

## **What You Sow Is What You Reap: Violence and the Construction of Male Identity in Jamaica**

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### **What is Wrong with Our Males?**

This is the question on the lips of an increasing number of people. The sight of idle males, young and strong, on the street corner, the daily news of the brutal, senseless murders they commit, the virtual dereliction of higher education by them, their cruelty to women, their display of a value system alien to the one most of us know--all these and many more examples of behaviors most of us fail to understand prompt the question. This essay, as the title suggests, argues that whatever it is our males have become or are becoming, we ourselves who ask the question have contributed.

Of the over 380 murders committed in Jamaica in 1996 and the nearly 500 in 1997, for which arrests were made, nearly eight out of every ten the police believed were committed by persons--males we assume--thirty years old and younger. Some of them were as young as a thirteen year old Grade 8 or Grade 9 student. We may assume also that the unsolved murders were committed by the same age group.

Along with the murders we should also consider shooting, a crime which involves personal injury. Eighty percent of shootings in 1996 and 86 percent of shootings in 1997, for which arrests were made, were committed by the same group. The comparable figures for robbery are 88percent in 1996 and 78 percent in 1997. The group also accounted for 70 percent of rape and carnal abuse in 1996 and 61 percent in 1997.

In other words, Jamaica's murderers and major criminals are mainly youths. That is to say, they come from that section of the population which most indulges in football, including six-a-side, which comprises the most avid players and fans of the game, whose favorite music is dance-hall, whose idols are the most popular DJ artistes, and who wear or aspire to the latest in designer clothes and footwear. At age 30, the oldest would have been born in the late 1960s and grew up knowing the political violence of the 1970s, but would have been too young to participate in it<sup>1</sup>. The younger ones would have only heard tell of it, and would therefore not have known or been a part of the youth-led community-based volunteerism that also came with the 70s. We are led to believe from the reports which describe them as "unskilled laborers and unemployed" that most would have come from among the army of males disappearing from out the school system at Grades 8, 9 and 10, ill-prepared for the world of work, unemployed.

In a situation where one person out of a population is a deviant, we would focus an explanation of his deviance on the formation of his personality. But in a situation where an entire section of a population is deviant, our focus inevitably must be directed to processes that shape the foundations of behavior. Apart from our most basic instincts of survival, such as breathing, eating and drinking, human behavior is the result of learning the meanings, values and intentions of our actions. These meanings, values and intentions are acquired by social intercourse with a collective, a family, a peer group, a

community, a society. Without the collective we would remain animals, of course, but we would never become human. For one thing, we would never be able to speak, and, if we could not speak, we would never be able to think or to communicate effectively, or be the object of the communication of others. This process whereby we construct our foundations of behavior is what we call socialization.

In what now follows I present a summary of the main highlights of the socialization process in Jamaica whereby the normative ideals of gender identity and behavior are constructed and represented. Some of them are common to the Caribbean region, if not universal. The summary is based on recent studies conducted on the island.

### **Gender division**

Common to virtually every known society is a division of labor along gender lines. The division takes as its defining axis the family, however constituted, since this is the basic unit of social organization in society. At its most general, work aimed at creating and maintaining a nurturing environment for the young and vulnerable members of the species is the responsibility of the female; work aimed at providing support for the unit is the responsibility of the male. In Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean males and females are socialized to identify domestic work as female, and work outside the domestic sphere, but supportive of it, as male. Thus, cooking, washing, bathing, grooming, dressing and nursing children, tidying up the house, and such the like, are chores seen as the responsibility of the females, while chores relative to the household economy, such as animal husbandry, artisan skills, farming, wage labor, and other outdoor forms of income-earning, are the responsibility of the male. The fact that many boys are required to perform some "female" tasks, as happens in a family of all or mostly boys, or that many girls are required to undertake "male" tasks, in a family of all girls, is of little consequence as far as the behavioral norms are concerned. What matters is the gender significance of what is done. Even as they perform such cross-gender tasks children are made aware of their gender significance, which is usually rationalized as preparation for an independent and self-reliant life. Boys, as soon as they are able to, will resist performing such simple tasks as washing up dishes and tidying the house.

