time. The age at which a person enters the labor force has implications for his or her future. During adolescence, employment tends to have a negative impact on academic achievement and training, which are among the primary prerequisites for social mobility. It is therefore preferable to delay entry until after adolescence or at least until the last two years, i.e., until 18 years of age. The

year of entry also says something about the level of support the person or persons is receiving from family, from community or from the government. Finally, it must be borne in mind that the labor force includes only persons 14 years and above, and therefore excludes child labor. It also largely ignores the hustle or informal economy. We will examine adolescent males who fall into the latter categories in a separate section.

Table 2.1
The Labor Force, by Sex, for Jamaica: 1999

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	612,300	54.3
Female	516,100	45.7
Total Labor Force	1,128,400	100

Source: STATIN. 1999. The Labor Force.

Table 2.1 tells us something that is well noted worldwide: Jamaica has very high female participation in its labor force

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relative to other countries. What it does not tell us is that female participation rose dramatically from 38 percent in 1991, to 43 percent in 1996, to the present 46 percent. In most countries in the Western Hemisphere, 40 percent female participation is considered a good supportive rate. Jamaica's high female participation rate suggests both leadership and a significant degree of independence among women. Contrary to what is often discussed in public spheres, females earn 39 percent of national income, a rate at the top of what is common in the West.⁵ These factors, when added to others such as a higher female literacy rate, higher female life expectancy including disability adjusted life expectancy (DALE), an almost ideal fertility rate of 2.4 in 1999 (World Health Report 2000) and greater use of the country's health care, give Jamaican women a better Gender-related Development Index (67th) than overall Human Development Index (83rd).⁶

These aggregates do not mean that women have arrived in Jamaica. According to the statistics, men dominate the business and technical sectors, especially manufacturing, small businesses, construction, engineering and electronics. The small business sector is of tremendous importance to the survival of young people. Men own two-thirds of all small businesses, and a significant proportion of these are young men. This is especially in the area of

manufacturing where men own over 80 percent.⁷ This is clearly the area where adolescent males find hope and promise.

Obviously, women have much to achieve. Nonetheless, the statistics do help us recognize that there is a shift of family, community and civil support towards women. The following tables attempt to highlight the differences in the support given to adolescent males compared to adolescent females and the effect of this support on the age of entrance and level of participation in the labor force.

Table 2.2
Labor Force Participation Rate of Adolescents Ages 14-19 Years Old, by Sex, for Jamaica: 1998 and 1999

Sex	January 1998		January 1999	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	49,900	30.3	41,900	24.5
Female	30,600	18.4	28,500	17.0
Both Sexes	80,500	24.3	70,400	20.8

Source: STATIN. 1999. *The Labor Force*.

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 highlight the fact that significantly more adolescent males than females are allowed to or are forced to enter the labor force at this critical developmental stage. Table 2.2 tells us that in 1998 almost a third (30.3%) of all males ages 14 to 19 were in the labor force compared to 18.4 percent of their female counterparts. The comparison for 1999

⁵See the *Human Development Report 2000*, males in Jamaica earn an average of US\$4,163 per annum compared to females \$2,629.
⁶Ibid.

⁷See *The Jamaica Labour Force 1996-1999*. All tables in this section are constructed from data drawn from this source.

was quite similar, though that seemed to have been a better year for adolescents overall. The same trend is seen in Table 2.3 where adolescent males ages 14 to 19 occupy a significant 6.8% of the total male labor force compared to their female counterparts who comprise 5.5% of the overall female labour force. It is important to note that adolescent males account for a noticeably larger share of their age group's participation in the labor force than males overall. Notice that they accounted for 62 and 60 percent for the years 1998 and 1999. Figures for 1999 showed that overall, men occupy 59.5 percent of the labor force (See Table 2.4).

Table 2.3
Male and Female Adolescents Ages 14-19
Years Old as a Percent of the Labor Force, for
Jamaica: 1999

Sex	Percentage of Total Labor Force	Percentage of Male Labor Force	Percentage of Female Labor Force
Males	3.7	6.8	
Female	2.5		5.5
Both Sexes	6.2		

Source: STATIN. 1999. The Labor Force Survey 1999

Table 2.4
The Labor Force, by Comparison of
Adolescent Males and Females ages 14 to 19,
for Jamaica: 1998 and 1999

Sex	1998		1999	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	49,900	62.0	41,900	59.5
Female	30,600	38.0	28,500	40.5
Both Sexes	80,500	100.0	70,400	100.0

Source: STATIN. 1999. The Labor Force.

Table 2.5 is probably the most graphic and focused. It tells us precisely why it is possible for women to be so highly represented in the overall labor force but not equally so in the data for adolescents ages 14 to 19. The data clearly allow for the inference that there has been a concerted effort on the part of the family in particular to delay the participation of females in the labor force until they have gathered at least some basic skills. The same cannot be said for the support given to adolescent males of the same age. Males clearly enter the labor force in larger numbers at an earlier age. Notice that in 1998 a third entered before reaching the school leaving age of 18 years. They are therefore more likely to begin working before possessing a skill. Their education is interrupted. The relatively poor support given to adolescent males must be taken into account when we discuss the dilemma that 80 percent of the male labor force in 1998 had no formal training compared to an also frightening but lower 75 percent of

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the female labor force. Furthermore, two-thirds (62%) of all professionals with diplomas and degrees are women.

A number of issues must be raised from the data on unemployed young people. Unlike their female counterparts, unemployed young men (14-24 years old) rely on parents and relatives as their main system of support. For the years 1998 and 1999, these two sources of support were recorded as the rescue for 80 and 84 percent respectively of unemployed young men. These figures, when compared with those of their female counterparts (55 and 63 percent respectively) for the same period, tell us that the unemployed male is a

burden on the family. The evidence from numerous research efforts including, Chevannes (2001), Gayle (1996), Ford Foundation (1996), Brown (1993), and Brown et al (1993) is clear about the immense pressure that the unemployed young male faces due to the expectation for him to earn money, despite his circumstances including age and training. Research also bears out that in the case in which the parent (especially a single mother) is unable to bear the burden and relatives are not in close proximity or are unwilling to assist, the male youth will be forced to join that aspect of the labor force that is below the radar. We will return to this point.

Table 2.5
Labor Force Ages 14-19, by Two-Year Age Groups, for Jamaica: 1998/1999

	January 1998			January 1999		
Males						
Age Group	Number	Percent	Cumula- tive %	Number	Percent	Cumula- tive %
14-15	2,000	4.0	4.0	1,100	2.6	2.6
16-17	14,000	28.1	32.1	10,300	24.6	27.2
18-19	33,900	67.9	100.0	30,500	72.8	100.0
14-19	49,900	100.0		41,900	100.0	
Females						
14-15	900	2.9	2.9	400	1.4	1.4
16-17	6,300	20.6	23.5	5,700	20.0	21.4
18-19	23,400	76.5	100.0	22,400	78.6	100.0
14-19	30,600	100.0		28,500	100.0	

Source: STATIN. 1999. The Labor Force.

The young male's dilemma is that other than parents and relatives, he has no one else on whom to rely but himself. Notice that for both 1998 and 1999 one out of ten (or 10%) of young males reported that they depended on personal savings during the period of unemployment. Only about 3 percent of the unemployed young females needed to rely on personal savings as their main source of support. Young men lack the networks of friends that their female counterparts depend on, and spousal support is equally non-existent for them (just over 1%). One out of three unemployed young females can rely on these sources for support. In clarifying the use of the category 'friend' as different from 'spouse', it became clear from dialogues

with statisticians that the friends young females largely rely on are overwhelmingly males. This undoubtedly helps to create an additional source of stress on the young males, especially considering that some are themselves unemployed or marginally employed.

Hustling and Juggling: Adolescent Males Working Below the Radar

The informal sector is both an indicator of and a solution for poverty. Jamaica has a very large informal sector. STATIN (1999, *The Labour Force*) estimated the visible aspect to involve over one-quarter of the

Table 2.6
Unemployed Labor Force, by Main Means of Support,
for Young People ages 14-24, for Jamaica: 1998/1999

Relation	Males				Females			
	January 1998		January 1999		January 1998		January 1999	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Parents	23,800	64.7	25,100	71.3	26,00	43.7	29,300	51.8
Spouse/C/Law	400	1.1	600	1.7	15,600	26.2	10,100	17.8
Other Relatives	5,600	15.2	4,400	12.5	6,500	10.9	6,400	11.3
Friend	600	6.1	0	0.0	4,900	8.2	4,800	8.5
Personal Savings	4,000	10.9	3,300	9.4	1,600	2.7	1,800	3.2
Other	700	1.9	1,100	3.1	3,000	5.1	3,100	5.5
Not Stated	1,700	4.6	700	2.0	1,900	3.2	1,100	1.9
Total	36,800	100.0	35,200	100.0	59,500	100.0	56,600	100.0

Source: STATIN. 1999. *The Labor Force*.

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work force. According to Witter and Kirton (1990), drawing on data from the Inter-American Development Bank, a large proportion (32 percent) of the population over age 14 was outside the formal labor force in the 1980s. They estimated that about one-third of the urban labor force survived through the use of the informal sector, and that beyond the 1980s this aspect of the economy would grow to account for over a quarter of GDP. Still, a large aspect of the informal sector is under-researched and fairly unknown to the vast majority of Jamaicans. This aspect is often described as the illegal, subterranean, clandestine, irregular, underground and hustle economy. From all available data, including the Jamaica labor force reports, women are very prominent in the visible aspect of the informal sector especially in areas such as vending. Nonetheless, the hustle economy is dominated by males, especially by the young.

It is difficult to measure the hustle economy. Unlike vending and some other economic activities, a hustler may not operate more than once at a particular location. Hustling is not bound by conventions or legal relations. It is very often illegal and runs counter to the values in which the actors were socialized. It may include, among other activities, gambling, smuggling, illegal currency exchange, hot sales (the sale of stolen goods, which is separate

from stealing), petty stealing, begging, go-go dancing, prostitution and conning (Gayle 1996). Witter (1980) summed hustle activities into categories of earning by service, by force, by appeal to conscience and by games of chance. Hustling is usually a high-risk activity and subject to variables of age and gender. Younger people and males tend to be more involved. Young men are involved in the most high-risk hustling activities including drug trafficking, and gun store and keep. The female hustle activities that carry the most risk are prostitution and scams such as crotching.⁸ It is important to note, however, that the concept of hustle as used by inner city or working class folk never includes major property crimes, organized drug trafficking or murder. Those involved in the latter are treated as hardened criminals and are separated from hustlers. Gayle (1996) learned that hustling is a bit parasitic. The idea is not to hurt the victim more than necessary; the hustler just takes a bit. This seems to be the protective veil of the hustler's conscience.

There is a difference between hustling and juggling. The latter relates to involvement in a number of economic activities that pay marginally but are useful when combined. Juggling is extremely laborious and is often referred to as slaving. The choice to hustle or juggle depends on gender, socialization and circumstance among other factors.

⁸This is a form of shoplifting in which small items are carried away from a store between the woman's legs. Chevannes (2001:168) illustrates the craft.

Youths learn to hustle on the streets, but they learn to juggle from their mother, I was told. By juggle the analysts meant to do more than one simple job to earn enough money to survive, but it also means using the little money wisely like a little granny. Men make better hustlers, and women make better jugglers. Women are not as keen on hustling cause not all of dem have di heart. Finally a man may be juggling and pressure reach him, im start to hustle too, so now im huggle hustle and juggle. Most persons who hustle and juggle are men with a large number of dependents Gayle (1996).

There are a number of reasons why young men hustle despite the risk involved. From the available literature the following seem to be the main ones:

1. The inability of government to raise the standard of living or employment rate;
2. Lack of education or skill training;
3. The difficulties involved in getting a job due to area stigma;
4. The creative capacity and resourcefulness, combined with the drive to survive evident in Jamaicans⁹;
5. The society is ideal for creative deviation as there is great stress upon the value of particular goals such as material wealth, and less stress on the institutionally

prescribed means of striving for these goals differentially distributed based on class¹⁰;

6. The desperation of single mothers and baby mothers and their push on the male to earn money.

Area Stigma

For young men in the inner city area, stigma is the primary reason they are outside the formal labor force. Having an education (and certificates to prove this achievement) does not guarantee an inner city male a job. In Gayle (1996), very few adolescent males of East Kingston could cite examples of adolescent males who got jobs because they had passes in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) or its equivalent. Nonetheless, they could find a number of young men with passes in the CXC working at a gas station pumping gas or doing some task that required no skill or training. The adolescent males felt it was more realistic for working class males to learn a trade. It is important to note that area stigma does not affect females in this way. The following excerpt from Gayle (1996) illustrates the seriousness of the issue of area stigma.

The problem of area stigma cannot be underestimated, I was told, cause it wicked bad. As one youth age 21 and an unemployed graduate of Kingston College, put it, Is area stigma, bad name and bad

⁹Anderson (1987), Henry-Wilson (1991)

¹⁰See Merton's (1968) discussion of deviation.

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vibes soak up dem youths yah nuff a dem, given the chance can do well. It was not until the final discussion in the issue of unemployment that a very valuable point was made by a 19-year-old past student of Excelsior. Sometimes you cannot blame the employers from uptown, he said calmly and in perfect English. This had caused the other six persons in the group to stop speaking. There was complete silence as he explained, the media never come to [Huggleton] when our youths do all the wonderful things but they race each other to come if one of us kills another. So the uptown people are stiff scared. Laughing, he told us that he had to take an uptown girlfriend downtown one day and that she was so scared that she almost scared him too. To make matters worse, he explained, some of the youths go to seek a job when they are quite upset, having been insulted by a number of employees before; and also, sometimes the way they dress turn off di people dem, a young lady added.

The main speaker went on to explain how he got his job as a teller at a bank. He dressed decently and spoke fluently, he said; used his aunt's address (some place up Shortwood) and only later told his supervisor the truth. Otherwise my five CXC's would be useless, he explained.

Due to the impact of area stigma, some youth do not bother to seek a job if they do not have the contacts. They know once you come from [Huggleton] you have fi know how fi hustle and if needs be hustle and

juggle, one lady pointed out (Gayle 1996:30-31).

Pressured to Earn Money at Any Cost

Youths, especially males, are encouraged to hustle. A mother may ask her son when he comes home frustrated after several attempts to get a job, What happen to your head weh God give you, you can t hustle? A woman may also pressure her man to hustle when other things fail (Gayle 1996: 31).

Chevannes (2001, 1999, 1996), Chevannes and Levy (1996), Gayle (1996), Headley (1994) and Moser and Holland (1997) all speak of the immense pressure placed on young males to provide for the family and the implications of this for economically related crimes. They are often expected to earn an income at any cost. According to this argument, the vast majority of males involved in economic or hustle-related violence could be expected to have a poor educational background and to lack the other skills needed for employment in the formal sector, but they are nonetheless expected to provide for a family, including siblings. Chevannes (2001) documented that despite the fear of having boy babies due to the difficulties involved in raising males in the inner cities, adolescent boys are often preferred to their female counterparts due to their earning power. In one community it was found that single mothers would go to great lengths to

protect their earning adolescent son from having girlfriends so as to protect the cash earned by the boy. The matter of providing, as will be discussed later in more depth, rests at the core of male identity.

Risk Taking

Adolescent males are better socialized to hustle than females. This is clear in the literature. The fact that adolescent males receive less attention and support than their female counterparts cannot be seen as enough of an explanation for the rate at which adolescent males join the hustle economy. Chevannes (2001) presented gambling as one of the key activities that provides young males with the skill of risk taking. Every form of illegal activity involves a risk. Gambling involves a double risk, that of losing and that of being caught (page 161). In the inner cities, Ludo, dominoes, bingo, crown-an-anchor, drop pan, horse racing and cards are quite popular forms of male recreation. Chevannes highlighted the game of Ludo because it involves some elements of strategy which enable a player to dodge a kill by distancing his men or markers from his opponent s or by spacing their progress to the safety of heaven which marks the end of the game. The game allows players to cooperate with one another against a common enemy, but also, in a version called corruption, they can play without mercy to survive on their own. Ludo represents real life situations for young inner city males. As Chevannes (2001:

168) documented, Once when Chris dodged a kill, David teased him by remarking that his dodging was similar to the time he dodged the police in Cross Roads. The youth in question had picked the pocket of an unsuspecting man in Cross Roads. Only his artful dodging had prevented the police from nabbing him.

Except for horse racing, all other forms of gambling activities in the inner cities are illegal. Because of their petty nature they often go unnoticed but remain a potential source of arrest, especially if the police are unable to pin the bigger charges. For this reason, most of these activities require players to be on the alert for the police. In Chevannes (2001) it is clear from dialogues with boys ages 12 to 14 involved in illegal gambling, that they understood the rules of this game of survival before adolescence. Whilst training in risk-taking does not necessarily lead to crime, it certainly is a contributing factor. Chevannes illustrated this point by presenting notes on aspects of the lives of two adolescents. The first was fully involved in the trafficking of cocaine at age 14, having started at age 12. He seemed trapped by the money, power and lifestyle he derived from the trade; his only hope of escape was to go to school in the United States if his mother got to migrate there and if she chose to send for him to join her though she was afraid of him. Bof, the second adolescent, unlike the first, got to fifth form at Kingston College and had earned seven Ordinary Level passes.

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However, he was unable to graduate due to fighting and insulting school administrators. His hopes are to do medicine at The University of the West Indies. Nonetheless what seems to separate the two are simply luck and some degree of free will.

Bof explained that he had been asked four times to hide guns for older men. His quiet disposition and reputation as a KC student made him the last person to come under suspicion. With much of the blood money he received for his services he was able to put himself through school. One night, though, he was nearly caught. As he said this he shivered. He had just been given a gun to deliver to Johnson Street. On reaching the bridge across the drain, there in his way stood three policemen, three of the most famous and deadly. He almost froze. With the .38 in his waist in back, he tried walking as normally as he could, hailing one of them as if he knew him. But just as one of the lawmen was about to call him for a search, another he had not even seen called out, Mr. KC! That marked the turning point for him. He then and there thanked God, resolved to stop the nonsense, and concentrate on his CXC's (Chevannes 2001: 167-168).

There is no evidence to show that Bof is out of the woods. Socialized in risk taking, he is trying desperately to stay away from illegal activities but this might not be sustained if his circumstances change for the worse.

Low risk Hustling

Dan is the second child of a married couple that broke up when he was age 17. His father now resides in Canada where he has three children so im don t send a lot of money... cause im is just a sideman on a truck and don t earn much. The money his father sends home helps to pay bills and take care of the four younger children two girls and two boys. Dan and his older brother, who lifts luggage at the Norman Manley Airport, take care of themselves. Dan never started goosing until he was 18. He had left school with only three passes in the Caribbean Council Examinations. He had helped his mother run the stall at the gate but that was not only boring and not mekking nutten, but held him in the community all day. He had also gone to seek work but found that the only jobs available were labour work. A can t manage those.

Dan, realizing that he needed to have at least six CXC's and some A levels to impress a man nowadays started to attend evening classes at age 19. When asked, So how have you been managing since, Dan responded, My mother said to me, my boy you is the ambitious one in the family so far. God going bless you. Between me and you father we will try help you but you have fi hustle something fi yourself cause book and dem things dear.

Dan had already started to goose by this time but only small time. Knowing now that his mother approved of him hustling he

began to goose full-scale. He taught me to goose and we in fact goosed together twice of the seven times I observed him. Goosing is an extremely easy, innocent looking and kind scam. It simply requires a youth to act as an assistant to people in the shoes arcade who seem to be either from the country or uptown. Dan and I would meet the client (as he called them), or goose since they are sometimes naive, at the gate of the arcade. The idea is to greet the person nicely and offer to help him or her to find the shoes he or she is searching for. If the person agrees, and they often do, especially women, the gooser helps her find the shoes as he promised. A gooser never allows a person to leave without buying, Don told me during my training.

The happy goose leaves giving the kind and helpful youth a tip of usually \$50-\$100, never more and rarely less. The goose is, however, tricked in the pricing of the shoes. Most shoes venders are happy to work with a gooser since he brings customers and persuades them to buy. This means good business. In return he allows the gooser to quote the price for the shoes. This price is marked up. The gooser returns for the difference after the deal is made. Dan has connections with six vendors each selling different kinds of shoes. He gooses between 10 to 20 persons each day. The bigger the buy, the higher the markup and hence a gooser's best day, is when he gets persons to buy expensive name-brand sneakers.

