Urban Poverty and Violence in Jamaica

Caroline Moser
Jeremy Holland
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The World Bank
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Acknowledgments

The research on which this paper is based was carried out during September and October of 1995, utilizing a Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA) methodology. The authors conducted the research in collaboration with a team from the Centre for Population, Community and Development in the Department of Sociology and Social Work at the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Mona, under the direction of Dr. Barry Chevannes. Meera Shah of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex participated as the PUA trainer. The work was commissioned by the World Bank's Human Resources Operations Division in LA3. Funding for PUA training and local fieldwork costs was provided by the British Development Division in the Caribbean (BDDC) of the British Overseas Development Administration as a U.K. contribution to the preparation of the Jamaican Social Investment Fund (JSIF).

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- Charmaine Harris
- Herbert Gayle
- Jeremy Holland
- Jennifer Jones
- Pauline Kidd

- Horace Levy
- Caroline Moser
- Arthur Newland
- Angela Stultz-Crawle
- Imani Tafari Ama
- Wilfred Talbert

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IN JAMAICA, URBAN VIOLENCE dominates the press. Stories graphically describe how violence not only kills, but also threatens personal safety, limits access to jobs, and undercuts community-based organizations. These stories are not contrived. Independently gathered statistics show that violence, despite its long history in Jamaica, has escalated steadily since independence in 1962. In the 1950s and 1960s, the homicide rate was approximately seven per 100,000 people; by the 1980s it had risen to 23 per 100,000. By the late 1980s the homicide rate was twice as high as in the United States. In the two-year period 1961-62 there were 183 homicides in Jamaica. In 1989-90 there were 981. In the single year of 1996 there were 922, and in the first six days of 1997 the murder rate was almost three per day. The rate of other violent crimes has grown even more precipitously. The number of felonious woundings rose from 466 in 1961-62 to 9,862 in 1989-90; rapes increased from 352 to 2,096 in the same period. Meanwhile, the percentage of crimes the Jamaican police have solved has decreased.

Although violence is clearly not confined either to urban areas or to poor people, violent crimes tend to be geographically concentrated in poor urban communities, with more than half of them occurring in Kingston and St. Andrew, and almost three-quarters of murders and more than 80 percent of shootings taking place in Kingston, St. Andrew, or Spanish Town in 1994. Both victims and perpetrators of violent crime tend to be young men, who account for 60 percent of all arrests for murders; 21- to 25-year-olds are the leading age group arrested for all serious crimes.
Increasingly violence has involved women, not only as victims of crimes by men, but also as perpetrators of violence against other women. At least 40 percent of murders in 1994 were the result of domestic disputes with women as the victims. A recent study of adolescent girls in Kingston found that most of them had witnessed at least one fight in the past year, 37 percent had been involved in a fight themselves, and 30 percent had been afraid to go to school because of violence in their communities. 3

Violence takes many forms. Political violence, for instance, has been a near constant feature of Jamaican party politics, from the first elections in 1944. The 1980 general elections reportedly left almost 900 people dead. Incidents of political violence are often the result of conflict between partisan gangs that operate mainly in low-income urban communities. These groups engage in armed conflict and intimidate others in order to influence their votes at election time. Drug violence, most widely associated with cocaine and Jamaica's role as a trans-shipment point for South American crack and powder cocaine, has received widespread publicity, especially when organized gangs or “posses” moved to the U.S. mainland. Domestic violence — encompassing a range of crimes against women, from rape and sexual assault to domestic abuse and murder — has also increased.

While the impact of violence is felt at all levels of Jamaican society, to date the voices of the poor themselves have rarely been heard. Partly as a result of this, the complex details behind the statistics are often well obscured. What kinds of violence really affect poor people most? What solutions do they believe would be most effective? This study was an attempt to find answers to questions like these.

A. Poverty Reduction, Violence, and the Jamaican Social Investment Fund

The Jamaican government and civil society alike increasingly recognize widespread violence and crime as a serious island-wide problem affecting all levels of society — and one with important economic and social-development consequences. The costs of violence include weak investor confidence, higher health and police costs, the disaffection and migration of the urban middle class, higher mortality and morbidity rates, reduced access to social services, dysfunctional families, deeper oppression of women, and an overall climate of fear that replaces a spirit of cooperation and participation in community life.