The gender divisions in the household are often contrasted as light work or work requiring little physical exertion against heavy work demanding great physical strength. Hence the ideas are that tough work is male work, and that a boy should be trained to be capable, by endurance, of tough work. The socialization of the boy child is often aimed at making him tough. His punishment is generally speaking much more severe than that meted out to the girl child. Believing in corporal punishment as a means of control and a means of "bending the tree while it is young", Jamaicans further believe that from the time a boy approaches adolescence only a man is strong enough to bend a wayward sapling. Up to that age, corporal punishment is generally exercised by mothers, thereafter by fathers, uncles or older siblings who are able to "drop man lick". To the provider role which a father is expected to perform is added the role of ultimate disciplinarian, the one to whom a mother appeals if her punishment is ineffectual. "Wait till yu faada come home!" often gets quicker results than the cajoling or flogging of a mother. Incidentally, this role of father is hardly compatible with that of a warm and nurturing parent. The society cannot have it both ways. In situations where the mother

is the sole parent, the punishment of boys, if they are not close friends and companions of their mothers, can be downright cruel.

A boy is also the first to suffer deprivation where the children are exposed. If resources do not allow for the children to attend school all at the same time, girls are given the advantage over boys. Interestingly, one would have thought that not being able to afford "lunch money" parents would ensure the children's attendance at school where they are able to get food supplied by the School Feeding program. But the people think otherwise. No lunch money, no school. Lunch money for only one, the girl goes, the boy stays back. Necessity is made into a virtue, as suffering becomes a means of producing a hardened man who knows how to survive.

"School is girl stuff!" This declaration by an eight-year old inner city boy to my research assistant, reveals the association of meaning built up in the minds of many boys. He was actually quite proud of the fact that it was his absence from school that allowed his sister to be present in school. But training in survival through deprivation and harsh treatment and constructing male identity through provider roles are not the only factors that give girls a school advantage. Parents will push through school any child, girl or boy, who shows exceptional intellectual endowment, but because of their own naturally earlier development, girls tend to be more favored.

The nurture-provider gender axis forms one of the bases of gender identity among children. Whereas girls are preoccupied with acquiring nurturing skills, boys are learning from quite early the need to access money. In rural communities their farming initiatives are encouraged, in urban communities their initiatives on the streets and in the markets. For many boys, unless they work, they cannot guarantee their own attendance at school. In the scale of priorities, school and education rank lower than making money, although an education is also valued. By the time he was 13 years old, Bully tells us that he owned six heads of cattle in his village in Portland, his 12-year old brother three and his ten-year old brother two. His father, he said, was proud of them. By contrast, their only sister became the only sibling to sit and pass the Common Entrance Examination (which ensures continuation on to secondary school). Now a JAMAL (Jamaica's main adult literacy organization) student at 20 years old, he refers to their early morning routine of animal husbandry as "animal school", the real school coming several hours after and three miles away<sup>2</sup>. In an inner city community where we recently conducted fieldwork, a fourteen year old boy who had dropped out of school to become an armed peddler of cocaine, was hoping that when he had earned enough to be able to get himself and his mother out of the ghetto and into the United States he would then go back to school. But for now, making money was far more important.

What does a young Jamaican boy expect to do with money? He learns that this is how he begins to "make life" and earn the respect of his family, his peers and the wider community. Making life is active, not passive. It governs gender relations as well as economic activities. By the time a boy reaches eight or nine years old, he would have already known that in his present relationship with girls and his future relationship with women, the active role is his. "Is man look wuman, not wuman look man!" By contrast, a girl or woman who assumes the active role in inter-gender relations is considered loose. These ideas are common to females as well and determine their expectations of males. In

research carried out in Jamaica by Claudia Chambers and me, women reported that one of their reasons for engaging in multiple partnerships was economic<sup>3</sup>. And in a study for the National Family Planning Board more men approved of multiple partnerships than actually engaged them, the difference being that they could not afford the outside relationship<sup>4</sup>. Only in recent years have we observed successful female informal commercial importers using their economic power to keep younger men, whom they do not expect to work. But generally speaking, the construction of male identity has as a principal building block the ideal of control over economic resources. We can therefore imagine the crisis of identity suffered by a man who is failing in the imperative to "make life", but who must relate to women. The turn to illegal activities must be understood in this context. In Herbert Gayle's 1997 study of coping strategies in an inner city community, men are expected to "make life" by fair means, juggling, or by foul means, hustling. Juggle, if you can, but hustle if you must. But you must do something. To do nothing is to be judged and branded "worthless."<sup>5</sup>