During the period of study, Dan never worked for more than six hours per day nor

more than four days per week since he had to prepare to sit his four CXC's and two A Levels. Yet he earned an average of \$8,000 per week or \$2,000 per day. Before exam pressure come down he said he made as high as \$3,000 or 4,000 on a good day. Dan's hope is to join the necktie crew uptown when he passes his subjects for a man cannot live their life like this. In other words, conning for most youths is a temporary or a transient occupation (See Gayle 1996: 50-52).

Street and Working Children: Sometimes Visible and Disturbing, Sometimes Quietly Suffering

Mark is a 14-year-old boy who has already been hustling for two years and who exhibits to a large extent, adult behavior. Mark became the man of the house at age 12, only weeks after his father's funeral. His father was shot by a police because he was stupid or bad enough to attack the police with an icepick when asked to allow himself to be searched. As far as persons in the community analyze it, he was selling cocaine and probably had stock on him. He died leaving behind three children: a 12-year-old son and two girls ages 10 and 13. A few weeks after his death, Mark was stopped from attending school as the \$1000 per week earned by his mother at

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the free-zone could only send the girls to school.

A teacher sympathized and bought Mark a glass wiper and advised him how to survive. By wiping car glass at stop signs after school and on most Fridays, along with helping to carry bags for persons in the market on Saturdays, Mark was able to help send his two sisters to school. Both girls are in fact in high school – only Mark was not able to pass his Common Entrance Examination because he had stopped attending school. He now attends an all-age school but mostly four days per week. On his request one afternoon I gave him a lift to a new location he had discovered – a Kentucky Fried Chicken drive-through. Here he did tremendously well for a week until another boy joined him to share the profit.

Mark gives almost everything he earns to his mother. In fact one evening at 10 o'clock after picking him up (along with his bucket, rag and wiper) and taking him home we stopped by the gate to count his earnings. It came up to \$205. I was shocked to see him take \$5 out to buy a bag juice and hand the balance to his mother. It was a hard evening, he said and he was not able to hustle the following day, Friday, for he had a test to do. This evening he seemed much older as he said thanks and slowly walked into his yard. Despite all his efforts, even by working in the market and cleaning glass on the same day, his highest earning for a day was six hundred dollars (\$600). Unfortunately, however, a neighbour told me, the boy is extremely angry sometimes.

Mark says he does not know why but he often hits his sisters and even roughs up his mother. The truth is that his burden is often too much for a youth of his age to carry (Gayle 1996: 52-54).

The plight of Mark is not unique. Thousands of children in Jamaica can be described as laborers, falling into a variety of out-of-place categories, including street, domestic, agricultural and sexually exploited. From the first phase of the Baseline Survey in Child Labour: Spanish Town, completed June 2001, much can be learned about the situation of child laborers there with implications for urban and to a lesser extent rural Jamaica. It must be noted that the study was focused on children from the inner city of Spanish Town, an area covering a population of over 18,000. The study highlighted the fact that:

- The number of children in Spanish Town that are out of place or not in school and involved in some form of labor is frightening. It is estimated at 1,220, an increase of 36.2 percent over last year. Of this number, an estimated 431 are residents of Spanish Town. In some areas such as Tawes Pen, an estimated 60 percent of school aged children were out of place. In Waterloo, the Market Area and Ellerslie Pen, 30 percent of children were in a similar situation. Overall, the inner city communities studied in Spanish Town had an average of 22.6 percent of school-aged children out of place.

- In three schools surveyed, 14 percent of habitual absentees were engaged in labor (5.3% of enrollment). Up to 19 percent of children not attending school (not including those kept at home for economic reasons) might be street/ working children.
- The sample of 310 children interviewed turned up a large majority (62.3%) of street children who fell into three categories:
 1. Of the street: living and working on the street (1.3%)
 2. On the street: only working on the street but who go home (36.8%)
 3. Market children (25.8%)
- The ratio of male to female child laborers was 56 to 44. Boys outnumbered girls 2:1 in the total street category. Those of the street were overwhelmingly boys, both interviewed and estimated. It is important to note here that while the sample picked up only a few boys living on the street, a focus group of these boys estimated that a large number of boys in Spanish Town did not go home at night. On the other hand, the situation was nearly reversed in the domestic/ agricultural helpers category where girls constitute nearly 60 percent. Surprising, however, is the fact that the very significant 40 percent that boys made up was employed at home in traditional women s work. Sexually exploited children are largely a female group, but the minority (10.5% or two of the 19) of sexually exploited boys should not be ignored.
- Sadly, it was found that a large majority (87%) of working children did so with parents consent and even at their insistence. An exception to the rule was the category of sexually exploited children, yet as many as 43 percent acted with parents consent. Dem take the money and then cuss, a girl explained. Single mothers headed a large majority (54%) of the desperate homes from which these children came.
- Very alarming, but probably not surprising, was that over a half of all street children said they were happy. The boys especially felt it was important to be assisting. In fact, a large number said they went on the street on their own volition having recognized that without their help the family would be in worse destitution.
- Working children were found to suffer from a number of illnesses including frequent bouts of flu, fevers and so forth (77.4%), respiratory problems (11.3), eye and ear infections (3.5%) and STDs (2.6%).
- Overall, 20 percent of the sample could be described as high-risk children:
habitual users of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, or cocaine

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sexually active with multiple partners
engaging in unprotected sex

physically, sexually or psychologically
abused

sometimes weapon carriers

- Fifteen percent of the children had been knocked unconscious on at least one occasion, and 10.8 percent had been stabbed or shot at.

Other recent research has made the same conclusion regarding street children. Using focus group discussion with street boys ages 11 to 17, Robinson, Bain, and Thompson (2001) found that the boys were

at extreme risk, especially the risk of contracting HIV.

1. The boys were not always able to get condoms.
2. They had a negative attitude toward condoms.
3. They had very early sexual debuts from primary school age.
4. They had multiple partners from an early age.
5. They were involved in drugs and alcohol use.
6. They had grave misconceptions about HIV/AIDS.



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CHAPTER 3

ADOLESCENT MALES AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Male Survivability

*There is a direct relationship between lack of education and the violence you witness carried out by young men. As a lawyer I see it everyday they walk into my office and they begin to speak to me. I hear the language and I assess the education background and I can guess if they come about some violent crime. Is not everybody in Westmoreland treat me nice or with respect. Some disrespect me and do various evil things to me, but you never hear that Ricketts threatening to kill any person. I put it to you the main reason is that I am educated. Rarely do the educated use violence as a tool of expression. Oonoo must educate the youth dem, an a mean the boy dem too. School mek fi dem too. Education is not only about making money; it is also about shaping character.*¹¹

Debating the Problem: Out-numbered or Out-performed?

It is a known fact that girls outnumber boys in school at all post-primary levels. The

debate is whether or not boys are genuinely outperformed in school. The fact that boys are outnumbered has a tremendous effect on the quality of male input within the labor force.

Outnumbered

Despite the dissatisfaction of a large percentage of the populace with the enrollment levels and quality of education received in Jamaica, the country is ranked among the top of the developed countries in terms of education. The problem lies in the sex adjustment of the figures outlined

BOX 2 SCHOOL ENROLMENT FOR BOTH SEXES: AGE 3-24

86.1% Early Childhood (Age 3-5)
99.1% Primary (Age 6-11)
97.4% First Cycle Secondary (Age 12-14)
82.5% Second Cycle Secondary (15-16)
39.5% Upper Level Secondary (17-18)
7% University/Post Secondary (16-24)
{note overlapping}

Source: Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

¹¹Lawyer speaking at a community forum on the topic of Crime and Violence: Strategies and Solutions in Petersfield, Westmoreland on September 19, 2001, hosted by the Association of Clubs.

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above. According to the Human Development Report 2000, Jamaica's male to female functional literacy ratio is 82: 90.

According to census data from 1982 to 2000 and data from the Ministry of Education, more boys than girls attend primary school, but boys begin to drop out at the secondary level such that more females than males attend secondary and tertiary institutions. More boys are enrolled in primary schools in Jamaica largely because usually more males are born than females. Take 1991 for example: According to the census in that year, 28,403 males were born compared to 27,323 females, a ratio of 104 males to 100 females. This information has always come as a shock to many Jamaicans, although this is a normal sex ratio at birth (more boys born than girls) (Huapt and Kane, 1998). The question that follows is: where did the males go? More males than females die through infancy, through adolescence, through young and middle adulthood and up to age 75. The 1991 census showed that in the 0-9 years category, 508 boys died compared to 387 girls, a ratio of 57 males to 43 females. Only beyond the age of 75 do women have a higher mortality rate. The data tell us that by the age of entry into the labor force (14 years) there are more females than males. Table 3.1 below shows how the enrollment ratio shifts from the primary to the secondary level. As is clear, the higher infant mortality rate, an independent

(causative) factor here, is also the result of other factors, including neglect of male children. It is important here not to miss the relationship between the gradual wearing away (attrition) of males from the education system and their higher mortality rates (another form of attrition).

Table 3.1
Primary and Secondary Enrolment by Sex
1991

School Level	Boys		Girls	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Primary	587,203	50.7	571,454	49.3
Secondary	306,960	45.2	372,374	54.8

Source: STATIN. 1991. Population Census, 1991

The shift at the tertiary level has been recent and swift. In 1982 it became apparent that a shift was likely considering that males no longer significantly outnumbered females in tertiary institutions (50.4% of 21,679 persons attending tertiary institutions were males). By 1991 females had overtaken males (52% of the 30,804) in terms of having a university education (Population Census, 1991). Recent data reveal that over two-thirds of the trained labor force with degrees and diplomas are women (STATIN, 1999. The Labour Force 1999).

Outperformed

Despite the noise about females outperforming boys in school, a number of scholars, including Professor Barry

Chevannes, maintain that this is not so; rather, the statistics overwhelm many readers to the extent that they confuse boys being outnumbered with being outperformed. The results of the Common Entrance Examination for a long time, until its demise, were skewed toward girls. This has been lamented to the point that the cognitive health of Jamaican boys was a matter of concern. Tests have, however, consistently shown boys to be equal to or slightly ahead of girls.

Samms-Vaughn (2000) surveyed and tested 11 year olds and found that Jamaican children showed great diversity in both academic performance and cognitive testing, depending on type of school, environment and school experience. Students in high schools performed best, followed by children attending preparatory and new secondary then by those attending all-age and primary schools. Quality of education is therefore critical. Better cognitive and academic outcomes were recorded among children whose biological parents were in stable relationships; who had their biological parents as their parenting figures; who lived with both parents, whose parents were highly educated and whose parenting figures were between 40 and 49 years. Note the implication for the children of the poor. Samms-Vaughn noted the domino effect of poverty. Children born in poverty had poorer home environments both physically and emotionally. They were less likely to have contact with biological

parents; more likely to be shifted from one parent figure to another; to have parents at the extremes of age, and with lower levels of education. They attended schools of poorer quality, and they were less equipped for school. In terms of gender, though, she identified no significant difference overall in terms of experiences in daily lives. It was found that girls attended church more frequently, read more books, and were more involved in organized extra-curricula activities. Though her instrument was not designed to assess the impact of these socializing agencies, we can assume that these do come to bear on the prerequisites of discipline and work attitude necessary for success in the school system. Not surprisingly, she found that girls outperformed boys on all academic tests though both sexes performed similarly on cognitive tests. Nonetheless, while the majority of those who significantly under-achieved on the academic tests were boys, the majority of significant under-achievers on cognitive tests were girls.

The discussion surrounding the Common Entrance Examination has been whether or not it is reasonable to give boys at ages 10-12 an examination that places or displaces them in society, given that at that age and point of socio-biological development, a boy is at a disadvantage competing with a girl. Given this debate, we will use figures for males and females in secondary and tertiary institutions to see whether or not there is a case for males being outperformed or numerically over-

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whelmed. The fact is that if they are not outperformed as is held, then we ought to concentrate on getting more boys into schools. Chevannes (1999: 33) identified the problem not as one of boys being outperformed but as one of male under-participation or under-representation in the key institution designed to prepare the young for life, namely the education system.

Tracing a group of students from grades 1 to 11, Chevannes (1999) examined their CXC results to see if boys were really outperformed. Drawing on Ministry of Education statistics from 1996-1997, he found that despite the much higher attrition rates for boys, which led to fewer boys sitting the CXCs, boys were not outperformed by girls. When only grades 1 and 2 are calculated, the gender performances were more or less on par, with males outperforming the females in 15 of the 35 subjects, and females outperforming the males in 14. If girls were in fact better achievers than boys, this should have shown itself at the higher levels as well (page 14).

Chevannes found that in the CXCs there were many more female subjects than male subjects. He defined a subject as having a gender bias if the ratio of those who sat the subject was three or more times in favor of one sex than the other. Seven were found for boys and eleven for girls (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below). These biases are not surprising, Chevannes argued. They follow the pattern of socialization whereby

females are prepared for skills focused on the home or on traditional occupations at the workplace while boys are prepared for what are perceived as moneymaking, technological skills. It is important to note nonetheless that the aggregates for males in male subjects were never as high as the aggregates for females in female subjects. Only in technical drawing did more than one thousand males sit the examination.

Chevannes found the same trend for the two major tertiary institutions in Jamaica: University of the West Indies and The University of Technology. The data for the University of the West Indies showed very clearly that while their numbers were three times smaller than females in terms of enrollment, males consistently graduated with higher rates of First Class Honors. Only at the lower levels were their rates lower (see Table 3.4). Also, males accounted for a higher proportion in areas of study that were related to those male-related subjects selected from secondary school. Consequently the University of Technology maintained a higher male percentage (40%) than the University of the West Indies (26%) with its greater subject bias toward females.

Bailey (1997: 28) noted the same trend as Chevannes for the Caribbean region.

Results at grades one and two in the 1996 CXC examinations for all Caribbean territories participating in the examination were used to determine achievement patterns for males and females entered for

16 academic and 17 technical-vocational subjects at the general proficiency level. The results indicate the typical sex-linked pattern reported universally. In the academic grouping, boys outperformed girls in all except two of the nine science-based subjects. In the case of Physics and Chemistry there were slight differentials of 1.15 and 0.31 respectively in favour of girls. Boys as a group are therefore outstripping girls in the sciences. The reverse was true for the Humanities where girls outperformed boys in the seven subjects subsumed in this group.

In the technical grouping the sex-linked pattern remains almost intact. In the male dominated grouping (Technical Drawing, Woods, Metals, Electrical Technology, Building Technology, Mechanical

Engineering Technology), as is expected, males outperformed girls in all subjects except for Building Technology where the performance differential was 3.71 in favour of girls. This difference, is however, almost insignificant given that only 43 girls as against 460 boys sat the examination. In the case of the female dominated subjects (Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, Home Economics, Shorthand, Principles of Business (POB), Principles of Accounts (POA), Typewriting, Office Procedures), girls outperformed boys in all subjects except POB and Shorthand where the performance differentials were 3.8 and 10.3 respectively. The difference in performance in Shorthand is insignificant given that there were only 15 male entrants, compared to the 462 females.

TABLE 3.2
Gender Biases in CXC Subject Areas and Number of Males Sitting the Exams, 1993-1996

Traditionally male subject	1993		1994		1995		1996	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Building Tech.	182	21	2076	18	195	16	255	17
Elec. Tech.	348	28	415	27	499	25	438	37
Elec./Elec.	400	21	466	45	471	36	725	59
Mech. Eng.	NO	DATA	NO	DATA	283	11	272	8
Metals	271	6	309	7	314	10	328	14
Tech. Drawing	1,749	128	1,888	156	1,924	158	2,332	213
Woods	356	14	367	11	412	19	570	28
TOTAL	3,306	218	3,652	257	4,098	275	4,920	376

Source: Bailey, 1997

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Causes for Fewer Boys in School

Clearly then, while adolescent males were not being outperformed, their small numbers have implications for their contribution to society and are an issue of concern. The data tell us that there are a number of reasons why boys lose their numerical advantage after childhood.

Economics and Attrition

Research has confirmed that the drop-out rate of boys from the school system far exceeds that of girls. Chevannes (1999) tracing a cohort of students, found attrition

rates increased with age and differed by sex. The highest rate (30% for boys compared to 23% for girls) was therefore that of grade 10 boys.

From the *Baseline Survey in Child Labour: Spanish Town* (ILO/IPEC, 2001) and data from The Labour Force, we can conclude that the main reason for high attrition rates among boys is economic. This has clear implications for government policies. The 1998 *Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions* (PIOJ and STATIN, 1999) and Samms-Vaughn (2000), among others are certain that economics is a major factor in terms of attendance and performance. The 1998 *Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions*

TABLE 3.3
Gender Biases in CXC Subjects and Number of Females Sitting the Exams, 1993-1996

Traditionally Female subjects	1993		1994		1995		1996	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Clothing	686	11	730	19	722	21	916	27
Craft	73	14	44	10	71	27	64	30
Food & Nutr.	1,428	123	1,782	128	1,683	127	2,009	229
French	338	61	338	73	340	83	369	74
Home Mang.	987	47	1,189	69	1,186	61	1,888	81
Office Practice	3,221	760	3,265	901	3,335	886	6,489	1,581
Religious Educ.	457	119	627	122	785	318	881	424
Shorthand	341	3	278	9	204	6	280	11
Social Studies	1,774	571	2,319	778	2,437	747	3,433	1,221
Spanish	1,098	303	1,340	356	1,327	410	1,422	531
Typing	2,626	240	2,554	277	2,364	243	3,092	302
TOTAL	13,079	2,252	14,466	2,742	13,598	2,584	14,543	2,224

Source: Bailey, 1997

highlighted the fact that two of every three (66.4%) children who did not attend school on Fridays could not do so because of a lack of money; two of three (66.8%) also belonged to the poorest consumer groups.

Not to be ignored also is the finding that boys were the majority (55.8%) of the 22 percent out-of-school population and were less literate than girls in the same category. The boys had simply stopped attending school at an earlier age and for longer periods than their female counterparts.

Again, it was found that more than a half (51%) of the children out of school were from households headed by single females. Again, the plight of Jamaican women must be discussed concurrently with that of men. Clearly demonstrated in the *Spanish Town Baseline Survey of Street and Working Children* and by Chevannes (2001) and Gayle (1996), among others, is the fact that when mothers lose the breadwinner of the family, they often turn to the male child for assistance.

Socialization

Chevannes (2001: 158-159) illustrates the problem as it relates to the socialization of boys in working class communities.

Most children of school age do attend school, but a large number, mainly the boys, do not. We were surprised to find so many girls over age twelve years old attending high school. They may be seen bustling early in the morning in larger numbers than their male counterparts. We

found them sexually active but aware of contraceptives. Girls of primary and high school age are generally watched carefully by community and family members. The few we observed playing basketball up to dusk and after always had a brother or a mother close by. Those who have been unfortunate enough to fall victim to the gang rape known as battery carry the humiliating nickname of mattress. On the whole, girls in Joetown are noticeably clean, well-dressed and presentable when appearing in public, even when wearing their batty riders, as some do.

A noticeably large number of Joetown boys who should be in school may be observed gambling, playing marbles or basketball or just walking the streets. When not accepted into adult gambling circles, they create their own in abandoned houses, at the back of yards, in tracks between houses, even in the churchyards, and there gamble for marbles, elastic bands and money. Stealing is another major activity: empty bottles, school children's lunch money, people's pockets. Some are couriers and messengers for drug dealers.

The ranks of the drop-outs swell from time to time, as parents when faced with too little money for school, send their daughters but keep back their sons. Girls thus have a greater association with school than boys do; have less pressure to prove anything; and usually manage to graduate unless they get pregnant. Boys on the other hand, are subject to the pressure of having to contribute to the household and to their

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TABLE 3.4
University of the West Indies (UWI) Graduates, by Sex and Class of Degree, 1990-98

YEAR	1st CLASS		UPPER SECOND		LOWER SECOND		PASS		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1990-91	8	9	60	137	106	223	58	98	232	467
	3.4	1.9	12.8	29.3	45.7	47.8	25.0	20.1		
1991-92	19	27	97	236	132	320	102	165	350	751
	5.4	306	27.7	31.4	37.7	42.6	29.1	22.0		
1992-93	22	37	110	253	139	290	87	125	359	705
	6.1	5.2	30.6	35.9	38.7	41.1	24.2	17.7		
1993-94	20	33	102	308	183	360	107	164	414	865
	5.0	308	24.6	35.6	44.2	41.4	26.1	19.0		
1994-95	26	59	116	335	156	381	129	164	426	940
	6.1	6.9	27.2	35.6	36.6	40.5	30.0	17.4		
1995-96	29	69	110	349	159	407	112	175	412	1,004
	7.0		26.7	34.8	38.6	40.5	26.8	17.4		
1996-97	25	49	89	352	180	426	142	216	436	1,0-43
	5.7	4.7	20.4	33.7	41.3	40.8	32.6	20.7		
1997-98	23	58	111	382	155	467	130	232	420	1,139
	5.7	5.1	26.4	33.5	36.8	41.0	30.9	20.4		

Source: Mona Information Technology Services, 1999

girlfriends; of proving their manhood and heterosexual orientation; of knowing how to withstand hunger and deprivation; of learning from very early how to be tough; of being able to win at all costs. Those who finish high school are generally very bright, but find getting a decent job very difficult. Many end up working as manual labourers, finding it extremely difficult, if not impossible to remain untouched by the

myriad illegal activities that are the trademark of the hustler and survivor.

Systemic and Structural Problem: The Jamaican School System is not Male-friendly

Most Jamaicans are able to see the relationship between lack of education and the most serious social ills. The fact is that not enough families, groups and government agencies have done

something about the problem. As is clear in the literature, the problem of male under-representation in the education system is not due purely to problems in the socialization process. The problems are systemic and structural; something is wrong with the entire education system. The data 'shout' that Jamaican schools have failed our boys, and even second chance programs are designed unconsciously for females. As Evans (1999) found, boys had different experiences than girls in the Jamaican school system. Schools were gender coded and discriminated against boys in a number of ways, including, teacher-student interaction, gender stereotyping of behavior, academic expectation, corporal punishment, curriculum design and methods of teaching.

Using a quantitative survey supported by qualitative tools, Evans (1999) sampled 3,719 students, including 1,557 boys (mostly from grades 9 and 11) from 45 secondary schools across Jamaica. There was a great deal of gender differentiation in the secondary schools studied. This was due not only to structural forces in the school but also due to the preferences of students who had already internalized gender roles and expectations. Gender distinctions are reflected in curricular and co-curricular activities and in the tasks assigned to males and females. Teachers also interact differently with males and females and have higher expectations of females.

Boys and girls were unnecessarily separated in the school environment including seating arrangements and even in roll call where the boys were separated and their names were called first. There was also separation based on gender in sporting activities and games. Subject areas were also separated by gender according to types of occupations and gender stereotypes associated with such occupations.

It was also noted that boys and girls exhibited gender-specific behavior within the classroom. Boys were the ones who were likely to be disruptive and to engage in activities unrelated to the formal curriculum when unsupervised and on some occasions when supervised, unlike girls.

The report noted the following types of behavior:

- *The boys give a lot of trouble in class.*
- *During register, the boys fidget, move about and talk among themselves (while the girls sit quietly).*
- *I saw a group of six boys sculling devotion, chatting and appearing unconcerned.*
- *The boys use bad words.*
- *The boys are hyperactive. The teacher seems to use verbal abuse to shame them in order to get them to be quiet. She may not mean it but this is how she responds (Evans 99:45).*

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In contrast to this, the behavior of females is usually that of conforming. They are willing to internalize that which is transmitted by the formal school curriculum. The male peer group is said to be an important component in determining the anti-school behavior exhibited by males. It was evident from information collected in one urban comprehensive high school that the genesis of the male culture is linked to gang or crew membership which leads to a situation in which if at least one member exhibits negative behavior in class then the others follow suit.

There was evidence of antagonism between boys and girls, and this led to some having unfavorable opinions of each other. Teachers also encouraged this antagonism by dividing classes by gender when conducting quizzes and then using gender-biased statements to encourage

students to excel. For example, a teacher was overheard saying to a boy who wanted to leave the classroom early, Notten no happen to the girls dem, but you want to leave already (Evans 99:46). Another point of concern is that the boys were judged by standards set by the actions of the girls. However, it was interesting to note that there was evidence of cooperation between boys and girls usually when involved in academic work despite the mentioned antagonism.

It was clear that school practices did influence the attitude toward learning and the ability to internalize educational material. School practices refer to: attitude of the staff toward the students and how they interact with each other; interaction of staff with students; streaming; disciplinary and other measures, which directly relate to students.

TABLE 3.5
Gender Differences in Perceptions of School Practices

School Practice	Total who agreed	%	Boys	%	Girls	%	X ²
I get beaten at school	498	14.0	281	18.0	217	10.0	56.10*
I often think of leaving school because of being beaten	216	6.1	123	7.9	93	4.3	34.80*
I don't like how teachers treat me	907	25.0	455	29.2	452	20.9	39.90*
I'd like to be treated with more respect	2,982	80.2	1,245	80.0	1,737	80.4	2.87
I have been insulted by my teachers	197	5.5	110	7.0	87	4.0	54.64*

Note: Percentages are calculated on the number of boys and girls in the study

* Indicates a statistically significant difference

Source: Evans, 1999

Five items on the questionnaire were designed specifically to examine students' perceptions of school practices. Table 3.5 summarizes the responses. All of the above variables except for desire for more respect showed a greater number of boys in agreement than of females. The gender difference was statistically significant for the statements, 'I often think of leaving school because of being beaten'; 'I don't like how teachers treat me'; and, 'I have been insulted by my teachers'. T-tests demonstrated that negative school practices affected academic practices.

As expected, the practice of streaming meant girls were more represented in the high stream while boys were more represented in the low stream. This is clearly shown in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6¹²
Proportion of Boys and Girls by Streams

Sex	High Stream		Mixed Ability		Low Stream	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Girls	709	32.8	1,003	46.5	446	20.7
Boys	399	22.7	723	48.3	434	28.0

Source: Evans, 1999

Students in the low stream were more likely to feel alienated from school. However, girls appeared to be more affected by placement in the low stream than boys (Evans 99:50).

Placement in a stream did not affect whether boys felt like they belonged in school. However, girls were more likely to feel that they did not belong in school if they were in the low stream. This was related to the fact that girls were expected more than boys to perform well academically and that boys were placed in areas other than academics that were accepted as important for their masculinity, including sports.

Parry (1996) also found that boys had problems at school. She found that there existed among boys an anti-academic male sex/gender identity which was not felt to be compatible with either diligent study or good grades. As Parry stated, teachers' perceptions and those of boys seemed to be in agreement that masculinity is not compatible with good grades. Education is not macho and is dismissed by some male students as effeminate and 'nerdish'. What is critical here is the fact that boys cannot always rely on their peers for encouragement to do well academically. Masculine identity is therefore an additional burden a boy has to bear in terms of academic performance.

Bailey, et al (1996) also stressed the extent to which boys were disadvantaged in the classroom. Males, socialized to be the leaders, found that at school the female teacher is boss. They may be physically mistreated also, including being flogged,

¹²The original table in Evans (1999) was changed. The one above is weighted due to the fact that there are more boys than girls. The trend however has not changed.

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aggravating further the psychological impact of relating to female leadership.

The impact of the institutional features described above has been assessed by Figueroa et al. (1996). They found that these features translated into higher benefits derived from the education system for girls than for boys. This in turn leads to greater investment in schooling girls and in fact higher returns on these investments made by parents. There exists therefore logic to invest in girls within the systemically flawed Jamaican education system.

The work of Anderson (1997:39) is also critical. Anderson stated that in April 1995, the unemployment rate for teenage workers with no secondary education stood at 38.3 percent, as compared with 49.5 percent for those with four or more years of secondary schooling. There was a correlation between years of secondary education for girls but not for boys. There remains in Jamaican society a higher demand for low-skilled male labor than for female. This serves as a disincentive for boys to continue in school. As Chevannes (1999) and Gayle (1996) clearly explained, the reality for many boys in working class communities is that quite often, success in the CXC examination does not guarantee employment.

Chevannes (2001:160) sums up the problem of male under-representation in the school system in the following narrative focused on a group of boys in early adolescence:

Why were they not in school? Four gave the standard explanation no lunch money, no clothes, one found school boring, another lied about being on holiday. Not surprisingly, of the six of them, four attend school sometimes, while the remaining two had not been in school since grade 2 and grade 3.

What about the sisters? One of the two with an uptown father smiled. He is about thirteen. My sister look like she like di book. Yeah man. She bright. The Bronx-father one put in: yeh, man. Girls love borin stuff. The one with both father and mother explains that when things get rough and they cannot afford to send both his sister and himself, they send her, for which he is glad. Sometimes me tell dem fi sen har cause she young. Me can read. He is eleven years old.

Can the Education System Become Gender Equitable?

According to Bailey (1996), what needs to be addressed in the educational arena is a breaking down of the iron curtain, which determines the pattern for the curriculum participation for both sexes. A level playing field needs to be created which allows both males and females open access to the range of curriculum options and therefore the freedom to choose career paths and professions based on inclination and aptitude. The right to exercise this choice is as important or even more important than

access to a place in school. An issue only hinted in the literature is that females find it more rewarding to sit male subjects than for boys to sit female subjects. Clearly then, the gender imbalance against females in the society backfires against the males in the education system. If there were equality for both males and females it would not be a problem for boys to select subjects of the humanities without sanction from peers and the society. The truth is that male subjects carry more value as they are designed to bring in the money.

The point is that the educational system in Jamaica needs to change urgently to become more responsive to the country's future needs. This means more technical areas must be included. If this were to be done the system would become more attractive to males. It must be noted however that girls would need to be given a chance to participate in these areas to stem the imbalance of female over-participation in low-paying academic areas. Anderson is correct that the training received in schools by males must be linked to the labor market. Were this to be done, however, says Chevannes (1999), it would only meet one albeit very important need in the construction of male identity: the provider role.

Open discrimination against males in the classroom in terms of physical and verbal

abuse must be stopped, and the continuous movement of boys towards sports rather than a balance of academics and physical activities must become unacceptable.

There need to be policies that ensure greater support for struggling parents, especially single mothers, to allow them to give their children a fair chance in school. The present school feeding program and other support is simply not enough.

The country needs an urgent propaganda campaign (as forceful as the National Family Planning Board's, Two is Better than Too Many slogan) that will strive to make people recognize that education is more than a means to an end; rather, it is also an end in itself. At the same time the government must find ways to provide more jobs that will draw on the education attained by the young people of Jamaica, otherwise education will lose its power as the key vehicle for upward social mobility.

Bailey's (1997) conclusion can be adopted here. It must be recognized that gender equity will not be achieved simply through educational reforms. Gender inequality is systemic and structural, and the search for the achievement of greater social equity for both boys and girls will only be fully realized when all other social institutions give attention to ways in which they contribute to these inequalities.

Male Survivability



Youth.now

CHAPTER 4

CRIME AND VIOLENCE

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We make life really terrible for some people and then blame them when they become dangerous.¹³

In Jamaica, violence not overall crime is a major problem. As shown by data from the UN Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of the Criminal Justice Systems, 2000, the per capita crime rate of Jamaica has been among the lowest in the Western hemisphere for the past two decades. In fact, data from the Statistics Unit, Jamaica Constabulary Force, tell that the crime rate has been stable (for instance it declined from 2, 220 to 2, 114 per 100, 000 between 1977 and 1994). The discomforting fact is that over the past three decades the structure of violence has changed. The main change has been a sharp shift in the ratio of property to violent crimes, in favor of the latter. In 1974, violent crimes accounted for only 10 percent of total crimes compared to property crimes which accounted for 78 percent. Two decades later (1996), violent crimes had increased to 43 percent of total crimes while property crimes had

decreased to 23 percent. According to Harriott (2000), the traditional pattern was distorted by the political war of 1976-1980. This distorted ratio has often been interpreted by people at home and abroad to mean that Jamaica is a high crime area. Jamaica ranks with the top 10 most violent countries in the world, and in fact in the top five in the Western Hemisphere. Data from the fairly recent UN Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems covering the years 1995-1997 show that Jamaica keeps company with crime-ridden South Africa with a 1997 violent crime rate of 60.1 per 100,000 persons and cocaine-trafficking Columbia with a rate of 57.9 for the same year. In 1997, when Jamaica had its second highest number of murders (second to 2001) its murder rate even competed with Albania, Europe's country in crisis, both with rates over 40. There is absolutely no country of Jamaica's small size with any comparable murder rates. Table 4.1 highlights the frightening reality. Notice that while Jamaican security forces have

¹³Statement made by Norval Morris, see Headley (1994).

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achieved a major reduction in the number of burglaries and robberies, the same cannot be said for murders, shootings, rapes and woundings.

Table 4.1
Total Number of Major Crimes Reported by Offence Type and Corresponding Year, for the Period 1995 to 2000

Offence Type	Year					
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Murder	780	925	1,038	953	849	887
Shootings	1,308	1,727	1,419	1,225	986	1,012
Rape	833	935	875	880	784	870
Burglary		1,380	1,030	744	453	
Robbery	4,424	4,494	3,464	2,985	2,392	2,331
Wounding		1,321	1,297	1,738	1,625	

Source: Statistics Unit, Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2001.

According to Riches (1986), when victims or witnesses invoke the notion of violence, they make a judgement not just that the action concerned causes physical hurt but also that it is illegitimate. Yet, even in the Western world physical hurt done to others counts as violence only in certain contexts. To illustrate this point, the state can execute grievous physical hurt to citizens, without it being recorded as

violence (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940). The fact that such physical force can be termed something other than violence implies that there is some idea of social order to which the notion of violence is inextricably juxtaposed.

In Jamaica, homicide by the state or justifiable homicide is without competition in the world. International human rights agencies began to highlight this Jamaican reality in the 1980s. There was in fact, reason for alarm. In 1984 when Jamaica had its highest number of justifiable homicides at 354, police accounted for over a quarter of them. Since the 1990s, there have been tremendous efforts to reduce police killings. Major changes came about with the appointment of a new commissioner of police, Colonel McMillan, who demanded that police killings be examined. Despite his efforts and those of his successor, Francis Forbes, Jamaica's justifiable homicide rate has been reduced only one-fifth of national rate; the country remains number one in the world in this regard. One of the reasons Jamaica's rank has not changed though is the recent success in South Africa (the major competitor in this regard) in reducing police killings. Table 4.2 below outlines the trend of police killings between 1983 and 2000.

TABLE 4.2
Number of Civilians Shot and Killed by Police,
1983 to 2000

Year	Number
1983	196
1984	354
1985	210
1986	178
1987	205
1988	181
1989	162
1990	148
1991	178
1992	145
1993	120
1994	125
1995	132
1996	148
1997	149
1998	145
1999	151
2000	140

Source: Statistics Unit, Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2001

In its various forms (political, economic, domestic and interpersonal), violence is on the brink of getting beyond the control of the Jamaican authorities. The government has begun to wake up to the reality that the situation cannot get much worse as the homicide statistics in Kingston easily compare with countries experiencing civil wars. The problem needs to be addressed as a crisis.

No other social concerns are as differentially distributed by age, gender, class and geographical location as are those of crime and violence. According to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973), phenomena have specific latitudes. Let us therefore locate the Jamaican violence problem.

- It is urban, centered in Kingston, but also includes communities on the edge of the suburbs.
- It occurs largely in extremely poor, densely populated communities that are separated and segregated from middle class ones.
- It is recent a post 1970 phenomenon.
- It is committed overwhelmingly by males against males.
- It is largely a phenomenon of youth.

An Urban Poverty Crisis

Anyone who has a working idea of the history of Jamaica would find it ridiculous if it were suggested that there was no such thing as rural violence. Undoubtedly there has been industrial unrest in the sugar belt areas in response to extremely harsh working conditions. There have also been occasional community floggings and rare, but nonetheless frightening, lynching of farm thieves from Kingston who prey on humble rural folk. However these incidents have been spontaneous and widespread and therefore cannot be compared to violence in Kingston. Violence in Jamaica

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today is therefore an urban crisis. It is true that the problem is often exaggerated by the media which is controlled and operated by uptown dwellers who are often either prejudiced or simply misinformed. Nonetheless there is much to fear about downtown or the inner city of the Kingston Metropolitan Area.

Table 4.3, which shows where the problem is located, tells a frightening story. According to the 1998 Crime Report (Statistical Department, Crime Office, 1999), about 82 percent of all homicides committed in the country in 1997 and 76 percent in 1998 occurred in Greater Kingston, which is the home of just over a third of the country's population. What is also interesting to note is that the overwhelming majority of the remaining 18 and 24 percent of homicides for those respective years was committed in the new urban centers. Notice that St. James has the highest rate of homicides outside of Greater Kingston. This is because it is the home of the second city, Montego Bay, where there are obvious slums. What is not explicit from the table is the fact that the divisions of Kingston Central, Kingston Eastern, Kingston Western and St. Andrew South cover a rather small area described by the social development commission as the industrial belt between six miles on the west and Rockfort on the east. This is a narrow strip of just over eight miles in length and less than two miles wide. The area is about 14 square miles with Kingston Public Hospital at its center. This is

the heart of the violent crime area and corresponds perfectly to the heart of the urban poverty map of the country. Notice that together these four divisions accounted for 54 percent of homicides in the country in 1997. What is also important is that this small area was home to approximately 220,000 people, or 8% of the population in 1991. It is clearly the most densely populated area of the country.

As Chevannes and Gayle (1998) found, some communities outside this area also face the grave problems of crime and violence despite their location. They bear the same inner city characteristics, though in varying degrees:

1. Dense population, with over 60 percent under the age of 30;
2. Unemployment rates of over 30 percent (twice the country's average);
3. Low education, with 50 percent not completing secondary school;
4. Poor housing, with over 40 percent in tenements, a third in one-bedroom dwellings, and the obvious presence of shacks or improvised dwellings;
5. Poor sanitation, with over 5 percent without flush toilets or water closets, more than a third without piped water, and with skips overflowing and garbage on the streets and in gullies;

6. Poor infrastructure, in the form of poor or no telephone service, poorly serviced roads and pathways, few, if any, active institutions except political ones.

TABLE 4.3
Number of Murders Reported Islandwide, By
Administrative Division, 1 January to 27 September 1997
compared to 1 January to 27 September 1998

Administrative Division	1997		1998	
	Reported	Percent	Report	Percent
Kingston Central	44	6%	48	7%
Kingston Eastern	58	8%	76	11%
Kingston Western	135	18%	65	9%
St. Andrew Central	47	6%	59	9%
St. Andrew North	66	11%	73	11%
St. Andrew South	164	22%	100	14%
St. Catherine North	72	9%	60	9%
St. Catherine South	38	5%	47	7%
SUB-TOTAL METRO	624	82%	528	76%
St. James	28	4%	28	4%
Trelawny	5	1%	8	1%
Westmoreland	8	1%	20	3%
Hanover	9	1%	6	1%
St. Mary	12	2%	9	1%
St. Ann	12	2%	26	4%
Portland	11	1%	9	1%
Manchester	13	2%	10	1%
Clarendon	18	2%	17	2%
St. Elizabeth	10	1%	7	1%
St. Thomas	12	2%	23	3%
SUB-TOTAL RURAL	138	18%	163	24%
GRAND TOTAL	726	100%	691	100%

Source: Statistical Department, Crime Office, Jamaica, 1999.

Roots of the Recent Male Youth Violence Crisis

Up to the late 1970s, Kingston was a safe city that people were proud to call home. In the year of the 1980 general elections, over 800 people were killed. It is thought that many of Kingston's youth had been called upon to act as mercenaries during this period. (Gunst, 1999) There was evidence that drugs were being used by a number of the youth who carried out the brutal killings of 1980. How else can one explain the burning of the Eventide Home in which 153 elderly poor perished? (Chevannes 1999) People began to look beyond the cocaine and political warfare theories in the 1990s when the number of murders exceeded 900 without an election and without evidence of drugs as the major factor. As expressed by the Jamaican public, those born in the city after the 1970s don't seem to know how it feel to live in peace (Chevannes 1999).

Chevannes (1999:19) outlined the problem in his Grace Kennedy Foundation lecture:

The worry is that a new and different kind of human being has been bred and let loose upon the society, whom we do not know, whose actions are consciously different. Almost as worrying as the atrocities themselves is the fact that increasingly they no longer chill. People have grown numb, the once-too-often victims of shock. There are no more tears.

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Over 10,000 Jamaicans have been deported from abroad mainly for criminal offenses since 1995 (Statistics Unit, Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2001). Many believe that their presence has helped to exacerbate the violence in Jamaica in recent years. It is argued that the greatest problem lies in the fact that a number of those deported were not born in Jamaica though they were of Jamaican parentage. They find it extremely difficult to adjust and manifest migration frustration. What is even more critical is that they also teach those born in Jamaica aspects of the trade of crime and violence never experienced in the country before.