As a second line of defense in the struggle to become and remain a man, hustling raises an issue of morality. For many men, meeting the demands of a male identity is a far greater moral imperative than the virtues of honesty and respect for property and even life. We do well to remember that Anansi the Spider, the main figure in Jamaican folklore, is male, and in one of the tales about him, he survives at the expense of his wife and children. Survival as a virtue has been a part of the social and cultural life of African-Jamaicans from the earliest times. It remains a fundamental part of the ethos of the people, particularly in these hard times. And although it applies to females also, as when some women enter relations with men for economic reasons--no romance without finance, or when domestic helpers pilfer without remorse from employers they believe to be better off, the main thrust in the socialization for survival is directed towards the male. Apart from the exposure to deprivation, survival skills are learned by the unsupervised exposure to the world outside the yard, to the street or the road, in effect to the peer group.

A girl's life, for as long as she remains dependent, is surrounded by a protective ring, which starts at home, encompasses the school and ends at home. Her whereabouts are known--home, school or on an errand. Even the time it takes to get home from school is sometimes known and monitored by parents, or must be accounted for. By contrast, as soon as a boy approaches pre-pubescent years and the peer group begins to exercise its magnetic pull, he is allowed to socialize outside the home, that is "out a' street", or "out a' road"--out of the direct control and supervision of parents. Once his chores and errands are done, there is no demand for a boy to remain in the yard. Indeed, too great an attachment to the confines of the yard is regarded as problematic, the symptom of a maladjusted, effeminate male--a maamaman. Left up thus, a boy learns from and with his peers the tricks and trade of the street culture, how to navigate the dangers, how to exploit them.

As a socializing site, the street, or the road (village square), is a male domain, in contrast to the yard, which is a female domain. There, males of all ages have the license to move about and socialize without censure. In this unsupervised setting, boys gather experience in risk-taking. They play their own games of chance, including gambling, model their behavior after young male adults, hang out on the corner or in the square,

fish in the river, swim in the sea, go bird shooting, hop trucks, test and perfect their bicycle-riding skills, follow a sound system, invent or learn their own speech pattern, learn how to talk to girls, experience the art of heterosexual intercourse and homophobic discourse, and run boat (organize communal cooking). It is the peer group that will put the final touches, so to speak, to the construction of his male identity--his anti-phobic heterosexuality, power and control over women through control over resources, paternity, and the importance of respect.

The peer group virtually replaces mother and father as the controlling agents, or, if not an entire substitute, a countervailing force. An adolescent boy's friends--his "spaar", "staar", "my you", "posse", "crew", exact an affinity and a loyalty as sacred as the bond of kinship, as strong as the sentiment of religion. They socialize one another, the older members of the group acting as the transmitters of what passes as knowledge, invent new values and meanings. This is what parents mean when they speak of "bad company". "Bad company" simply means my son's friends whom I do not know, or whom I do not approve of. Its bonding power and its potential for deviance scare parents. When "bad company" turns out to be everywhere the same, sharing the same departure from the norms of the yard and acquiring the same symbols and the same meaning, then we have a generation gap. That is alright if the departure is not great. When, however, it results in the kinds of divergences that produce one of the highest murder rates in the world, we have not a generation gap but a generation of strangers, people we ourselves have produced but no longer recognize.

We do not, for example, know how or why it is that the gun has become such a symbol of young male identity at this turn of century, but it has. The proliferation of guns is not simply a function of the drug trade but the ultimate representation of what it means to be a man, the object of the fear and respect of others and the fearless defender of one's own self-respect. Not every youth who owns a gun is a gunman. In inner city Jamaica and many other parts of the country, the illegal possession of the gun by many male youths functions in exactly the same way as the legal possession of it--the ultimate defense. In an era in which the greatest social sin among young males today is to dis, that is to show disrespect, the gun is the ultimate guarantor of respect. That also is why the gun salute has been appropriated from the state. The gun has become a sort of language among the young people. The most common gesture of a young male in an angry exchange is a hand tensed in the shape of a pistol and an arm pivoting in symbolic intent. And who can forget Dionne Hemmings's gesture after capturing the Olympic gold for Jamaica--her right arm and hand extended in symbolic gun salute? The so-called inner city don is a role model not only because of his ability to command and dispense largesse, but also because he is a living source of power--the power over life and over death, the ultimate man. Among the youth a common name for the penis was rifle, according to a 1991 study (Chevannes & Chambers, 1991). In inner city communities the dream of many a young boy is to be able to own a gun, preferably personally, but jointly with the crew if necessary.