Males against Males

Table 4.4 reveals that women are not immune to violence. By any standard, 826 cases of reported rape is an extremely high figure especially in a society that is so matrifocal. There is also a high rate of physical abuse of women, and not to make mention of this would be unpardonable. Data from the Jamaica injury surveillance system tell us that about a third of all injuries inflicted on females are done by their spouses. The good news though is that adolescent males are increasingly becoming aware that the practice of abusing females is not normal. We will return to this subject later.

TABLE 4.4
Arrest for Major Crimes, by Age and Type, for 1996 and 1997

Age	Murder		Robbery		Rape		Shooting	
	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997
<16	8(2.0)	8(1.6)	68(2.9)	30(2.2)	51(6.2)	19(2.9)	11(1.3)	6(0.8)
16-20	77(20.2)	111(22.5)	430(18.2)	267(19.7)	140(16.9)	79(11.9)	238(27.1)	195(29.6)
21-25	143(37.4)	141(29.1)	860(36.5)	416(30.7)	210(25.4)	165(24.8)	326(37.2)	260(36.8)
26-30	76(19.9)	125(25.3)	710(30.1)	338(24.9)	180(21.8)	144(21.7)	132(15.1)	145(20.5)
31>	78(20.5)	109(21.5)	290(12.3)	306(22.5)	228(29.7)	358(38.7)	170(19.3)	101(12.3)
TOTAL	382(100.0)	494(100.0)	2358(100.0)	1357(100.0)	826(100.0)	665(100.0)	877(100.0)	707(100.0)

Source: Statistical Department, Crime Office, Jamaica. 1998.

The glaring fact nonetheless is that the violence carried out by young males in the Kingston Metropolitan Area is overwhelmingly against other male youth. For example, in 1996, 920 persons were murdered. Of this number 88 were women and 16 were children. The majority, 816 or 89 percent were men, and three-quarters were below the age of 30.

This does not include those killed by the police the so-called justifiable homicides. It is not surprising therefore that the 1998 World Development Report informed us that 4 percent of the Jamaican population has no hope of living to see the age of 40. It is safe to assume that this group is mainly comprised of the youth of the inner cities of Greater Kingston. Clearly this must be the reason Laurie Gunst (1999) entitled her work on the Jamaican posses *Born Fi Dead*. The great contradiction of it all is the fact that Jamaica boasts one of the highest life expectancies in the developing world. Women have a life expectancy of 78 years and men 72. It is sad to hear people in the troubled communities speak bluntly that they pray to God asking Him not to give them boys, as they could not guarantee a boy's survival. This is the sad reality many inner city youth have come to accept that death sometimes comes even before life. When life is not worth one shit there is not much sense in fearing death in the search to make it worth something (Gayle, in press).

According to the Jamaica Injury Surveillance System: Injury Report 2001

(Ministry of Health 2001), the frequency of violence-related injuries in Jamaica is quite worrying. Some 6,380 cases were seen at the Accident and Emergency Departments at the Kingston Public, Cornwall Regional and May Pen hospitals in the short period of December 1999 to May 2000. Two-thirds of the victims were males. Males accounted for 82 percent of all admissions for violence-related injuries during the period. The data clearly support public knowledge that violence against males is perpetrated by other males. There were relatively few cases where women inflicted injuries on males. In fact, only 4 percent of male violence-related injuries came from their spouses. A total of 70 percent of all injuries inflicted by acquaintances was inflicted on males, as were 82 percent of all injuries inflicted by strangers.

Table 4.5 tells us that 88 percent of admissions to the three main penal institutions in the year 2000 were males. In fact, the proportion of males to females arrested overall is even higher. Men dominate penal institutions though this is not peculiar to Jamaica. The figure for New York is over 90 percent overall. Not only do men commit more violent crimes than females, but their punishments are usually more severe than those meted out to women for similar crimes. In 1996 a significant 3.4 percent of all males convicted received sentences from 10 years to life imprisonment to the death penalty compared to none for females, despite the fact that a few women committed crimes of

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comparable magnitude. The fact is that the system of law finds it extremely difficult to give women full sentences, especially death sentences, due to the fact that women very rarely commit murder, and when they do take the life of another, it is in self-defense or in moments of passion. The year 2000 has been considered a rare case year in that a woman was given the death sentence and three others were sentenced to ten years each. At the same time over 135 men received sentences of over ten years, including 53 to life, four indefinite and 13 death.

Adolescent Victims and Perpetrators

If we examine the data in Table 4.4 we will realize that it is the youth who kill. Notice that in 1996 and 1997 over three-quarters (79.5 and 78.5 percent respectively) of the arrests for murder were of persons under the age of 30. Note also the fact that a fifth of all of these categories of crime are committed by persons 20 years and younger. The same can be said for other violent crimes such as shootings and robberies. Only as it applies to rape do we see men over age 30 significantly involved. Table 4.7 shows us that the situation is not changing for the better. What is alarming is that the vast majority of violent crimes committed by male youth are against other adolescents. The Jamaica Injury Surveillance System Injury Report and other data from the Division of Health Promotion

and Protection inform us that adolescents are victims of one of five violence-related injuries. Consequently, for the past few years homicides have been the leading cause of deaths in adolescents in Jamaica.

TABLE 4.5
Numbers of Males and Females in Prison for Various Sentence Lengths: 2000.

Length of Sentence by Institution and Sex, January to December, 2000			
Length of Sentence	St. CACC & TSACC Males	F.A.A.C.C Females	Grand Total
Less than 1 month	14	2	18
1-3 months	393	47	440
4-6 months	343	88	431
7-9 months	127	23	150
10-12 months	224	37	261
13 -24 months	334	50	384
25 months - 3 yrs	97	4	101
37 months -10 yrs.	242	8	250
10 Years	62	3	65
Life	53		53
Death	13	1	14
G.G. s Pleasure	3		2
Indefinite	4		4
TOTALS	1909	263	2171

Source: Statistics Unit, Jamaica Constabulary Force. 2000.
St. CACC St. Catherine Adult Correctional Centre
TSACC Tower Street Adult Correctional Centre
FAACC Forte Augusta Adult Correctional Centre
G.G. Governor General (head of state)

Of grave concern is the early age at which adolescent males get involved in major violent crimes. The data scream at us that

there is indeed a male dilemma in terms of violence. Notice that more than a half of crimes committed by juvenile males are in the major category, compared to less than one fifth (18.7%) for female juveniles. Other figures of interest are highlighted.

TABLE 4.6
Reasons for which Male and Female Juveniles
(under age 17) Appeared before the Courts: 2000

Major Offences	Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Murder	9	0.7	0	0
Robbery with Aggravation	9	0.7	1	0.1
Rape	5	0.4	NA	NA
Carnal Abuse	20	1.7	0	0
Larceny	109	9.5	17	2.4
Breaking/Enter/ Larceny	24	2.1	6	0.8
Indecent Assault	36	3.1	2	0.3
Unlawful possession	6	0.5	0	0
Wounding	150	13.0	55	7.7
Assault	36	3.1	3	0.4
Assault of Bodily Harm	60	5.2	28	3.9
Dangerous Drugs	95	8.2	7	0.9
Malicious Destr. of Property	23	1.9	11	1.5
Other Major Offences	24	2.1	5	0.7
Total Major Offences	606	52.2	135	18.7
Total Minor Offences	546	47.8	583	81.3
GRAND TOTAL	1,152	100.0	718	100.0

Source: Statistical Department of the Crime Office. 2000.

TABLE 4.7
Total Number of Teenagers (Ages 12-19) Arrested for
Major Crimes in Jamaica: 1992 to 1999

Years	Murder	Shooting	Rape/ Carnal Abuse	Robbery	Total
1992	21	101	79	337	538
1993	42	105	86	380	613
1994	57	130	74	387	648
1995	100	198	120	428	846
1996	85	249	191	498	1,023
1997	119	201	98	297	715
1998	100	225	132	385	842
1999	106	140	167	274	687
Total	630	1,349	947	2,986	5,912

Source: Statistical Department of the Crime Office

Causes of Male Youth Violence

A number of explanations have been advanced to explain why violence exists and more so why it is a male phenomenon disproportionately perpetrated by the young. A significant number of studies has been done in the area of male violence in Jamaica. In fact this is the most studied aspect of the Jamaican male. We will begin with cultural-psychological explanations, then shift to historical construction, then to sociological and finally to economic reasons.

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Aggression

According to Fernald and Meeks-Gardener (1997), boys may be at greater risk for aggressive behavior because they are more likely to be temperamentally difficult, to have problems with adaptive behavior (Prior et al, 1992) and are the perpetrators and victims of aggressive behavior. Studies (Matteson, 1980; Kreuz and Rose, 1972 included) seem to be inconclusive as to whether male biological differences account significantly for their tendencies toward violence. They show no strong correlation between testosterone and aggression (Schaal, 1996). It seems therefore that while there is an argument for genetic factors, factors such as socialization and environment seem to be more important in explaining why males behave more violently than females. Fromm (1973) spoke of reactive aggression or malignant aggression in humans, especially males, due to problems inherent in the construction of Western societies. Men are likely to be aggressive due to the impact of loneliness, separateness, alienation, anomie and powerlessness. Socialized less to relate to these Western constructs and to rely on the support network of the family, males can become quite aggressive in response to these existential conflicts.

Identity Formation: Mirroring, Identity Negotiation and Internalised Oppression

According to Erickson, no other time in one's life is it as important to define oneself vis-a-vis the society at large as in adolescence. It seems that one of the greatest developmental tasks of this stage is to forge a sense of identity. Suarez-Orozco spoke of how difficult this identity negotiation becomes for segregated or displaced youth. When there is too much cultural dissonance, negative social mirroring and role confusion, an adolescent will find it hard to develop a sense of self. Even when the parents provide positive mirroring, it is often not enough to compensate for the distorted reflections they receive daily in the media, the classroom and the street. McDougall (1993) found that in black Baltimore the media was one of the most destructive mirrors. He writes (p.4), the newspaper and the T.V. give us a lot of negative attention, but they're not interested when anything positive happens.

Let us examine Suarez-Orozco's discussion as it applies to inner city youth in Jamaica. Adolescents face immense stereotyping in Jamaica. As discussed earlier, those of the inner city are so stigmatized they are not employed in jobs of quality, even if they qualify. They are feared and sentenced as untrustworthy and dangerous, without proof. They are segregated and treated as outcasts in their country of birth. It was a shock five years ago, during the urban

poverty and violence study to discover that there were youth who lived in Kingston who had never been uptown (see Chevannes and Levy, 1996). How do these charged attitudes and rampant hostilities affect the youth? According to cultural psychologists, a youth can resist or withstand the pressures, but the most frequent response is internalization. He or she responds with self-doubt and shame and agrees with the low standard of behavior or achievement set by the sources of his or her mirrors or he or she sets poor standards for him or herself. Quite often inner city male adolescents respond violently to show that they are really bad, a quality often esteemed in their environment. For them the consequence of internalized oppression is often worse.

The impact of the media on the male youth is exacerbated by the low expectation of some teachers who set one standard for girls and a lower one for boys in terms of behavior and academic performance. The observation of Odette Parry in her 1996 research in Jamaican schools was that masculinity for adolescent boys is a drama enacted, a mask of the real teenager whose life is filled with fear, stress and strain to measure up to the expectations set by peers, older men and the society at large. Obviously then stereotypes do not help these boys.

Young, a British criminologist (1976), drew on the same social psychology construct to explain why some drug takers never returned to normal life. He explains that

often they succumbed to the prevailing stereotypes and failed to construct the counter-definitions for themselves without which they could not heal. Young also raised the issue of recruitment for drug gangs or into drug use. If stereotypes become extreme in the public, a person of a particular set of circumstances might automatically be recruited into a particular behavior group, as this is where he is expected to go. The argument therefore is that if a youth is expected to be aggressive he may become aggressive as both directly and indirectly the mirrors of society and his peers put pressure on him to internalize this expected behavior. There has to be strong motivation therefore for him to be different to develop counter images of himself.

A Historical Perspective: Construction of Male Violence

Scholars such as Beckford (1999), Alleyne (1996), Patterson (1967) and Smith (1965) argue strongly for a historical perspective to be included in any explanation of social problems in Jamaica today. Violence was the main mode of control on the plantation during slavery, and, not surprisingly, Afro-Jamaicans responded by revolting against the planter authority. Hence the national heroes of Jamaica were resisters. After emancipation in 1838, the British planter class relied heavily on their well-constructed political network to maintain control. The governor, the assembly, the governor's council, and the local militia all served the dual purpose of protecting the

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planters and controlling the freed Afro-Jamaicans. For more than a century 1838 to universal adult suffrage in 1944 this group of freed people had no representation and was abused in a variety of ways, including the use of physical violence by the planter class. This was a century of unrest as the Afro-Jamaicans resisted harsh treatment. Two major uprisings occurred during the period. Paul Bogle led the first in 1865. The freed men took up arms to compel the planter class to listen to their plight. Despite the success of this revolt, it gave the planter class reason to construct a paramilitary police force designed to violently restrict the masses while protecting the propertied class. Paradoxically, this militant band of street executioners comprised of Afro-Jamaicans used to crush their own people. Any form of open protest could be met with instant death, especially if it threatened the life of the planters. This legacy still haunts the Jamaica Constabulary Force as they are largely seen as the oppressive agents of the ruling class. It is therefore no surprise that the Jamaican police bear the traditional name of Babylon. In 1938 when the second uprising occurred, the level of violence used by the state against disadvantaged sugar workers was phenomenal.

In accounting for the violence in some developing countries Fanon (1963:29) stated the following:

The police and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their

frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge... The agents of the government speak with pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native.

The actions of government agents of force have clearly served the purpose of reinforcing the pain of the colonial history of Jamaica. It is fair to say that they have led the natives to think that society was meant to be violent; that it was an effective way to achieve social goals or to effect control. This becomes very clear when you examine any of the many informal systems of justice formed in the inner city of Jamaica. I have been told repeatedly by inner city youth that the violence carried out in these community systems is learned from society (Levy, Gayle and Stultz 2001). In Jamaica, laws have been largely followed out of fear of the power of the ruling class rather than from commitment. The poor maintain that very little or not enough has changed in terms of their human rights since the British left in 1962. They argue strongly that the police and soldiers still teach the same lesson that violence is power.

Let us be frank: violence is central to the construction of Jamaica. Violence has been used effectively against the masses for centuries, and they have learnt how to respond in like manner. Today, violence remains a means of expressing frustration, of dealing with disagreement and of achieving economic and social gains. As is clear in the work of Levy, Gayle and Stultz (2001), male violence is often a political issue, not in the sense of party tribalism but as an expression of frustration at the powerlessness of the black male created in slavery and maintained in the present class structure.

There is no doubt that the social structure of Jamaica fosters violence. It embodies, sharp class differences; an almost ineffective and partial system of law; intensely concentrated poverty; a major gap between material goals and the legal means to achieve them; the socialization of males to be tough and to resist authority. When these factors are analyzed we recognize that the means of expression and achievement open to the poor urban youth are extremely limited when compared to their uptown counterparts. Poor male youth are therefore easily drawn into political warfare as consciously and unconsciously they seek to change the socio-political structure. Political power is not, however, an end in itself though some level of political power is seen as necessary to achieve upward social mobility.

Socialization: Gender Division and Social Capital

Chevannes (2001,1999, 1996), Brown and Chevannes (1998) and Boxill (1994), among other scholars, argue that there is a problem in the socialization process of the Jamaican male that accounts for his violent behavior. Chevannes (1999), Evans (1999) and Figueroa and Handa (1996) point to the low educational achievement of men due to poor socialization and the lack of family investment and support for them. According to Chevannes (1999), male criminal, educational and sexual problems in Jamaica are linked together as vital elements in the social construction of masculine identity. For many men, meeting the demands of a male identity (to be tough, to survive, to be a protector and provider) is a far greater moral imperative than the virtues of honesty, respect for property or respect for life.

Drawing on publications from the Gender Socialization Project, the following is a summary of key issues that have a bearing on the violent behavior of working class boys.

1. The socialization process of boys is aimed at making them tough. This is evident in the division of labor and the severity of physical punishment meted out to boys. Boys generally receive heavier punishment, both from mothers and fathers. The most common form of discipline is beating with the hand or with an

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instrument such as a belt or stick. This harsher treatment is defended as toughening boys, as part of their need to be able to survive in the rough outside world . (Brown and Chevannes 1998: 30)

2. Boys suffer greater deprivation where there is a scarcity of resources. When parents cannot afford to send both to school, the girl attends and the boy does not. He learns instead to survive and in some cases helps to provide for his school-attending sister(s).
3. From very early on a boy learns the value of money. This is how he makes life and gains the respect and attention of women. To do otherwise is to be considered worthless . It is not surprising therefore that meeting the demands of a male identity is so important to him.
4. While the girl is sheltered, the street is the boy's domain: The bull is loose so tie your heifer. Running free in this unsupervised manner, the boy develops the risk-taking experiences necessary for crime. Often his peers become more important as socializing and controlling agents than his parents. Parents call such peer influence bad company. With the respect of his peers now so important, a gun becomes equally important in the inner city not for the sole purpose of

crime, as some persons assume, but equally for the guarantee of respect (Chevannes 1999).

We cannot over-emphasize the difference between raising a boy and a girl in the Jamaican inner city setting. Here, If boys do not drop out of school to earn for themselves or their families, they often leave school with few skills that can be turned to ready profit. By any means necessary for some becomes an alternative strategy and on the street, instructions for these skills are readily available (Brown and Chevannes 1998: 31).

The Caribbean region has seen immense shifts in gender relations. In Jamaica, women are more educated and better trained than men, often because poor families (particularly single mothers) rely on school-age boys for economic support. Many poorly trained working class men are frustrated. At the core of these troubles is the exploding of the myth of the male breadwinner, the persistence of unemployment and the feminization of some aspects of manufacturing and of certain jobs in the Caribbean region. (Lewis 1996: 11-12). The dilemma stems from the fact that despite the shift the man is still expected to be the breadwinner. This is clearly borne out in the recent Gender Socialization Project. Our boys have to face this dilemma as they grow up.

In most settings in Jamaica, a child is socialized by a network of social agencies

including the community. In the inner city, parents feel increasingly helpless against external factors as they relate to raising a boy. Moser and Holland (1997) found out that inner cities often lack the social capital necessary to create an environment for effective child rearing. Social capital includes the skills and knowledge, health, self esteem and social networks of communities . (Seymour 2000: 6) Seymour argued that strong social capital leads to lower crime; unfortunately, it is those with the fewest resources who are least able to tap it.

While the lack of social capital contributes to violence, violence in turn erodes existing social capital and spirals into further violence. Violence erodes social relationships, not only through death but also by restricting physical mobility and by increasing tension. Communities in which people care for each other and raise each other's children are forced to change when there is an outbreak of violence. Even living arrangements change during periods of violence, which results in immense frustration and anger (Moser and Holland 1997). Boys are drawn into community warfare as they are told explicitly that they are the protectors of their community; to be otherwise is to be other than male.

It is important to note that it is possible for communities to have strong social networks despite poverty. This is a possible

explanation for a significant number of inner city communities that have relatively low levels of violence. Data from Levy et al (2001) seem to confirm an observation made by Chevannes and Gayle (1998) that some communities possess very strong leadership and are united in the upbringing of their youth. Levy et al (2001) found that for these reasons a few districts of the Greater August Town area were not as involved as the other sections in the community war that persisted between 1993 and 1998. It is important to note here that the people of the districts that were not involved were not in a better economic position than those of the areas that were at war. The fact is they possessed social unity that had helped to cushion the effects of urban poverty and held their families together through the period of turmoil. In sum, where there exists no alternative and the socializing agents reinforce violence as a part of male identity, youth will be violent.

The Yard versus the Street

The yard¹⁴ is the only place where mothers are able to control the socialization of the children. Not only because they have them within sight or earshot, but also because of the sense of responsibility which other adults in the yard exercise towards younger children. As Erna Brodber (1975) noted, it is an important social space for settling interpersonal and other problems among women. People who are unable to get

¹⁴The yard is a Jamaican term used to refer to the confines of the home but can supercede the concept of home to be the space within the boundaries of a separated or fenced area in which families reside. In tenement situations in urban Jamaica several families can be situated in one yard. This is often a source of conflict.

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along with others in the same circumstances and surroundings are considered selfish.

What then does the street represent? By street it is meant all that space outside the confines of the yard. It is a somewhat residual category ... From the viewpoint of the yard it refers also to the shops, bars and street corners. Compared to the tidiness and pride in the yard, the street strikes a stark contrast: potholes everywhere, uncollected garbage and sometimes a broken sewage main overflowing through a manhole (Chevannes 2001: 169-173).

Chevannes got it correct when he established that there is a struggle between the yard and the street to socialize children. The critical issue here though is the fact that the yard is the central area of socialization for the girl, while the street is the central area of socialization for the boys in working class communities. It must be said here (as will be discussed further in the next chapter) that boys in the suburban communities are at a major advantage as the street is less powerful there than in the inner cities. The street as a force in the socialization of males is particularly strong in poor areas, in households headed by single mothers and where the social capital is weak.

Di good tings wha mi learn mi learn dem a mi yaad, not the street. This implies that the street is more of a bad socializing agency than good. It is the young men who control the street, regulate its flow of life, make it safe for some, unsafe for others, engulf the

prepubescent male, only to release him a pubescent boy fully socialized into values, predispositions and behaviour that leave many parents, the mothers especially, at a loss as to what to do to counteract them (Chevannes 2001: 173-174).

Unstable Homes

Using a sample of 140 institutionalized Jamaican male adolescents, Crawford-Brown (1997) studied conduct disorder. This she defined, drawing on McMahon and Wells (1991), as a pathological state within which delinquent acts take place. One important variable in the development of conduct disorder in the young is child-rearing practices. These are evident in such things as conflict in the home and harsh disciplinary actions.

Structural factors such as separation of parents, separation from parents, and single-parent household; and functional factors such as degree of parental discord, presence of positive parental role model(s), and the consistency and severity of discipline all may contribute to conduct disorder in childhood. Specific biological variables as well as group variables are also implicated in the development of conduct disorder (Crawford-Brown 1997: 207).

The statistical analysis pointed to a number of specific structural and functional family factors associated with the presence of conduct disorder. The structural family variables that showed significant relationships to the presence of conduct

disorder were: absence of mother, little or lack of contact with mother, and changes in living arrangements. The functional family variable that proved to be most significant and that showed a moderate degree of association with the presence of conduct disorder was the presence of negative parental role models. One could argue that the problems relating to family functioning (e.g., the presence of negative parental role models) may also have led to other problems relating to family structure, such as frequent changes in the youth's living arrangements. (page 214)

The findings suggest that the absence of the mother was related to the presence of conduct disorder. However, the presence of the father seemed to be of little significance in affecting conduct disorder. Even though the presence of the father seems to be an insignificant variable, when paired with the presence of the mother and joint parental contact with the child, it becomes a significant variable in influencing conduct disorder. The absence of the mother has increasingly become an issue in Jamaica. It arises from the sad reality that many mothers have had to migrate in search of jobs, leaving their children to be raised by the extended family or sometimes close friends. This is especially so in situations where the father does not support the child.

The presence of a negative parental role model can be an important factor in the development of a conduct disorder; this view is supported by social learning theory

on delinquent behavior (Bandura and Walters, 1959). In that study, it was evident that 76.7% of respondents with conduct disorders were exposed to negative role models while only 23.3% of those without negative role models had conduct disorders. Fathers comprised 70% of the group of negative role models, which suggests that the relationship that children have with their fathers does influence conduct disorder.

Crawford-Brown (1997) cited Brodber 1972 as stating that there is a tendency to give troubled children over to the care of the state. This prompted the author to test if there is a relationship between the presence of conduct disorder and the stability of the parental home. Eighty percent of children in the study group were living without parents prior to being institutionalized compared to 20% in the comparison group. The data showed that 91.7% of the children comprising the study group had two to six changes in their parental living arrangements. The frequent changes in living arrangements may have affected the quality of relationships children formed with parents (page 217). Crawford-Brown cites Bynum and Thompson (1992) among others as having established a link between conduct disorder and insecure attachment of children with the significant others, usually their parents, in the socialization process.

Conduct disorder is prompted by biological factors that determine temperament and is affected by the family and by other agents

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of socialization such as the peer group and the school. It appears that the absence of a stable maternal figure, inadequate contact between mother and child, poor parental role models and instability in living arrangements seem to contribute to the presence and severity of conduct disorder (Crawford-Brown, 1999). The presence of a father, while not as critical as that of mother, should not be ignored. If he lives in harmony with the mother this is absolutely positive in the growth of the child. On the other hand, if his main function in the home is one of creating conflict, he serves a better purpose by being physically absent. The presence of the father has been a topical issue for some time in the discussion of violence and conduct disorder.

Reverend Ernie Gordon (2001) stated, The male role model is absent from the family culture in Jamaica and we are paying for this because the socialization process is either absent or weak. Drawing on studies done at the University of the West Indies, he pointed out that as early as the 1970s Jamaica had some 92,000 young people left to look after themselves while their fathers had migrated to other countries in order to fulfill their primary role of economic provider. Using the work of George Beckford and Orlando Patterson, Reverend Gordon highlighted that this pattern of paternal absence was designed by the planters, but needs to be dealt with now.¹⁵

Jail as a New Home

One of the most glaring weaknesses of Jamaican society is the seeming inability to take care of and protect children according to the most basic international, regional or national standards. In the case of our so-called normal child population, we are adept at abusing them, and then we provide few workable systems for either healing or redress. One of the manifestations of institutional abuse is the fact that several of our children each year are interned in jails because of a shortage of childcare facilities (Crawford-Brown 1999).

In a country where a third of the population is comprised of children below age 12, why should jails be sometimes used to temporarily hold children because places of safety are full? Crawford-Brown reminded us of the degree of abuse children suffer in these lock-ups, including an 11-year-old girl raped in a police station while awaiting a transfer to a place of safety. And what of the boys who learn better ways of using violence as a tool of survival in jails? There is absolutely no time to waste. The calls for better child protection systems in Jamaica need to be heeded now.

The Media

¹⁵See the Daily Observer, April 25, 2001, page 7.

¹⁶Reverend Gordon, *ibid*.

Violence pervades every section of the media to the point where even the cartoons are not exempt. ¹⁶ (Reverend Gordon *ibid*)

The force of the electronic and print media cannot be ignored in our discussion of factors contributing to violent behavior in our youth. Crawford-Brown (1999) expressed frankly that the media should take a positive role in sensitizing youth about violence without breaking codes of ethics set to protect our children. The radio and television should also take greater responsibility for the programs aired. While controls on cable are more problematic, at least local programs on cables should be monitored to protect children from viewing unnecessary extremes of sex and violence. There has been much concern about the lyrics of Jamaican dancehall Reggae and Rap from North America. There is no clear policy to sanction those songs that explicitly promote violence. The harsh reality is that often songs that do not receive airplay due to unsuitable lyrics often out-sell many that are considered uplifting. It is therefore a difficult task to control the music industry in Jamaica.

The Don

We cannot help but make special mention of the don as an agent of socialization separate from parents, school, church and community. In Jamaica, the don is an institution. The benefactors of organized violence are the dons and the shotta and sprats that they use as press-triggers to shoot, maim and kill the community's

youth. It is naïve to view dons as a bunch of criminals who go in search of the sons of the innocent. Quite often the dons represent both good and bad in their communities. In essence they are often quite attractive to both male and female youth. As Harriott (2000: 23) put it, The drug dons often enjoy high status and are seen as models of successful adaptation to today's urban realities. Dons do not only use coercive power to recruit youth into crime; they often use charm. It is not uncommon to find dons who reward hard work, innovation and honesty, traits that they themselves do not display. The same don who gives the order for an informer to be killed quite often is the builder of the basic school or the founder of the homework center and the lunch money project. He is the charmer and the killer. Harriott (2000:23) described the don as both criminal and police, victimizer and provider, aggressor and defender, political terrorist and crusading general. He is able to charm the weak and to scare the wanna be brave. In the absence of strong social capital, he becomes the owner of the community the dad and obedience to him becomes an expectation. The sons of the community are attracted to climb the ladder of power from little sprats to hardened second-class criminals or shottas with the aim to become dons themselves. It is common to find sprats and shottas killing each other as well as those who oppose their dads, creating mayhem in once quiet communities.

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The evidence of the don as a forceful agent of socialization is well documented. The Gender Socialization Project (see also Chevannes 2001) from as early as 1994 in preliminary papers made the point of dons carefully selecting the brightest of high school dropouts for work in the drug industry. Crawford-Brown (1999:83), in her popular work *Who will Save the Children?* described the dons as one of the new agents of socialization. She related the story of a fourteen-year-old boy who was recruited by a don and who was forced to watch the rape of a young teenaged girl as part of his toughening-up experience. She further documented how a mother was stopped by a don from disciplining her son because according to the don, No maada, we have im in training, you no deal wid im , leave dat to we.

The Economics of Violence

Much of human action seems to be driven by economic motives, beginning with survival. It would seem that man will manipulate whatever means are made available within the material and knowledge reservoir of a society in order to survive. Central to the construction of the Jamaican society is the matter of social and economic survival. Violence has been learned as an effective means of achieving power and economic gain. There is no evidence to show that Jamaicans are peculiar in terms of violence. Inner city people seem to act differently because their socio-economic conditions are different.

The fact that many inner city people relocate to peaceful middle-income communities and are never recognized is proof enough.

Drawing on Durkheim and Marx, Merton (1968) produced an extensive discussion of social deviance in which Western societies are presented as materialistic with particular success goals but without the legal means for all to achieve them. This leaves the excluded individuals or groups to respond in one of five ways, four of which are deviant. They may conform and seek to achieve these goals by normative means, though with no guarantee of success. Merton discussed the four ways in which individuals or groups may deviate as follows.

1. *Innovation*. This is an attempt to achieve material goals by any means possible. This is most likely to be selected by persons of the lowest stratum who are least likely to succeed otherwise due to problems in their socialization.
2. *Ritualism*. This is especially the response of lower middle class persons who are so socialized that they find it easier to attenuate their goals than to attempt to innovate or to use illegal means to achieve them.
3. *Retreatism*. This is the response of persons who retreat from society out of the frustration that comes with recognizing that they do not have

the means to achieve their material goals. This group includes outcasts, drug addicts and drunkards and those who do the ultimate, i.e., commit suicide.

4. *Rebellion*. This is the response of those who no longer live by the rules of society or aspire to the goals it sets.

Criminologists have paid most attention to the deviant responses of innovation and rebellion as these imply violence. More eloquently than other scholars, Marx outlined how ownership and power have an impact on the behavior of and relationship among people in a given social setting. Marx not only addressed the issue of relations of production but more importantly, the matter of who constructs the law, who breaks the law and who gets caught. The frustration of the powerless and their response to this feeling are the important issues here. This is the aspect that Merton and other scholars highlight, namely that the dispossessed will express their frustration in a variety of ways that threaten the stability of society.

Seen in these terms, some Jamaicans are extremely innovative. Probably the most important issue here concerns the illegal drug trade which developed in Jamaica in the 1980s and emerged into an enormous

economic effort. A number of scholars, including Harriott (2000), Gunst (1999), Holland et al (1999), Chevannes and Levy (1996) Khan-Melnyk (1994), and Stone (1992, 1991) make a strong connection between the drug trade in the Caribbean (linked with that of South America) and the importation and use of guns and other weapons by young men to harm or kill each other. They also found that there was a relationship between drug-related violence and political violence in Jamaica. While the latter has been declining, the former seems to be escalating. The connection seems to be that many of the young men who were recruited by political parties in the 1980s have now entered the drug trade and have done so either under the guise of politics or within the old political network. Hence it has been found that some acts of violence have both political and economic motives.

There is no need to apologize for agreeing with Headley's (1994) Mertonian functionalist perspective that violence is a means of economic survival. Headley was convinced that persons are often killed because they stand in the way of young men attempting to achieve an economic goal. Urban violence, therefore, seems to have a strong economic motive. Chevannes (1999, 1996), Chevannes and Levy (1996), Moser and Holland (1997),

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Gayle (1996) and Headley (1994) all speak of the immense pressure placed on young males to provide for the family and the implications of this for economic-related crimes. They are often expected to earn an income at any cost.



Youth.now

CHAPTER 5

PATTERNS OF SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN JAMAICA

Male Survivability

The existence of social and public health problems from drugs in Jamaica is nothing new. It is associated from the whole range of drugs, legal or illegal, which are liable to use (Narcotics Awareness Project Report, 1988). Substance abuse has been a significant problem in the last three decades in Jamaica with cannabis use becoming more of a constant danger in the 1960 s and 1970 s and cocaine use in the 1980 s. Jamaica is presently recognized as a world-renowned supplier and user of potent grades of cannabis. Where cocaine is concerned, since the 1990 s, Jamaica has become a major transshipment as well as a major user territory (Douglas 2000).

Documented studies on adolescent substance abuse in Jamaica go back to the

1960s. The work of Professor Michael Beaubrun in the late 1960s was one of the first to document alcohol use. What is important about this study is its focus. It was titled, *Alcoholism and Drinking Practices in a Jamaican Suburb*. Most studies since have examined substance abuse among working class groups. Of importance were his findings that the earlier one begins, the greater the likelihood of becoming a heavy drinker, and that males were allowed to begin drinking from an earlier age.

In 1975, Rubin and Comitas in their medical anthropological study showed that the smoking of cannabis (ganja) was a rite de passage especially for working class boys. Through this act they signaled to parents and peers that they were maturing. Grizzle and Rose (1976) were among the first to discuss the use of tobacco, cannabis and alcohol. The study however was focused on students in tertiary institutions and hence only included persons in the late teen years. It clearly bore out, however, that the problem of substance abuse was greater for males than for females.

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Chevannes and White (1981) in their report *Drug Abuse Among Youths* related usage patterns to socio-cultural, historical and economic factors. They concluded that the use of cannabis and alcohol was part of the tradition of the working class though they acknowledged that the problem also existed among the youth of affluent communities. Chevannes and White also found that availability and a variety of social pressures were responsible for drinking problems among youth. The problem of cocaine never emerged in the research findings of the 1970s. The work of Chung et al (1985), despite methodological weaknesses, was among the first studies to reveal that a few (1.3%) adolescents had tried cocaine.

Supported by Douglas (2000), the most comprehensive national survey done on drug use patterns in secondary schools was the National School Drug Survey of 1987. The survey was administered to a total of 8886 students in grades 9, 11 and 13. Random, stratified sampling allowed for generalizations to be made about the total population of the various secondary level schools in the country. Among others, three important findings of the 1987 survey are worth noting here.

1. In rank order, the three most frequently abused substances were alcohol (76.3%), tobacco (29.1%), and cannabis (28.3% tea, 19.8% smoked). Though only 1.9% and 1.5% respectively used cocaine and crack, the study expressed concern

that such hard drugs were being used by students.

2. The Kingston Metropolitan Area recorded the highest use of alcohol and tobacco; rural areas the highest for smoked cannabis and tourist areas for crack and powder cocaine.
3. Males are involved in the use and abuse of licit and illicit drugs much more than females. The table below illustrates the point using figures for tobacco use. The table that follows from the Medical Association of Jamaica supports the data from the survey.

TABLE 5.1
Sex of Post Primary Students who Ever Used Tobacco, in percent, for Jamaica: 1987

Sex	Past Month	Ever Used
	Percent	Percent
Male	7.3	39.8
Female	3.1	19.4

Source: National Council on Drug Abuse, 1987. National School Drug Survey, 1987, not in the bibliography.

TABLE 5.2
Current Young Smokers, by Sex, for Jamaica: 1987

Age Group	Both Sexes	Males	Females
	Percent	Percent	Percent
10-15	2.3	3.2	1.3
16-21	7.9	14.1	1.8

Source: National Council on Drug Abuse. 1987. National School Drug Survey, 1987.

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A number of significant findings emerged from the 1997 *National Adolescent Students Survey*.

1. Except in the case of inhalants, a higher proportion of male than female adolescents was involved in illicit drug use. Notice that this was more than twice as high for cannabis and four times as high for crack. Table 5.3 illustrates.
2. In their lifetime, except for inhalants and amphetamines, males were significantly more likely than females to use particular drugs. Even more important is the fact that males were more likely to be heavier
3. Lifetime and current use of alcohol and cannabis tended to increase with age.
4. Among all students, the peak grade (age) for initiation tended to be before grade 7, and initiation rates gradually decreased as grade levels increased, except for ganja and tranquilizers, which peaked again in grade 9.
5. The vast majority of students did not condone regular use of crack, cocaine, alcohol, cannabis or cigarettes. Nonetheless, 1.1 percent

TABLE 5.3
Lifetime and Current Use of Various Substances Among Students of Grades 9, 11 and 13,
by Sex, for Jamaica: 1997

Substance	Lifetime Use Prevalence Rate Percent		Current Use Prevalence Rate Percent	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Cigarette	34.7	21.1	6.4	3.5
Alcohol	78.0	63.5	37.1	22.0
Cannabis (Smoked)	37.3	18.4	12.4	3.8
Cannabis Tea	24.1	16.7	7.9	4.6
Cannabis in any other food or drink	6.7	2.9	4.4	1.6
Crack	3.1	0.9	1.2	0.3
Cocaine	2.1	0.6	0.8	0.1
Inhalants	15.1	16.4	7.6	11.2
Tranquilizers (Non- prescribed)	6.4	4.6	2.6	2.0
Amphetamine (Non-prescribed)	1.9	1.2	1.2	0.8
Opiates (Heroin, morphine, opium)	1.8	1.6	No data	No data

Source: National Council on Drug Abuse. 1987. *National School Drug Survey, 1987*.

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did not disapprove of the regular use of ganja.

6. More females than males strongly disapproved of the regular use of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis and of trying crack and cocaine. More males tended to strongly disapprove at the grade 13 level.

It seems clear that adolescents are among the most vulnerable groups to substance abuse. One of ten persons admitted for treatment of drug related problems during the period 1993 to 1996 was under the age of 20 years (National Council on Drug Abuse 1996). Adolescents often succumb to pressures from within the family, from peers, at school and from social conditions, as well as from individual psychological or psychiatric factors.

Soyibo and Lee (1997) found that not only was drug use higher among male than female adolescents, but it was also higher among children of professional parents and among adolescents from urban areas. The work of Chevannes and White (1981) and of Professor Beaubrun from the 1960s cites a variety of reasons why the urban male adolescent, especially of parents with reasonably comfortable incomes, has the highest drug use. In addition to Erik Erikson's explanation of the male adolescent identity crisis (largely borne out in the work of Rubin and Comitas in 1975), the issue of availability must be considered. Also, Beaubrun's substitution hypothesis cannot be dismissed. It states that working class (and we may add those especially of

rural areas) adolescents tend to use ganja as a substitute for alcohol because they cannot afford alcohol.

The literature clearly shows that adolescent males not only abuse drugs because of pressures of the various sorts discussed above or because of the stress to identify with manhood, but also because the society (especially the older men of the community) has made drugs more available to them. One key solution here is in fact practiced in a number of communities – the senior men never allow adolescents to smoke or to drink with them. This, some will argue, can only help an infinitesimal bit as boys will mimic adults as seen in Chevannes' 2001 book, *Learning to be a Man*. Hence smoking and drinking might be inevitable for adolescent males once older males are engaged in the act.

A more realistic objective might therefore be to attempt to educate adolescent males about the danger involved in using drugs. At the same time it is important to provide alternatives for the expression of masculinity with the hope of at least delaying the development of unhealthy habits. As borne out by the data, heavy drinkers and chronic drug abusers often begin at an early age; tobacco and alcohol often serve as gateways to harder and more addictive drugs. Delaying the use of drugs is therefore a very important strategy in the fight against drug abuse.

In sum, the data direct us to take into account two variables when designing programs to reduce drug use: gender and

age. More resources must be targeted at adolescent males, and the target age must be below age 12, which means focusing not only on the primary variables but also, and importantly, on the primary variables are taken into account the fact that the most vulnerable terms of drug use is among boys.



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CHAPTER 6

MASCULINITY, SEXUALITY AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Male Survivability

The National Family Planning Board of Jamaica has adopted the WHO definition of reproductive health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. The issue of reproductive health has become a dominant area of discussion as it relates not only to male influence on female health and childrearing but its impact on male participation in the reproductive process, and how their related involvement impacts on their own definition of sexuality, identity, and gender roles.