No one willed or intended all this to be so. No political boss or don would admit that his/her drive for five-year power was intended to produce press button (pre-pubescent assassins) and shata ("shooters"). No television station or cable company would concede that it has any responsibility for violence and coarse behavior becoming a way of life,

nor would any franchise holder in Kingston. The parents who afford the Nike track shoes but will not afford the school fees, or who abuse teachers for attempting to discipline children, the teachers who neither teach nor mentor, the women who transport the guns, the mothers who shield the community "protectors", the officers and agents of the law who shoot when "attacked with a knife"--none see themselves as sharing responsibility for this generation of strangers. The failure of the system of justice to dispense justice with dispatch and equity, even the "global", twenty-first century, American society in which one can virtually walk in a store with dollars and walk out with guns, load them in a barrel and ship them to Jamaica, have to be seen as contributing parts of the problem. And therein lies a great difficulty, for where blame is so diffuse, no one can accept responsibility. But in a way we all are responsible. We provide the building blocks, the young people design and construct their own edifice. We are reapers of our own sowing.

Are Jamaican males being marginalized? Certainly not, if the main factor being considered is power. Despite the increasingly larger proportions of women at the University of the West Indies, it is the men who are elected to the seat of student power. At 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-Broos, 1997; Toulis, 1997). The marginalization discourse always ignores these facts.

If educational performance is our criterion, the picture still does not allow us to conclude with an unreserved yes. What is clearly the case is male under-participation or under-representation in the key institution designed to prepare the young for life, namely the education system. This, coupled with the high visibility of male youth unemployment, creates a greater impression of marginality. There are proportionately more unemployed young females than unemployed young males, but the impression is one of male and not female marginality. Young unemployed females do not hang out on the street corners and in the village squares, neither do young unemployed males hang around the yard trying to find something to do. The socialization process does not operate that way.

But under-participation in the education system, through lower enrollment and attendance rates, is bound to have consequences for educational performance, and, since occupational placement is increasingly being determined by educational competence, bound to result in some social dislocation. As bad as our present problems are, they would be far worse but for the ability of the informal sector to absorb functionally illiterate males, who are somehow able to make and consolidate their transition to manhood, sometimes rising to positions of leadership within their communities. Expansion of the formal sector of the economy at the expense of the informal would therefore make it difficult for males to drop out of, or under-participate in, school and still get by.

Insofar as Jamaican values place a premium on fashioning the male into a tough, invulnerable sort of human being, no change can be expected in parents protecting their girls and exposing their boys. Girls will continue to exhibit higher rates of enrollment and attendance, especially where the family's economic circumstance forces parents to

be selective in their attention. But even if the economy were to allow all children to attend school at the same time, there are urgent issues which still need to be addressed. One is the deprivation of education to the All-Age school leavers, who will have no chance for another three or more years to access any form of formal training, although the soon to be instituted National Assessment Program should guarantee institutionalized education for every child through to Grade 11.

The second issue concerns what we teach and how. A conscious effort has to be made to make school more attractive to boys. I would like to focus a few remarks on the secondary school system, which I believe could function in quite a different way if our own ideas about what a secondary education is designed to do itself changes. Up to the present, and looking beyond the turn of the millennium, we have seen education in general as a means to an end, not an end in itself. We send our children to school, not so much that they be self-fulfilled by being educated, but that they study to become professionals--the doctors, engineers, lawyers, people who earn a large income. It is fair to say that this has been the motive of our rural forebears throughout the post-emancipation years of the 19th century, right up to the present. The middle and upper middle classes with origins in the black rural folk are an example of the worthwhileness of the effort and the sacrifice.

But there is another aspect to education that we have neglected, and that is its teleological function. Here education is not just a means to the end of upward mobility, but an end in itself. To realize one's full potential as the only being who cannot be oneself unless one is a part of a society, one must be educated. The function of education is to make us more human. It is therefore an important aspect of the socialization process.

Socialization is therefore an interactive process, in which each individual internalizes the meanings, values and behavioral norms of a collective. Within the collective, some people exert greater influence than others in the construction of such meanings, values and norms, in their transmission, as well as in the timing of their transmission. Thus, for infants and very young children, the older members of the family are more influential. Later on, teachers exert greater influence, sometimes surpassing that of parents and older siblings. This fact is seldom of concern to parents, who see the school as an effective adjunct to the home. However, it is often the case that the peer group or the wider community or society exert influences that are not only greater than the influence of parents and teachers, but contradictory to those nurtured within the family and classroom. In such cases the sites where the socialization takes place are both outside the home and outside the control of parents.

Secondly, socialization is an interactive process. If we are socialized by others, we also socialize others. For the construction of meaning, the determination of values and norms are never fixed and frozen in time or space, but are ever the creation of our interaction. This is true even of children. Children do socialize one another, and socialize others as well, including their own parents. It is therefore misleading to conceive of socialization as a one-way process, from adults to children. Thirdly, for any individual socialization is an on-going and never-ending process. We never cease being socialized or socializing others. Were this not so, once socialized we could never change our values or our

outlook, could never acquire new ways of speaking, or construct new meanings. Finally, socialization does not replace consciousness and freedom. It does not assume conformity. The fact that one learns how to talk does not translate into the compulsion to talk. Thus, part of the process itself is given to determining and communicating the consequences of deviance, the meaning and weight of sanctions. Conformity to the ideals may be the result of fear of the consequences of deviance as it may be the result of affective identification.

Adolescence is itself a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. We could call it a long period of liminality. One of the difficulties facing our adolescence is the way the transition is structured. First it exacerbates the contradiction between nature and society. Nature tells them they are ready for reproduction, but society tells them they are not. This could be tolerable, were it not so long-lasting. Society tells them they need to spend an increasingly longer span of years acquiring an education, while Nature quietly speaks to them at increasingly earlier ages. Add to that the social context in which the constraints on sexual behavior are weak, and sexual stimulation is an omnipresent feature of daily life. During this period of transition the adolescent is biologically an adult, but socially a child, subject to and dependent on others.

As a recognized institution overseeing that period of transition, the secondary school could, it seems to me, serve to enact the ritual transformation, so that the students who enter as boys leave as men. As it stands now, for boys there is no marked ritual. They undergo no event, real or symbolic, to signal their transformation into manhood. Manhood must be fought for and won. For many boys it comes only when they begin to work and contribute to the household, for others when they earn the right to their own key to the house, and still others when their paternity over some neighbor's daughter's baby is acknowledged.

But for this to happen, three things are required. First, teachers would have to see their role as helping boys to make the transition to manhood. The objective of this aspect of the socialization process would then be not only to give them the foundation on which to build careers as professionals or skilled people later on, but also to help them acquire a sound sense of self, based on who they are but fired by who they could become. The teacher thus becomes a mentor, the wise guide, instructor and confidant, helping a child over the transition. Second, what we consider education would have to be broadened to embrace as many as possible of the defining characteristics of manhood in our current social context, if only to contend with them. The concept of education could be expanded to include exercises in the ways of accessing personal power--through the art of self-defense and self-control, grooming and fashion-consciousness, responsible sexuality and gender relations, the art of music appreciation and word-power, leadership and responsibility, home-making and financing, and so many other ways, including sports, that contribute to the social definition of manhood. Some of these could be built into the curriculum, others instituted as co-curricular education. Graduation then becomes the ritual re-integration into the community as men. And here the third requirement would trip in--the concurrence of parents and the wider community that they no longer have boys but men. A male could not be accorded the status of being a man until and unless he gains a secondary education. The message to a boy would be this: If you want to be a man, you must go to school.



Rituals are a necessary part of social life. We cannot live without them altogether. The need to insert them in the education system is so strong among Jamaicans that it is taken to extremes. Even Basic Schools now hold a graduation ceremony. Given this impulse, graduation from secondary school could take on far greater significance than is already invested in it. One of the reasons secondary schools in Jamaica attract very strong loyalty from their alumni, who retain life-long bonds of friendship, could very well be the fact that they were the sites where boys became men.

Nice ideas, one might say, but we could all die at the hand of some young gunman by the time high schools become rites of passage institutions. Do we have to wait for this to happen before we begin to see a softer, caring, more refined and socially responsible type of young man? The answer is no. In any case it is unrealistic to hold the schools alone responsible for such an enormous project. All the major public institutions, service, sports, economic, NGOs, have to be engaged, as many now are, each in its own way attempting to address at national and community levels what everyone agrees is an urgent social problem. But I would recommend that the problem of crime demands a special focus.