Definitions of Masculinity

*Masculinity, like gender, is a socially defined construct influenced by myriad forces including history, culture, religion and economics. Male identities are partially created in the process of individuation that young males go through in an effort to define themselves as separate from their mothers. Strict gender roles are internalized, and boys learn to divorce themselves from qualities they identify as feminine passivity, weakness, illness, dependence and sensitivity.*¹⁷

*Males or male-defined traits include assertiveness, aggressiveness, ruggedness, toughness, decisiveness, inventiveness, risk-taking, confrontation, conquest seeking, ruthlessness and having a killer instinct.*¹⁸

The literature is very clear on the importance of the issue of identity in the discussion of masculinity. Brown (1995, 1993), Brown et al. (1997, 1993), Boxill (1994), Chevannes (2001, 1999, 1996, 1993), Chevannes and Gayle (2000),

¹⁷Male Participation in Sexual and Reproductive Health: new paradigms symposium Report Oaxaca, Mexico, October 1998.

¹⁸Professor Miller's address on Violence: Self and the Young Male, edited by Author McShire.

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Gayle (1996) Leo-Rhynie (1993), Lewis (1994), Barrow (1982), McKenzies (1971) among others all found the key identifying mark of manhood to be the ability to provide for the family despite class, geographical factors and changes over time in the economy. This has often been presented as if it were a religious creed. Without this role, a man could no longer be the head of his family or even a male for that matter. The dilemma, well discussed by the scholars listed above, is what Lewis calls the feminization of traditional male economic activities and the more important fact that many males enter the labor force prematurely and are thus robbed of the chance to reach their full potential. The result is that Jamaican men are not always able to provide for their families as is expected of them. Of tremendous importance is the fact that adolescent males are forced to face this reality even as they mature or approach adult life. The result is often conflict and self-doubt, but many grow up to the reality that a greater sense of gender equality exists in this generation than when father was king and mom was barely queen.

Brown et al (1997: pages 98-99) raised a series of issues related to male identity.

1. *Primary role as provider* men are seen as the ones who should be responsible for the economic livelihood of their families. This is regardless of the employment status of the woman, as financial provision for the family is not her designated

role. The man is not seen as a man if he cannot provide financially for his children and offer protection from external harmful forces. This sentiment is summed up in the argument that a man must defend in youth.

2. *Scriptural authority for family head* Men view it as God's will that they should be the heads of their families. This view is also shared by women who feel that when they happen to be heads of households, it is not by their own choice but because they are forced to do so.
3. *Sexuality/sexual identity* the male exhibits his manhood through sexual exploits and the higher the number of women with whom he is involved sexually, the greater his achievement. He provides evidence of this through the number of offspring he produces.

Even though the three aspects of manhood are seen as necessary and increasingly achieved as the man gets older, there are inherent contradictions among the three. The young man who is successful at proving his manhood through sexual exploits and many children will have a lesser chance of being able to in the end be a true man who can financially take care of his family and head his household than one who was not very successful in proving his manhood through his sexual behaviour. Such men are seen as bwoys never becoming real men. (page 99)

Even though the findings of the study suggest that boys and men are increasingly sharing domestic duties, such are still predominantly viewed as women's work and do not serve to enhance a man's demonstration of manhood or are viewed as substitute contributions when financial provision is lacking. Man/woman relations were characterized by high degrees of distrust and disillusionment. (page 99)

The authors argue that this is due to the fact that the factors which determine manhood encourage tensions between members of both sexes and also to the fact that the present economic climate prevents many men from ever reaching the status of full manhood.

The following are a list of reasons given by Brown (1997: 99-101) for the level of distrust and disillusionment which exists between men and women, and were obtained from group discussions with men alone, women alone and men and women.

1. *Male-female fidelity* Men and women have different views towards fidelity. Men often see it as a need for them to have multiple partners while women view it as an economic necessity. Men, however, view female infidelity as unacceptable and punishable. According to one man, *De ooman mus n do everyting whe me a do. If me is a t ief de ooman mus n be a t ief!* Due to the social realities, social codes have evolved to dictate the protocol

for women who share a man, and refer to financial as well as behavioural rules that are intended to protect the primary (especially common-law or married) partner and inside children above other parties and families. Some men defend outside sexual liaisons only if they do not substantially interfere with the maintenance of their children.

2. *Power/authority* Most men understand their role within the family as the head with the power and authority which has been ordained by God, and by historical cultural derivatives. Recent forces such as globalization, cultural differences and women's liberation movements have challenged the male's authority within the home and have led to power struggles between men and women.
3. *Family finances* The man is expected to take care of the family financially and this regardless of the woman's earnings. The woman sees her earnings as her own to spend on herself, her own children who do not belong to the man and the home as she pleases, but it is not her responsibility. Men, even though acknowledging that women working outside of the home is an economic necessity, consider that it threatens the man's authority within the home. The position of the man within the

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family is dependent on economic contribution. However, some men are uneasy with the fact that the women get all the credit from children for their care as the woman is the one who spends all the money.

4. *Division of domestic labor* Men and women have clearly defined views as to the roles of each other within the household. The man is to be the head and provider while the woman should take care of household duties. Women should do things inside the house while the men take care of those things outside of the house. Many women also do not appreciate men who are overly active in domestic affairs, as they see such men as soft, maama men who intrude on and interfere with the woman's hegemony within the home. However, real life situations often dictate that the ideal expectations are not lived up to.
5. *Domestic violence* This is usually described as beating their women, although there were occasional cases of women beating men. This was often attributed to men and women breaking contracts or unstated misunderstood expectations which lead to disrespect or the man losing face, and for him this can only be remedied by the woman being punished. The rate of such tensions within male and female

relationships that was reported was of concern, but there were individuals who reported harmonious male and female relationships.

Leo-Rhynie (1993:7) highlighted very well one key implication of the power embodied in the definition of manhood, given the major changes within the Caribbean in terms of gender over the past three decades:

The man is, however, the symbolic authority figure in the home, but due to the prevalence of matrifocality, in reality it is the woman who is the head of the household. The woman however, shows deference to the man on the basis of her expectations of economic support, and the deference shown to the man in the home is eventually based on his ability to provide for his family economically.

Leo-Rhynie cites Barrows (1986:7) as reporting considerable sexual antagonism between males and female in the Caribbean:

Women see men as authoritarian, dishonest, irresponsible and unreliable, while men consider women to be materialistic the embodiment of Eve, Delilah and Jezebel the Trinity of Treachery.

Chevannes and Gayle (2000:78) summarize the issues here as follows:

Despite the differences in social background, the adolescents and young men seemed quite united about their definition of manhood. Of greatest importance is the male's ability to provide for the family. He must maintain not only the children but also the mother of those children. Additionally, he must care for his own mother. The men who reside in the rural and inner city communities have expressed this as being critical. A man is independent. He must survive on his own and hence earn the right to make his own decisions. He must also be the protector of his family. For this reason, as well as for the matter of his personal survival in a world that is sometimes hostile to men, he has to be tough. The young men distinguished good men as disciplined, courteous, gentle and caring. Nonetheless he is never to be soft, meaning to be headed or ruled by his woman and thus become a *maama-man* or allow himself to be abused by anyone, especially have another man take his woman away from him.

The young men viewed the gender division of labour as central to the socialization of males. A boy's duties are to be located outside of the house. It is useful for him to learn to do some of the inside chores so he can survive on his own during his cowboy days and to be able to assist his spouse, especially if she is ill. He should not

at any time wash a woman's underwear or carry out any task that undermines his masculine pride. The youth express a deep concern for boys who are given a considerable volume of female tasks to do. His sexual identity is at stake, they reason.

The young men express extreme pride in being male. Of greatest importance to them is the fact that men are the aggressors in sexual activity, rather than the recipients. Males who act effeminate are seen as attacking the core of their male pride, and are therefore not treated kindly. While the youth are able to distinguish between an effeminate male and a homosexual, they shun the former almost as much. There is no divergence among the youth regarding their hostility towards homosexuals. The continuous use of the slang *bun dat* throughout all the sessions in reference to the practice cannot be taken lightly. It indicates a high degree of intolerance and aggression against those who are involved. Borrowing a word from Guyana, one group described homosexuals as *antiman* someone that erodes manhood. It is interesting to note that despite the extreme homophobia expressed by the youth, there are particular female traits that they feel are enviable. These include the woman's sense of focus, self-control and perseverance. The youth recognize that men on the other hand often lose focus due to their strong urge for sex.

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Toughness

It is important to highlight toughness as a mark of manhood and to note its impact on sexuality, family life and relationships. Clearly this particular identity or mark has immense implications for the way men relate to their spouses. As mentioned by inner city adolescents in Chevannes and Gayle (2000), a girl was liable to be physically abused if that was required to make her realize that the male was not to be treated as the soft one. The implications for crime and violence have already been dealt with.

Brown et al. (1997) stressed the extent to which boys are treated differently from girls in order to make them achieve this mark of manhood we describe as toughness. Chevannes (2001, 1999) and Chevannes and Gayle (2000) among others support the observation made by Brown et al that boys receive harsher punishment than girls even though their behavior receives less attention than that of girls. Girls are usually those who receive physical affection although as their age increases it becomes more inappropriate for male family members to express such attention. This increases the man's distance from his children, but this is partly due to the fear of incest. Boys, unlike girls, are socialized not to express affection and emotions.

Chevannes and Gayle (2000) found that toughness as a variable was constant across class or social background and age. Of all the males studied, those of early and

late adolescence and early adulthood felt the same. Toughness, they reasoned, was a necessity for survival and for pride. It is in fact one of the pillars of male power. As reasoned by early teens of the inner city:

A boy could not be soft no mama s boy. He had to learn from early to fend for himself, to be a man and not a girl or a virgin soft and delicate.

How im going to protect him family if a man see him as gal? one asked.

Yu woman would cheat and feisty with you and you can t even do nutting.

Sexuality

An individual's sexuality is the result of a complex joining of social, cultural and historical processes that form one's sexual identity. The existence of a hegemonic model of masculinity is one of the principal forces that shape men's perceptions of their sexuality. This model also influences how men interpret feminine sexuality. Many men from various cultures are socialized to believe that a woman's sexual desire is born out of love for a partner, while men's sexual desire is born out of a biological instinct. In *The Jamaica Adolescent Survey 1998*, (Jackson et al, 1998) most adolescents also held this view. Many adolescents also disapproved of teens having sexual intercourse outside of an established romantic relationship; however, more boys than girls approved of

a girl having sex with a male other than her boyfriend.

A number of well-executed studies has been done on the subject of male sexuality, though most have not focused on the adolescent. Undoubtedly, sexuality is central to male identity as explained earlier by Brown et al (1997). A literature review done by Barry Chevannes in 1993 is very useful to introduce the key issues.

1. Men are able to separate sex from love; sex is natural, and it is expected that men will want to indulge in it.
2. Boys learn much about sex from their peers and often feel pressured to get involved in sexual activities.
3. Early sexual debut of boys is treated with tolerance and even amusement but not so for girls. There is a concern for the boy's sexuality. Early heterosexual advances are greeted with relief.
4. Males are quite anxious about their sexuality. The threat by a woman to fire a man for not being able to do the work represents a stinging humiliation (page 9).

Sexual Debut: Different Strokes for Different Folks

*Even before they enter the teenage years, the sexual attitudes and behaviours of young Jamaican adolescents have been significantly shaped by sociological and gender norms that send contradictory messages about sexuality and impose different standards of behaviour for boys and girls. Girls (are) less likely than boys to concede that a young adolescent girl would have sexual intercourse.*¹⁹

The literature is clear that there is an expectation that boys will get involved at a younger age than girls. One of the critical findings of Chevannes and Gayle (2000) was that boys feel very pressured by girls to get sexually active as a mark of their sexuality. This is separate from the pressure to satisfy the female sexually.

Chevannes (1999:12) noted that among boys, great pressure is exerted by the peer group to initiate relationships. The reasons given are: fear of being branded homosexual; fear of ridicule because oil cake up meaning unreleased sex drive; the attitude that sex is natural. The peer group is a source of pressure not only to become sexually active. The group also sometimes shares in the actual experience, in what is commonly known as battery. Battery involves boys taking turns at coitus with a single hapless female. More recent

¹⁹Eggleston et al. (1999)

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research by Chevannes and Gayle (2000:82) found the same concern.

The young men express concern and in some cases anxiety regarding sexual performance. One group even acknowledged that they act aggressively towards those women they assume mock or attack their male pride in this regard. We found it quite common that a youth preferred to harm the female physically in the course of sex rather than have her describe him as lacking the ability to perform. They feel that the women contributed much to their anxiety, as they required a high level of performance from them. With the exception of some suburban youth, having a large penis meant being better equipped to meet this performance requirement.

Eggleston et al. (1999:81) illustrated the dilemma of peer pressure in the following manner.

A boy in another group related, Him friends, them tell him that him gonna love it! For boys who have not yet had sex, encouragement from friends to engage in sex may turn into pressure. If him no do it, them a go call him chicken, explained one Kingston boy. Having intercourse for the first time often signifies a passage into adulthood, and sex can be a way for an adolescent to assert that he or she is no longer a child. In the focus group discussions, boys were particularly likely to view sexual initiation as an important sign of manhood. A boy in one focus group said,

Him would feel good cause him friends biggin him up . When the moderator asked boys in a rural school if Ted would tell anyone that he had sex with Nell, the response was, Him a go tell him friend, big brother. Him tell him relative and cousin and friend and everybody!

It is in fact the pressure from peers why a boy tells his friends and relatives that he has had sexual intercourse, despite the consequence of offending the girl involved and indeed creating an uncomfortable situation. Identifying with his peers is of greater importance than the embarrassment he may cause and is more valuable than the girlfriend he may lose.

It is not surprising therefore that in *The Jamaican Adolescent Study*, reported sexual experience was vastly different between boys and girls, with 64 percent of the boys and only 6 percent of the girls in grade 7 saying they had experienced intercourse. The question then is with whom are these young boys having sex? Chevannes (2001), Chevannes and Gayle (2000) and data from the Gender Socialization Project illustrate that from an early age, boys participate in commercial sex. Also, in a number of cases, older adolescent females initiate them.

Still, a significant percentage might have had sex with girls of their age or just a few years older. Tables 6.1 and 6.2, drawn from the *Jamaica Reproductive Health Survey 1997*, support this position.²⁰ The survey showed that 15.5 percent of boys

under age 13 had their first sexual intercourse with girls under age 14. The reality is that due to the construction of Jamaican society, females are expected to abstain from sex longer than males so they may lie about when they were initiated. Boys, on the other hand, may also lie stating that they started earlier than they in fact did. Overall among males, the older they were at first intercourse, the more likely they were to have a woman younger than themselves as a first sexual partner. Notice that 59 percent of women 18-24 years old had a younger partner at first sexual encounter. A similar pattern was observed in the 1993 *Jamaica Reproductive Health Survey*.²¹

Eggleston et al. (1999) noted a significant difference between boys and girls in relation to their sexual experience. Among adolescents reporting sexual experience, the mean age at first sex was 11.3 for girls and 9.4 for boys. Forty-five percent of boys reporting sexual activity claimed they had their first sexual experience at age nine or younger. An examination of the data from the *Jamaica Reproductive Health Survey 1997* tells us that the average age for sexual debut might be somewhat older, i.e., 13.4 years for boys and 15.9 for girls. This is in fact closer to the findings of Chevannes and Gayle recently.

Additionally it was found that sexual debut (and in fact other issues of sexuality) was influenced by class or environment. Inner city boys gave 13 years and earlier as age of sexual debut, rural boys gave 14 and suburban boys cited roughly 16 years. As was clear in the study, the critical factor affecting the age at which males become sexually active is economic. As explained by the adolescent males, boys cannot be kept from sexual activity if they have already begun to earn their own money and to carry out other functions of adult life at an early age. Suburban boys can delay sexual encounters, not simply because they are more informed, but because they are allowed to remain as children for much longer. Jackson et al. (1998) suggest the same that poverty is a critical factor in early sexual behavior.

Chevannes and Gayle (2000) expressed this point in the following manner, and with an appeal:

It must also be pointed out that early sexual debut is associated with reduced childhood situations. The boys of the inner city who traditionally grow up much earlier than other boys in order to fend for themselves or assist their mothers economically, are not surprisingly, the earliest starters.

²⁰National Family Planning Board, 1999.

²¹McFarlane, C.P., J.S. Friedman and L. Morris, 1994.

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TABLE 6.1
First Sexual Intercourse, by Age of First Partner, for Young Males in Jamaica: 1997

Age at first Inter-course	Younger	Same Age	1-2 years older	3-5 years older	6+ years older	Not known	Total	N (Pop)
Under 13	0.0	5.7	9.8	16.2	56.0	12.4	100	50
13-14	0.4	3.5	14.4	38.6	32.4	10.8	100	285
15-17	1.9	7.7	25.1	34.4	23.0	7.9	100	799
18-24	7.3	10.4	22.1	31.2	16.5	12.5	100	294

Source: National Family Planning Board 1999.

In the case where the children are allowed to have their full childhood as

school to begin to indulge in sexual activities.

TABLE 6.2
First Sexual Intercourse, by Age of First Partner, for Young Females in Jamaica: 1997

Age at first Inter-course	Younger	Same Age	1-2 years older	3-5 years older	6+ years older	Not known	Total	N (Pop)
Under 13	13.2	26.6	28.1	17.9	54.8	8.5	100	520
13-14	23.9	29.9	26.7	9.0	2.4	8.1	100	487
15-17	36.4	30.3	20.2	3.2	2.1	7.8	100	533
18-24	59.0	6.6	7.9	5.9	2.9	17.8	100	126

Source: National Family Planning Board 1999.

in the suburban group, there is less rush towards sex. Only this group felt little pressure including from their peers to have an early sexual debut. Undoubtedly, there has to be a drive for sex education in our primary schools as it is clear that our boys do not always wait until secondary

Sources of Information and Level of Knowledge on Sexuality, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Family Planning

Eggleston et al. (1999) expressed concern at the low levels of knowledge on reproductive health that were observed during the Jamaican adolescent study. For instance, fewer than 10 percent of the 11-14 year olds knew the point during the menstrual cycle when a girl is most likely to get pregnant, and only a third knew pregnancy is possible at first intercourse. Though boys' correct answers were significantly (statistically) higher than those of girls, this must not be taken to mean that the boys were more aware. Due to socialization, boys expressed more confidence when they thought they knew something. Girls tended to say I do not know even at times when they really did know. Despite the fact that more boys got particular questions correct, they were overall less informed than girls and had greater misconceptions on a larger number of issues related to reproductive health. In sum, boys are less likely than girls to get accurate information regarding their reproductive health. The major concern is the sources from which adolescent males get information regarding sex. This obviously has implications for what they

learn and how they practice what they claim they have learned.

Peer influence is seemingly important as the key source of knowledge on sexual issues. *The Jamaica Adolescent Study 1998* found that boys were less likely to rely on parents and more likely to turn to their peers for sexual information, and that this did not change significantly even in early adult years. Many boys reported learning about sex from other relatives such as brothers and cousins. The proportion of boys who received their most important sexual information from a friend rose from 14 percent in September 1995 to 34 percent in June 1996.

Boys never seem to experience a shortage of information on the fact that they should have a girlfriend or on how to get a girl. The problem seems to exist when they need to get accurate information on sexually transmitted diseases or on reproduction. The boy is encouraged to see himself and his manhood in a positive manner with emphasis on his physical attributes and those of the adolescent female. The source of encouragement was not noted as either internal or external to the family. A seventh grade boy in one group offered that his male relative told him, girls is very sexy and nice. The young male was also given advice about the facts of life or how to have a relationship with a girl: Him father would talk to him and make him take time with the girl.²²

²²Jackson et al, 1988.

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Notice that even older groups of males indicate that their primary source of information on sexuality is similar to that of their younger counterparts. Unlike younger males, however, they participate in family life education. Both sexes used parents and peers/friend/siblings as the major source of information about sex in heterosexual relationships and their own sexuality (Tables 6.3 and 6.4).

TABLE 6.3
Adolescents Ages 11-14 Years Most common Response to the Item, The Most Important Thing I Know about Sex, I Learned from , by Sex, for Selected Sites in Jamaica: 1998

Response	June 1996 N= 868			June 1997 N=718		
	Girl	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Mother	10.8	10.2	10.5	6.6	9.1	7.8
Father	4.1	11.0	7.3	1.1	12.7	6.5
Other relative	6.1	14.7	10.0	9.0	17.0	12.7
Friend	28.4	33.8	30.9	24.2	21.5	22.9
Clinic	33.6	8.9	22.2	29.5	8.8	19.8
Other	17.0	21.4	19.1	29.6	30.0	30.3

Source: Jackson et al, 1998.

McDonald (1999) and Jackson et al (1997) expressed concern that family life education begins too late for many adolescents. A significant proportion of

adolescents have already had their sexual debut before entering secondary school or even grade 6, the final grade of primary school. As McDonald explained, the timing of family life education must be wrong if 17 percent of girls who get pregnant do so at the primary school level. She further illustrated the point by drawing from the Jamaica Reproductive Health Survey 1997 to show that the mean age for first sex for girls ages 15-17 was 14.7, yet only 35 percent of girls had their first family life education class before age 13. The mean age for first sex for boys ages 15-17 was 12.4, yet by age 13, only 30 percent had had a course in family life education. The solution is, therefore, to begin family life education in primary schools in the middle rather than at the later primary years.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) reports that the incidence of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is increasing among adolescents. The number of reported new HIV infections in adolescents had doubled each year since 1995. Adolescent girls are three times more likely to have acquired an HIV infection than boys of the same age.²³

²³Blank 2000

TABLE 6.4
Preferred Source of Information on Family Life Education
Topics for Young Women and Men Aged
15-24 Years, for Jamaica: 1997 (In percent)

Source of Information	Women	Men
Parents	32.2	32.8
Health Personnel inclusive of National Family Planning Board	29.8	13.0
Peers/friends/Siblings	18.4	26.4
Teachers	7.5	19.1
Print Media/TV/Radio	3.8	5.6
Don't know	1.6	1.5
Other	1.4	1.7
No preferred Source	5.3	0.0
Total	100	100
N	1974	2278

Source: National Family Planning Board. 1999.

The Jamaican Adolescent Study found that adolescents seemed most knowledgeable when it came to condom use. Seventy-eight percent boys and 53 percent of girls agreed with the statement, Using a condom is a good way to avoid getting a sexually transmitted disease. Sadly though, the older cohorts (15-19 years), although more aware of the perils of sexual activity, demonstrated the highest risk behavior of all age cohorts. The study indicated that among those reporting sexual experience, fewer than half of both girls (43%) and boys (38%) reported using a family planning method the first time they had sex.

Non-use was attributed to cultural values. Many boys heard that sex was less pleasurable with a condom and they feared they would be perceived as unmanly if they used one. Some thought that a boy who did use a condom would keep it a secret. Him no tell nobody because them a go laugh after him and say him a little boy, Blank (2000) highlighted. Eggleston et al. (1999) also suggested that culture is a major barrier to increasing condom use among youth.

Students associated family planning with promiscuity. Fifty-four percent of girls and 71 percent of boys agreed that condoms are only for boys who have sex with more than one girl (page 82)

According to the Jamaica Reproductive Health Survey 1997, among men 15 to 19, contraceptive use increased significantly from 69 percent in 1995 to 83 percent in 1997. Because of increases in condom use and, to a lesser extent, injection use, overall usage increased in male age groups from 1993 to 1997. Overall however, 10 percent of young adult men reported having fathered a child, despite condom use. This indicates that although there has been an increase in condom use, generally it is not consistent.

Chevannes and Gayle (2000) found nothing completely new in terms of sources of sex information, except that the problem is differentially distributed by class, as well as by age. You will notice that peers again become more powerful as sources of

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TABLE 6.5
Contraceptive Use at First Sexual Intercourse among Adolescents
Ages 11-14 Years, for Selected Sites in Jamaica: 1997

Measure	Girls		Boys	
	%	N	%	N
Percentage reporting intercourse	5.8	490	64.4	455
Mean age at first intercourse	11.3	28	9.4	284
Mean difference (in years) between first partner's age and respondent's age	3.2	28	1.2	284
Percentage who use contraceptive at first intercourse. Difference is statistically significant at $p < .05$	42.9	28	37.7	284

Source: Jackson et al. (1998).

information once the sheltered suburban boy leaves that shelter.

It was not surprising that the youth of the suburban groups drew on a wider range of sources regarding information on sex and manhood. They also differed in the sense that for the younger groups, parents were listed as the first source of information. The suburban youth attending university differed somewhat from their younger suburban counterparts in that they had pushed aside much of what they had learnt at home and had turned to colleagues, internet and the media as their major sources. The inner city and rural youth presented street and school as their main sources. What is of interest here is the impact of the street on the socialization of the boys, especially those of the inner city.

What was probably most impressive in the research is the level of information the youth had regarding contraceptives. All,

without exception, had good knowledge of STDs, especially AIDS. What was worrying, however, is the fact that a small number of youth of the 10-14 age group reported that they were sexually active but without using condoms, either because they were not yet able to ejaculate and therefore did not see the need to use them or simply because they experienced problems with the use of the condoms available, due to the small size of their penises. (pages 81-82)

The literature and statistics found on the knowledge and use of contraceptive by adolescents beg for urgent action. It is clear that despite the gender differences that both male and female adolescents are in trouble—dying of thirst in a fountain of information. The issue is not that information does not exist but rather that it is not reaching young people early enough. Girls seem to be at an advantage in terms of getting accurate information. This is implied in the fact that they go to more informed sources, meaning parents and clinics. The paradox though is that while girls and older adolescents showed that they had more information than early adolescent males, the former groups are at greater risk of contracting the HIV virus. Part of the dilemma of females is that it requires more than information to secure life. Studies have shown that females are

forced by economic circumstances to engage in risky sexual activities or to manage sexual risk. The reality is, risk is not always manageable. Furthermore, females are more biologically susceptible to contracting HIV.

Information from Allen (1997) and White and Chevannes (1981) tells us that boys may also find themselves in various vulnerable situations. Allen (1997) spoke about the relationship between empowerment and contraceptive use as it relates to women. Sex is often a source of power for women as Jamaican women are known to use sex as a means to their ends. This is manifested in red-eye sex and the practice of withholding sex from men. Nonetheless, the same could not be said for young boys in homosexual relations with older men as they could find themselves unable to negotiate condom use.

White and Chevannes (1981) wrote some two decades ago:

Adolescent boys in particular spend considerable time talking about sex, but they tend to acquire sex information from their own ill-informed age mates or through experiment or experience. In the adolescent peer culture, ignorance of sexually related matters is suppose to connote that a person is still a youth and is soft. The result is often a hodgepodge of misinformation, half-true guesses or shrewd surmises,

folklore myths and out-and-out misconceptions.

A number of concerns must be raised in terms of developing programs to combat the problem of sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents: the first is that programs designed to educate students must effectively connect with and match their frame of understanding. The second is the economic plight of students must be taken into consideration. Third, the pressures placed on males and the various cultural contracts that impact negatively on the male must also be addressed. Finally, programs must also be focused on out-of-school adolescents.

Adolescent Prostitution

Very little has been documented on the subject of adolescent prostitution. The Baseline Survey in Child Labour: Spanish Town, raised the issue that a significant proportion just under 8 percent of the working children sampled were in fact sexually exploited. Just over a year ago, qualitative research was carried out in seven parishes by the National HIV/STD Prevention Programme. In these parishes it was estimated that there were 1250 female prostitutes and a shocking 550 male prostitutes catering to the now-obvious homosexual male population. The data tell us that large numbers of both male and female prostitutes are adolescents. It was in fact a frightening revelation (when it was published in the media) that 50 of the

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estimated 350 male prostitutes in the Kingston Metropolitan Area were in fact under the age of 15 years.²⁴

Robinson, Bain and Thompson (2001) were concerned that a number of boys are being sexually abused on Jamaican streets. Klao Bell, in an article entitled, *Street Boys Feel Brunt of Sex Crimes* discussed the plight of street boys. She cited a number of observed incidents where men pick up these boys in variously priced cars. It can be assumed that the boys are paid for their sexual favors and are indeed operating as prostitutes. One nerve-rattling point made was that the rape and juvenile unit of the police had had no reports of these incidents. It is clear that occasional patrols are not enough to protect youth from sexual abuse. What is needed is the enforcement of laws designed to protect them with effective sanctions that will reduce the crisis.

Homophobia and Homosexuality

Lewis (1994: 14-15), in his work *Constructing the Masculine in the Context of the Caribbean*, described homosexuality as a

subordinated form of masculinity, which cannot be overlooked when attempting to understand men and gender relations. It also forces us to come to grips with what cultural

forces constrain or permit certain forms of expression of masculinity. Lest one infers from the foregoing that masculinity in the Caribbean is constructed in two varieties hegemonic and homosexual one should also be cognizant of other forms which inhabit spaces between those two addressed so far here are men in the Caribbean who reject homosexuality and hegemonic masculinity, some of whom chart an alternative course of gender relations. Such men do not subscribe to the belief that masculinity should be predicated on the domination of women.

Jamaica can be reasonably described as one of the most intolerant countries of homosexuality in the Western Hemisphere. All forms of anal intercourse are considered revolting by Jamaicans whether with a woman or with a man (Chevannes 1992). Such is the stigma that very few studies have been done in the area. Simply put, scholars refuse to be associated with the topic. Furthermore, the few studies that have not ignored the subject find the same thing: there is a deep intolerance of homosexuality. In the recent study by Chevannes and Gayle (2000), boys even felt offended by the question. In a number of cases the boys felt more comfortable being asked by a female. Despite the differences among the suburban, rural and inner city boys, they were all quick to bun a

²⁴See The Sunday Gleaner, October 22, 2000.

fire on a batty man during the group sessions. One of the implications that we cannot escape is the fact that the fear of homosexuality has been used as an excuse for not requiring teenaged boys to delay heterosexual activity until late teens at least.

There is an extreme homophobia here, which among other factors, seems to bring pressure to bear on parents, many of whom are young. From the data, one gets the impression that some parents, especially in the inner city, are relieved when they discover that their boys are expressing an early interest in girls. As one group told us, mothers were more likely to warn their boys of early sexual activity than fathers. (Chevannes and Gayle, 2000:80)

Relationships

Chevannes and Gayle (2000) found that youth consider it important for a man to have a girlfriend. There were, however, slight variations in the responses based on age and social background. While rural and inner city males saw this as very important as an identifying mark of manhood, younger suburban males felt it was secondary. The latter claimed education deserved more of their attention during their teen years. For a number of the younger inner city and rural males who were already sexually active, it was the sex that was important, not the relationship which brought with it some degree of commitment duties.

They also found that younger and especially suburban males were more likely to support the view that it is possible for a man to have one faithful partner. The overwhelming majority of the youth, however, feel it is normal for a man to have more than one sexual partner. As was expressed by a number of them, men are hunters by nature and hence having more than one woman satisfies the macho or hunter feeling.

The young men felt having more than one woman was also important to safeguard the man from heartbreak. Not all women can be trusted to be faithful, they reasoned. It is best for a man to have more than one woman so as to reduce the effect on his emotions whenever she cheats. Those who differed in opinion here did so mainly on religious grounds. The Christians in the group point to the level of possible stress that could come to bear on the male who has more than one sexual partner.

The issue of marriage resulted in a continuum of views. At one end was the view of suburban young men that marriage was critical for stability and respect. For them it was a prerequisite for establishing a family. They suggested that a man should seek to do this respectable thing between the ages of 25 and 35, at which point it was expected that he would have had the material resources to begin a family. In the middle was the view of inner city and rural young men who agreed that marriage was an ideal without which the family would not enjoy the respect and

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status that society ascribed to the institution. They did not, however, share the middle-class view that it was a prerequisite for establishing a family. Instead they established a sequence of events: sex, children, and finally marriage. Marriage would take place during middle age but before the children were old enough to go on their own. At the opposite extreme was the view of some of the older youth of the inner city and rural communities who expressed an outright fear of the institution. They lamented the fact that they might have to marry one day. The major problem for them was the amount of power that the woman gained when she married the man. They felt it was unfair that a woman could claim half of a man's property if married to him. They suggested late middle age as the time in their lives when they might be forced into wedlock.

One area of adolescent relationships that has received some attention – albeit not enough – is that between parent and child. Leo-Rhynie (1993) expressed concern that boys are missing out on a lot when their fathers are absent from the home. Sadly, boys often learn about fatherhood from their fathers' transient and erratic presence. Fathers are often detached or physically and psychologically absent, existing at the margin of the home. Part of the problem, she pointed out, is that many women have reached a point where they feel that the presence of the father is more negative than positive. In the case where the male is not earning, he becomes a

problem in that his presence reduces the assistance she could receive from family and friends. This reality was also clearly borne out in Gayle (1996). Leo-Rhynie, like Crawford-Brown (1999) did not ignore the fact that a child might best do without a father if his contribution is to abuse the child and mother or simply to create conflict. Children may develop negative attitudes toward authority as a result. Leo-Rhynie criticized the practice of mothers turning to fathers only when they are unable to discipline the child. This is especially dangerous when the father does not temper the correction with some show of affection, as mother does. Studies have shown therefore that quite often the boy is closer to his mother even when the father is present.

The Adolescent Father

Adolescent fatherhood is seen as a problem but is treated with ignorance and prejudice. Volumes of literature have been written on teenage pregnancy, yet so very little data exist on adolescent fathers in Jamaica. The impression created from the quantity and quality of data available is that the adolescent male is expected to behave in that manner and having not disappointed the society by being a problem, we can then focus on the victim of his damage: the female. Adolescent fathers are treated with the same stereotypes as older men, but adolescent males are not all irresponsible. Chevannes (2000: 2-3) addressed the attitude of the Jamaican

society towards adolescent paternity in the following way:

One of the most important powers discovered by the adolescent is the power of sexuality. The power of involuntary arousal and emission, of the stirrings of love and attraction, of the qualities of smell and touch, of reading through the eyes, and so on, are all parts of the new experience. In this context, and with these considerations as base, that of the whole matter of adolescent paternity becomes a matter that we have to deal with. But I do not separate it from adolescent maternity they are two of a kind, they belong to the same self-discovery of powers that our society of elders and supposedly wiser folk deny, seek to repress, pretend do not exist, expect them to handle by themselves, pass off to others parents to educators, educators back to parents, and now, in the most morally reprehensible way possible, to the law-makers, to make of our youngsters criminals for the consensual use of powers that are natural, and therefore God-given.

The problem is even further exacerbated by the fact that, largely out of a fear of homosexuality, adolescent males are given confusing signals regarding sex. The comment made by Reverend Ernle Gordon in an article recently is worth noting:²⁵

Whenever our sons have sexual relations with young girls and they become pregnant, we have a bashment party to

celebrate their achievement, but send away the girls to the country to have the child and in some instances they are banished from the church; the community says she is a demon and has let down the family. The reality is that none of the two actions are usually done with a focus on guiding the steps of the teenager. The family goes into crisis management gear to save its reputation, and the teenager becomes the secondary issue. After the bashment is over and all accept that the adolescent male is indeed heterosexual, then reality sets in. Suddenly he is the problem and no longer the star.

The Gender Socialization Project (see Chevannes 2001) and Gayle (1996), among others, speak clearly to the fact that a number of adolescent males wake up to the reality that they are fathers, and, with financial support from parents not always forthcoming, they drop out of school to support mother and child. In the Women's Centre survey (Gayle, 1996), cases were found of adolescent baby fathers who had to juggle school, part time work and collecting the baby at the day care center every day. Very little is mentioned of this reality. Reports usually highlight those scared or simply irresponsible males who leave the task of caring and providing for the child to the grandparents. Reverend Gordon's connection of early fatherhood to economic crime cannot be ignored.²⁶ As borne out in Gayle (1996), many youth

²⁵See The Daily Observer, April 2001, page 7.

²⁶Ibid.

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would not have hustled had they not taken on the role of father.

Neither the data from the Women s Centre survey of 1996 nor their later report in 1999 (Women s Centre of Jamaica Foundation, 1999) provided evidence that young men were sexually irresponsible. It is important to note here that three-quarters of the baby fathers were between 14 and 23 years old not mature men taking advantage of teenaged girls. The 1996 evaluation exercise carried out by the faculty of social sciences of the University of the West Indies selected a sample of 232 of the Women s Centre clients over the five-year period from September 1989 to August 1994. A matching control sample of 145 non-clients, 55 baby fathers of clients and 45 baby fathers of non-clients were also sampled. The similarities between clients and controls were great. Both sets of girls were in reasonably stable relationships with the baby father before they got pregnant (84% of clients and 88% of controls considered themselves girlfriends). Three of four girls (75.4% clients, 79.2% controls) stated that their baby fathers stood by them during the pregnancy, and 88.8 percent of clients and 89.7 percent of controls said the baby fathers gave material support.

Three other points of importance emerging from the study must be discussed here. First, the main reasons baby fathers give little or no support or visit once per week or less were as follows:

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. | He lived in another parish or area | 23.0% clients, controls 22.9% |
| 2. | He denied/doubted paternity | 12.2% clients, controls 13.3% |
| 3. | Family pressure from one or both sides | 12.2% clients, controls 11.4% |
| 4. | He was not interested | 12.2% clients, controls 11.4% |

It is important to note that the major reason was not that they were not interested. Equally important is the finding that almost all the girls said pregnancy was unplanned, an accident. Chevannes (2001) and the contraceptive prevalence surveys of the 1990s confirm that this is usually the case. Eggleston et al. (1999:81) illustrated how easily sex can occur between adolescents with the consequence of pregnancy:

A boy and a girl a play dolly house the boy, the father and the girl, the mother. Them a sleep and things get outta hand. Him start feel her up, you know, take off clothes, kissing go on him push it in, she start cry.

The act should therefore not be considered irresponsible for any one or both parties.

What this is suggesting is an experience of sexual powers somewhat out of control. Chevannes (2001). What is therefore needed is education and guidance.

The second concerns an issue that emerged again in Chevannes and Gayle (2000). Young males are mostly not anxious to have a child. While the prospect of having a child is ego boosting, more adolescent males are viewing early

fatherhood as a bad prospect. Eggleston et al (1999:83) found that while boys were more likely to express enthusiasm about an unexpected pregnancy, their peers may have mixed feelings. A boy in the Kingston focus group observed, The good ones would ask him why him do such a thing, him should ve wait. But the bad ones would big him up and say gwane man, you get a son! and dem would want to try it. The situation is complicated by the fact that sometimes when told that their girlfriend is pregnant they are not always certain if the baby belongs to them. Chevannes and Gayle (2000) found that it is a major cultural issue in Jamaica for a man to find himself tricked into believing that a child that he never produced is his.

The problem of accepting paternity becomes worsened, however, if the mother is a sketel or careless or loose woman with whom a number of men have been having sex. Here the youth has two problems:

1. He cannot guarantee any support from his parents as he has embarrassed them.
2. He is likely to become an object of ridicule to the community. The pressure not to accept paternity builds due to the stigma attached to jackets , that is a child accepted by a man to be biologically his but which was fathered by another man unknown to him (page 81).

Box 3: The Street Corner Society

Street based groups provide an important support network for young men. They influence and validate the emerging values and ideals and may even be the foundation for an alternative community the street corner is a zone of occupation for men, predominantly young men. It is scene of conflict between and within gangs and between gangs and the police. The theater of the street is also the arena where young men sound out strong messages about themselves through the medium of designer goods, jewelry, their movement speech The street is a dead end but it offers ways of hustling and working out a way of living. It seems to have a magnetic pull on the large number of boys who have not performed well in school: it thrives in an environment where the job options are scarce as they are The centrality of physical strength, the possession and display of money and the control of many women is the definition of maleness and one of the lifestyles therefore offered and highly valued by the street culture is that of the girls man (who) deliberately develops a number of relationships with women with a reputation and with the symbolic values of the culture.

**Excerpts from: Street Culture and the decay of Community,
By Bailey, Branche and LeFranc
Caribbean Dialogue, 4, 2,1998**

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Less than two years ago an article was published in The Daily Observer that justified the fear expressed by young men that children named as theirs might in fact not be. The article presented that 34 percent of samples tested by the University Hospital of the West Indies for the family court showed that the man to whom fatherhood was attributed was not the child's father. Only 30 percent of almost a thousand monthly cases that arise in the court for child maintenance generate orders for paternity tests, the writer informed us. The implication, therefore, is that thousands of cases go unchecked.²⁷

The third point is the fact that Jamaican culture constructs a graduation for relationships, which means a child produced in an adolescent union may not eventually grow up with the biological mother and father. This is quite problematic as it has implications for stable families. Chevannes (1999) in his Grace Kennedy Foundation lecture reported the findings of a 1996 survey that assessed the proportion of relationships that remained intact over the 1989 to 1994 period. The boyfriend-girlfriend relationship had plummeted for clients from 84 percent to 22, and for controls from 88 percent to 31. Chevannes (1999:9) commented that this is not surprising:

It has long been established by Caribbean anthropologists and demographers that the pattern of conjugal bonding among

African-Caribbean peoples shows a very high incidence of extremely fragile and unstable kinds of relationships we call visiting at the start of the mating cycle, and a progressive development through the life-cycle towards greater stability.