According to recent Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica (ESSJ) reports from 1994 to 1997, over 70 percent of the murders and shootings regularly take place in Kingston and St Andrew and the adjacent parish of St Catherine--the Kingston Metropolitan Region, in fact. And not simply the Kingston Metropolitan Region. The Police are very specific--the western region of the Corporate Area has the highest concentration. This is where most of the marginalized inner city communities are to be found. The reports further identify the population bearing the main responsibility for these crimes--the youth, that is males between 15 and 30 years old, sometimes as low as 13.

The problem can be addressed by targeting this population and, given our understanding of their peculiarities as young males, co-opting and bringing them in "from the cold" and from the margins. Kingston has enormous but unexploited potential as a cultural capital. Its natural harbor, backdrop of mountains, historic buildings, art galleries, Institute of Jamaica, institutions of higher learning, theatres, gardens (what's left of them) and people constitute a veritable gold mine. Its bustling street markets along Heywood and Princess Streets and Spanish Town Road to the Coronation Market are living studies of culture many a visitor would pay to experience. Kingston is still the reggae capital of the world, with some of the finest world-class musicians and recording studios. But it is probably the only major capital in the wider Anglo-phone, Franco-phone and Hispanic Caribbean without a tourism market. One of the major reasons for this is, without doubt, the high level of crime. Even those of us living within Kingston itself are so contained within our own gridded prisons passing for homes and our security-guarded communities as to be unable to exploit the rich culture of our own city. Few uptown housewives care to venture to the downtown markets as they once did in Saturday morning rituals, meeting and gossiping with their bonded country-higglers and hand-cart men. The Ward Theatre, an icon of the performing arts, has become a victim of the fear and paranoia unleashed by the youth.

But what if the male youths of Kingston were to be sold the idea that inasmuch as they now own and control the city they could exploit its rich cultural heritage by offering it as a tourism destination? In this they themselves have much to offer, for they are among the country's most creative people. There is far more wealth to be gained by tourism, gained in greater peace and safety and shared in more extensive reach, than by drug trafficking, extortion racket and robbery. The idea in fact calls for a community tourism focus, since the product is not, as on the north coast, the sea and the sun but people--their past heritage and present accomplishments, their joie de vivre and hospitality. People, local and foreign, would pay handsomely for that. Crime as such would not thereby cease, for even in the best of times and the safest of places robberies and murders do take place, but they do not leave the rest of the population feeling exposed and vulnerable. For this to happen, though, the youths have to buy into it. They would have to own and control the product. This is not beyond them. We have only to recall their extraordinary level of volunteerism and community building in the 1970s.

Targeting and co-opting the male youth of Kingston could transform our inner-city communities at the margin of the mainstream from derelict eyesores into centers of recreation and learning. The result could be the transformation of gunmen and shata into creative and productive men, and the dawn of a new era of peace for Jamaica. After all, it is always in the margins that prophets and visionaries appear, and from the margins that societies are renewed.

#### **Notes**

1. Jamaica has had a stable two party system of democracy since 1944, based on a first-past-the-post territorial representation. Elections are generally intense, but beginning in the 1960's, political representation in the densely populated inner-city areas of Kingston introduced possibly the most effective means of winning and defending constituencies, namely armed gangs of youths. Supporters of the opposing side would be pushed out through violence, and the constituency turned into a virtual garrison. Once the rise of Democratic Socialism in the 1970s was accompanied by friendly relations with neighboring Cuba, many read communism in the making and a deadly struggle between the two political parties saw over 800 mostly poor inner-city youths killed in the months leading up to the election in October, 1980. But the 1970s was also a period of heightened volunteerism, which merely intensified a long tradition of building societies, clubs and church groups. Under Michael Manley's democratic socialism, the youth clubs flourished, citizens associations and councils grew, a national youth service was introduced, Labor Day transformed into a work day, and community projects promoted. The backbone of all this was the male youths between 18 and 30.
2. Interview conducted in November, 1998.
3. Chambers, C. & Chevannes, B. (1991). Report on focus groups: Sexual decision-making project. Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies.
4. See Chevannes, B. (1985). Jamaican men: Sexual beliefs and attitudes. Kingston: National Family Planning Board.

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5. Gayle, H. (1997). Hustling and juggling in inner-city communities in Kingston. M.Sc. thesis. Kingston: Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies.

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