The implication is therefore clear: those families that are able to guide their adolescents to wait beyond the early crisis period have a higher probability of producing a stable second generation of families. It is therefore not surprising that the suburban adolescents in Chevannes and Gayle (2000) were less inclined to identify having a child as a mark of manhood and were less likely to be adolescent fathers than their rural and inner city counterparts. The study nonetheless found some degree of promise among all the adolescent and young men.

The young men, especially the teenagers of suburban background, took the issue of fatherhood very seriously. They expressed clearly that they were not ready for that level of commitment. As youth their focus has to be on acquiring education or a skill to prepare them for the world of work. Some were explicit in stating that having a child would at that stage be a hindrance to their progress or survival. On such ground they acknowledged that in case of accidentally getting a girl pregnant, they would sadly request a termination. In the cases where such an operation may not be possible, they suggest that their mothers would be called

²⁷Wrong Dad: A third of Fathers never Sired their Children, Nicola Ramarand, Observer, March 9, 2000.

upon to assist in the care of the child. There was unity, especially among the older youth that the ideal age for children is in the thirties. Even those young men who already had children shared this view.

The implications are clear: if male youth view having a child at that age as such a problem then we can assume that his reaction to the news that he has a child on the way will be negative or evasive. Many of the youth expressed, nonetheless, that they would do their best to care for that child if it had to come into the world.

Due to the pressure that comes to bear on a young man when he fathers a child many argued that during their teen and early adult years they feel comfortable depositing their sperms in condoms. (page 80-81).

Adolescent Male Bonding

This is an area that needs to be urgently investigated. It is important to note that the topic of adolescent male bonding has always been discussed as an absent fathers issue or as a consequence of homophobia or subsumed under discussions of inner city violence. The fact is that men of all ages and classes bond. It is

sad that boys learn most about themselves on the street and from their peers, but research ignores how they bond and support each other. There is a real absence of studies on how adolescent males relate on the playground and youth clubs and on what is involved in youth brotherhood.

Studies on male bonding have tended to focus on social clubs, pubs, churches and other organizations of adult men. Levy, Gayle and Stultz (2001) found that corner crews are institutions that play an enormous role in providing support to young men. Often confused as criminal gangs, they are attacked by the police and receive very little sympathy from people of the outer city as they are branded. This is not to say that corner crews cannot and do not in fact get involved in crimes, but they are not designed for the purpose of carrying out crimes; rather, their main function is to lend support to each other. It is even the place where boys attending school learn how to attempt examination questions from other boys who had been there and done that but have dropped out of school. The corner is a school but very few of us have gone to assess what the youth learn there. Box three illustrates how other scholars view the corner crew.

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CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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So where do we go from here?

S*o much research is lacking on the male adolescent in Jamaica and an examination of the little has saddened me so much.*

The major serendipity of the literature search is the fact that the society including the state, the community, the school, and the home has failed our children in terms of protective care and a promise of tomorrow. Too many Jamaican children are vulnerable, stressed, lonely, confused and sad while we pretend not to see. We must embark on a new road that helps our children to find us, the adults. Themes relating to children's programs need to be named Reaching out to Hard-to-Reach Society instead of Reaching out to Hard-to-Reach Youth. Projects must reflect the truth that we adults are the ones who are hard to reach.

While the data suggested that adolescent males were more neglected than adolescent females, the latter are overall not significantly better off. Young females

suffer immense abuse, sometimes in the shelter of their homes. Gender equity in every sense is still only on the road coming ; it has not arrived. Despite the achievement of feminism, adolescent girls are exposed to a variety of forms of abuse: sexual, physical, and psychological. It is therefore unforgivable to construct programs for a single sex. While the following discussion will be focused on adolescent males, I strongly recommend that support systems should rightly be focused on needs rather than on gender. Both boys and girls should be able to get the help they need when they need it.

Society makes men of poor boys and then wonders why they act like children if and when they do become adults. The problem with young men in Jamaica is not only one of socialization or male identity. The problem is structural and fundamental, systematic and systemic. Society either does not care or is oblivious to the plight of the male poor and ignorant of their power to

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forcefully remove those in authority or block national development efforts. The inner city and working class male progresses from an often unwanted birth to an infancy lacking protection and love, to an adolescence filled with misconceptions and confusion, to young adulthood decorated with children he is not fully certain are his, to a family court if he is honest but broke, or to prison or the grave if he tries by Mertonian Innovation to respond to the many who constantly remind him that he has to provide by any means. He is guaranteed a place with the four percent of Jamaicans who are not expected to live to see age 40 and requires immense help to occupy a safer place.

The adolescent male of the upper and upper middle classes, clearly better off than his working class counterparts, is not intimidated by the challenge presented by the upwardly mobile females. He is certain of his share of his family's legacy or business. He may become spoilt and arrogant. It is difficult for him to understand the plight of the poor, and he often does not pretend to. In essence he therefore becomes a part of the problem. Yet he is most likely the one who will make decisions regarding the survivability of our women and the marginalized poor, as he owns the core of the private sector, the life-blood of the nation. The middle class male seems most guided and equipped through adolescence. It is he who relies mostly on the guidance of parents. Notwithstanding, this guidance, he is not out of the woods for

he often sees the dilemma of the inner city adolescent and interprets it to be in style or cool .

Education and support of varying forms are needed for all three groups of adolescent males in Jamaica, but concurrent changes must be made to change how both males and females perceive life. It must be recognized that males need to have a fully developed adolescence without premature entry into the labor force. The family needs to recognize that a trained male is a better investment than an abused premature substitute for the frustrated or less than honorable father who left or died.

One of the major problems in Jamaica may well be a lack of vision. The plight of adolescent boys is extremely visible. One can only assume that the policy makers and planners have been too preoccupied with other issues of development to recognize that those for whom the developments are planned may not live to benefit from them and may ensure that others also do not benefit. The situation is most grave for males of the inner city. The newest weapon turned against adolescent males is that of sexual abuse. This cannot be taken lightly.

Three objectives that are instructive for program intervention are presented.

Objective 1: To develop a system that affords adolescent males a chance to enter the world of work later and better qualified.

According to the data, males enter the labor force far too early and comparatively poorly qualified. Their contribution is therefore not maximized; rather, they are expected to produce as if they were equipped with the necessary skills to do so. The expectations placed on the working class adolescent male to earn a living by age 14 years, and sometimes younger, cannot be changed at will. These expectations are maintained obviously because they serve particular needs, without which life could not be sustained. Providing for the family remains the primary role of men in our society. Being able to earn therefore has implications for male identity.

The fact is that a cycle of poverty exists in Jamaica stemming from the residues of slavery but equally because there has been some lack of political will. The society cannot solve its economic and social problems by disenfranchising males of a particular class of education and skills, while concurrently facilitating women of the same class to achieve upward social mobility. The implication is social suicide. The present crime trends should motivate the requisite change. The fact is, if males are increasingly unable to carry out their God-given, family-expected role of providing, they will:

- feel diminished manhood,
- increasingly manifest self-destructive behavior, acts of insecurity, especially violence against their families,

- create alternative means to recapture lost pride through acts of crime and violence, thereby threatening our survival as a nation.

We can begin to build the bridge with better inputs or we can watch the construction of this bridge fail. Urgent short-term as well as long-term measures need to be taken to address the crisis of the working class male. The truth is that surgical applications are required.

Make school attractive to boys

Schools need to be redesigned to be more sensitive to the needs of men and the progressive path of society. Whilst we would rather have our youth see education as both a means to an end and as an end in itself, the reality is that our boys, often stressed by economic and socializing pressures, identify education with earning. Unfortunately some are forced to view education as unimportant because in reality many around them, especially women, are no better off economically despite having an education. As discussed by Anderson (1997), we have no choice but to align school with the demands of the labor market. Schools must therefore become more technical. We discussed earlier Mohammed's (1995) argument that despite fewer males attending the University of the West Indies, men land in technical areas that offer higher remuneration. Why then not design schools towards this end? This is the direction the world is going – it is a technical world. No

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longer do we speak about information; rather we speak about information technology. Why then should the demands of our youth not drive innovations in the school system?

As one adolescent male pointed out, school is a place you go to if you want to be controlled and have people punish you because you do not know. Poor teaching techniques and the abuse of boys in school must be legislated out of existence. We have to put in place sanctions to prevent the physical and psychological abuse of boys especially in primary schools. Teaching strategies are female-oriented, and expectations of male behavior and performance are unacceptably low. Having taught in the primary school, I am convinced that males are often destroyed at that level. They often drop out psychologically at this stage before the physical drop-out occurs in secondary school. I have witnessed schools change from a passing ratio of 1 boy to 4 girls to 50: 50 by simply changing the teacher. Research needs to be carried out in the area of best methods to teach boys. Frankly, a large number of female teachers do not know how to reach boys. Only recently a female teacher in a particular school made the error twice in a single devotion exercise of asking the girls to stand in a co-educational school. The boys were ignored. One boy demanded to know if he was a girl.

Although studies have clearly shown that boys have higher energy levels they are

expected to sit in class like a girl and learn their English and sums. Even girls have complained how boring school is at times. The truth is that we have to retrain and re-equip our teachers to survive in the new video-active age. Talk and chalk has long served its purpose. The continuous appeal to male teachers to return to the classroom is a waste of time. Until teachers are paid at a competitive scale, it will not attract male teachers enough for them to make a significant input at the teaching level.

Develop an effective programme to give youth a second chance if and when they fail in the school system

More centers of technical skills need to be established with a focus on boys from marginalized communities. Centers need to focus on viable areas of training including construction, auto mechanics, carpentry and joinery, ceramics, small electronics, photography, small business and painting.

What is wrong with the HEART program?

The Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART/NTA) needs to adopt gender sensitive approaches if it is to act as an effective second chance program. HEART must include more male-oriented skills programs in keeping with the male crisis and upgrade its system of support. For example, HEART should provide a stipend for students enrolled in programs that are designed to attract adolescent

boys. Programs must treat adolescent male students on a case-by-case basis and assess the short and long term cost of keeping him in the training program. Where it is assessed that funds are not available to support those below the radar it should be declared honestly so that a different approach can be sought.

An alternative approach is to construct on-the-job education programs. This will allow boys to get into large companies and study while they work. In this way they will see the reason for working close to the face. This will also be less costly to the government. It is important to note the difference between the former and latter approach. In the latter case the adolescent male is placed in a company which provides a stipend that is counterpart supported by the government. Part of this package is that the boy has to study related areas of subjects in order to remain in the program or to be accepted as part of the staff of the company. The stipend in this approach is expected to be higher, and there is less of a chance for him to drop out after a month due to lack of support and the demands of his family. This is not uncommon to the HEART program. Finally, each youth taken into this program should be assigned a mentor within the company. This provides a wonderful opportunity for the private sector to become more involved in the socialization of our youth.

Grassroots Programs

The visual and performing arts should be developed in such a manner that through

this medium, the poor can achieve acceptance. Projects must be organized at the grassroots level such as those of the Area Youth Foundation and Children First, which have produced top quality performers from among marginalized adolescent youth.

Objective 2: To address the circumstances and behavior of adolescent males that endanger their lives as well as threaten the lives of others: neglect, violence, drug abuse and poor sexual conduct.

It may seem extremely paradoxical, but we need to protect our children from the state. How can children be put into lock-ups because there is a lack of space in safe houses? Groups such as Children First must take on the additional task of protecting our children from a system that maims and destroys children who are already scarred. There is an urgent need for family service agencies to be made available to families. Families are in trouble. The current probation service and family counseling services may be inadequate. If the battle is to be won comprehensive services need to be put in place, and the focus should be on boys if violence is to be reduced. For too long the job has been done backwards. Boys must now be the focus. The data tell us that we need a program to help sexually abused boys. For them the pain is equally great, yet due to our version of masculinity, the society neglects the tough but easily-broken

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male. Child prostitution laws must also be enforced to protect both boys and girls.

We are aware of the degree of neglect that boys face in the working class setting. They are more likely than girls to be hungry. We have achieved a lot as a country in terms of reducing squalor. The nutritional status of our children is remarkably good but we have a high inequality of child survivability (87th) (Human Development Report, 2000), which suggests that certain groups are extremely vulnerable. The data tell us clearly that where the resources are scarce, the attention is focused on the survival of the female as she is assumed to be soft. It is not surprising that studies show that in certain settings boys can be expected to be shorter than girls in relation to the expected height at that age.²⁸ This is not to ignore the fact that some parents are quite willing to treat their adolescent daughters as a commodity for the survival of the family. The truth is that despite the actions of groups to ameliorate the situation of adolescents and children from poor environments, the government will need to establish a better welfare system, and, even more importantly, will need to steer the country along a path that will guarantee the populace a decent standard of living. Policies should also aim at reducing the extreme inequality in the society, albeit the actions required are always going to be unpopular with the powerful high-income group.

HIV-related deaths of adolescents in this country are largely to blame on poor policies and on our extreme conservatism or plain hypocrisy. Let us begin to face the reality: most of our adolescents are sexually active. They become sexually active between ages 12 and 18 depending on sex and class. We can safely assume that a working class adolescent male of age 14 is already sexually active. Why are sexual issues discussed in language as if all our adolescent males are altar boys and all the girls are saints of the blessed faith? This is as good a time as any to end the hypocrisy. If we do, then we will be able to save our adolescents from the scourge of AIDS.

Acting on the fact that our adolescents are sexually active before their mid-teens, let us shift the emphasis of our campaigns from abstinence to the power of choice. This means equipping our teenagers with information about sex, including how to be protected if the choice is to engage in sexual intercourse. Chevannes and Gayle 2001 among other studies have clearly shown that there is a correlation between economics and early sexual participation. This means that we will need to do more than convince some of our adolescents that sex is better enjoyed and is safer after the magic age of 18. If a child is fully engaged in adult economic activities at age 12, he or she will quite likely engage in sexual intercourse, which is an adult activity. If we convince a teenager to abstain from sex but his or her life circumstances dictate that he or she be an adult prematurely, how will we

²⁸See Michaelmoore and Clarke 1993.

address the issue of sex as a tool for survival? Roughly 8 to 10 percent of Jamaicans live in marginalized urban communities. Can we assume that morally loaded education can save this group from the reality that life is a risk? Scholars at the University of the West Indies have often commented on the frankness of reproductive health promotions in North America and especially Europe. In fact many Jamaican parents pledge not to expose their children to that kind of media. The truth is that our children now have access to aspects of the media, including the Internet that are more explicit than the well-designed, well-meaning promotions of the North that we have criticised in our overly conservative frame.

Here are three practical measures that need to be considered:

1. Reconstruct reproductive health promotions to address the problem groups: Inner city adolescents first, rural second and suburban last. This means to change both the content and language. The intensity needs also to be changed so that certain aspects of the messages carry the degree of seriousness that a plague such as AIDS requires. In other words the promotions will relate to the fact that Jamaica is a complex society. Instead of one script for all, three could be done depicting real life situations in inner city, rural and suburban settings.
2. Remove the focus from local television. Teenagers watch cable, attend dances and parties and walk the streets. Adolescent programs which use local television networks will fail. The JACS Cable Network alone has a much wider adolescent viewership in St. Catherine than TVJ and CVM combined. This is common knowledge. If we are serious about addressing the crisis of STIs, then we need to have the participation of Stone Love, Metro Media and other sound systems and in fact the entire music fraternity.
3. Finally, make condoms easily accessible. Eighty percent of all teenage pregnancies result from sexual intercourse between youth not older men and teenage girls. Older men have too much to risk and are more informed. The problem is that many young people cannot access condoms due to the poor attitude of cashiers at pharmacies, and health and other providers. If we can invest so much in procuring Pepsi and other soft drink machines, why can we not purchase condom machines? In fact multi-purpose vending machines that sell other things at the same time have proven to be most successful. Machines can be placed in the corners of pharmacies, at the edge of parks, in public toilets, in toilets at work places and venues for every dance or public activity.

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A number of programs can be created in the short-term to ameliorate the plight of adolescents in terms of drugs, violence and poor sexual practices. One of the most alarming findings was that teenagers are among the most likely to contract HIV. Even more alarming is the fact that many youth, especially males, still believe a wide range of myths about sex and STIs despite the efforts of our education and health promotion systems. The reality is that much effort has been wasted as the programs have not been methodologically focused. There needs to be greater investment in peer counseling. The more the counselor can relate to the experience of the youth, the method is likely to be better and the content more relevant. Peer counselors should be used to address issues of drug awareness, STIs and violence in schools and on the streets. Programs such as Addiction Alert should be expanded. Classes in personal development should be mandatory in schools.

National school competitions should also be designed to encourage students to do research on the crisis areas of drugs, violence and sex. This and other programs should be designed to encourage studies and enhanced information about sex, drugs and violence. There seems to be few problems in the number of information/activities for adolescent boys especially on sex the problem is with our methods. Boys like to speak about sex. They are quick to pass on information that is erroneous and to do so with a sense of conviction. If the message can be conveyed

to boys on the street through road-side shows and through national quizzes with monetary rewards, an impact can be made.

Frankly, there is much hope in this country. Research tells us that Jamaica responds well to effective mass media campaigns. This is part of the reason the National Family Planning Board was able to make the Two is Better than Too Many campaign in the 1970s and 1980s a phenomenal success. Let us not forget, however, that part of the reason Jamaica's fertility rate dropped from over 4 per childbearing woman in the 1970s to 2.4 today is the immense upward social mobility of women, allowing more women to take control of their lives. The lesson here is that our programs must be accompanied with overall positive changes in the society. The problem is systemic, hence our solutions should also be.

Objective 3: To get the media and the Jamaican diaspora to become a part of the process of change.

The Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARIMAC) and the Press Association of Jamaica, as well as the Caribbean Child Development Centre, Youth.now, Fathers Incorporated, Children First, Area Youth Foundation among other local groups should collaborate to produce media tools for a campaign against violence and sexual abuse. Recently I saw adult black males get up from their seats and head to the bathroom in order to conceal tears at a seminar on the situation

of youth. The occasion was the Reaching Hard-to-Reach Youth Seminar held at the College of North-West London, June 18, 2001. The Area Youth Foundation had just completed a performance on the impact of violence on children in Jamaica. The reaction was immense – a quick exodus of men to the bathroom and the women, unlike the men, crying openly. I could not help going to see if this was really what was happening, macho men crying. After reassuring a very tall and strong young man whose parents are Jamaicans that the situation in Jamaica affects me in like manner, he asked 'What are you all doing down there?' The reason for this personal experience is actually positive.

1. The youth are not hard to reach, and they can help us realize in the most powerful ways how to help them.
2. We are not short on resources, only the will and courage to start the change. Helping adolescent males (and may I add females) will drive at

the core of our country's developmental problems.

3. Jamaica has one of the largest Diaspora per capita in the world, probably beaten only by Irish and Jews. We have no excuse not to try to draw on our external resources both monetary and expertise.

The way forward is to have government, private sector, non-government organizations, community groups, international friends and the media unite in an outright campaign to give our youth, not only those of the upper classes, a chance in life.

Finally there is need for more research into the situation of Jamaican youth survivability. Areas such as prostitution, homosexuality, male bonding and street children are grossly under-researched, due partly to prejudices in the society. The University of the West Indies and other tertiary institutions also have a role to play. Scholars should be required to carry out the responsibility that comes with the privilege of education.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Baby father: father of a child, usually not married to the mother of the child

Baby mother: mother of a child, usually not married to the father of the child

Corner crews: term used to refer to young men (or women) of inner city communities who identify with a non -criminal gang

Don: person who heads a visible and powerful political or drug gang

Shottas and Sprats: persons who act under the command of a don within a hierarchy, so that the shotta is next in command to the don

Downtown: geographically speaking, this refers to that aspect of the city of Kingston located south of Cross Roads; sociologically speaking, it refers to the areas where the urban poor reside

Uptown: Those areas of Kingston located above Cross Roads, especially the middle class suburbs

Goose: term used to describe a person who gets tricked easily

HEART/NTA: Human Employment and Resource Training Programme/National Training Agency is a two decade old programme designed to give school leavers a second chance in both academic and technical skills training

Hustle: involvement in economic activities, which are considered illegal or distasteful by mainstream society

Juggle: involvement in more than one low-paying economic activities

Schoolers: youth attending school at the primary or secondary levels

Sketel: a loose young lady/female whose sexual activities are considered distasteful to a community/not necessarily a prostitute

Yard: Space occupied by a family or families that is fenced or protected or separated from the street or other such units

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