Mortality and morbidity statistics tell a grim story of the clear public-health burden and economic cost that violence imposes on society. For men aged 15 to 44, injuries account for nearly 60 percent of disability adjusted life years (DALYs) lost, and homicide is the leading cause (35 percent). For Jamaica as a whole, injuries account for a quarter of all DALYs lost, and in 1990, one out of 10 DALYs lost was due to homicide. 4

Because of the importance of violence as a contributory factor to urban poverty, this study of urban poverty and violence was undertaken during the preparation phase of the Jamaican Social Investment Fund (JSIF) to contribute to project design. The JSIF was an outgrowth of Jamaica's recently approved National Poverty Eradication Program, which emphasized community-based interventions undertaken in partnership with NGOs, the private sector, and communities themselves. Recognizing the limited capacity of existing government institutions to initiate small-scale projects at the community level, the government established the JSIF in February 1996, with the primary goal of contributing to poverty reduction and helping create an environment for sustainable national development. The JSIF is designed to assist the government in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable groups currently underserved by existing programs and institutional mechanisms in three ways: first, by establishing an efficient, demand-driven and complementary mechanism to deliver basic services and infrastructure to the poor; second, by mobilizing and channeling additional resources to the areas of basic social and economic infrastructure and social services;
and third, by increasing national institutional capacity to identify, design, implement, manage, and sustain small-scale community-based projects.

**B. THE STUDY AND ITS METHODOLOGY**

To incorporate the rarely heard voices of the urban poor in the JSIF project design, the study used a Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA) methodology with fieldwork in five communities that are broadly representative of Jamaica’s poor urban areas. The specific objective of the study was to elicit and identify perceptions of four different aspects of violence: its causes; the interrelationship of violence and poverty; the impact of violence on employment, the economic and social infrastructure, and local social institutions; and the perceived means by which government, communities, households, and individuals could work to reduce violence. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, researchers guaranteed the anonymity of the communities and the participants in the studies by using pseudonyms throughout this report.5

The Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA) methodology used in this study emphasizes local knowledge and enables local people to make their own appraisals, analyses, and plans.6 It is an iterative, flexible research approach that is particularly appropriate for the investigation of complex, causal relationships, such as those that surround violence in Jamaica.

In PUA, the reliability of findings is assured through the use of triangulation — using a variety of techniques and sources to investigate the same key issues and verify the results. Qualitative research such as this, which stresses in-depth investigation in a small number of communities, uses purposive as opposed to random sampling. This means identifying study communities considered representative of the issue under investigation (see Table 1), and within them undertaking the PUA with sufficient groups to be representative of that community.

Greenland and Campbell Town were identified as “depressed” inner-city areas of Kingston with opposing political leanings. Zinc City was chosen as a “garrison” community, an enclave controlled by one of the country’s major political parties. Maka Walk was seen to be representative of the type of violence plaguing the tourism zones of the country. All were perceived to display evidence of drug-related activities.

**C. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

To identify the causal relationships that produce and sustain violence in poor urban communities in Jamaica and to begin to identify interventions to break the cycle, this study used an analytical framework that drew together the violence-poverty-social institution nexus (depict-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
<th>Greenland</th>
<th>Campbell Town</th>
<th>Park Town</th>
<th>Zinc City</th>
<th>Maka Walk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City location</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>secondary city</td>
<td>secondary city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-city location</td>
<td>inner city</td>
<td>inner city</td>
<td>peri-urban</td>
<td>poor neighborhood</td>
<td>inner city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic characteristics</td>
<td>declining residential and business areas</td>
<td>residential area near factories</td>
<td>residential area</td>
<td>bimarcated into upper &amp; lower sections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal spatial division</td>
<td>fragmented into numerous turf areas</td>
<td>differentiated by socio-economic status</td>
<td>bimarcated by political patronage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party characteristics</td>
<td>contrasting political party alignment</td>
<td>politically aligned community</td>
<td>politically controlled “garison community”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>credible “gatekeepers” willing to cooperate with the research project and provide access, security and trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ed in Figure 1). An understanding of the interrelationship of these three elements is important for the design of appropriate policy recommendations.

In examining this nexus, it is critical to understand that people's perceptions of their poverty are not necessarily based on fixed income measurements or captured by “poverty lines,” but more frequently relate to vulnerability — to complex aspects of “well-being” and “livelihood security,” which include survival, security, and self-respect.  

Vulnerability, which refers not only to individuals but also households and communities, is closely linked to asset ownership; the more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are. Assets, both tangible and intangible, are as follows:

- **Labor**: commonly identified as the most important asset of poor people.
- **Human capital**: health status, which determines people’s capacity to work, and skills and education, which determine the return to their labor.
- **Productive assets**: for poor urban households housing is often the most important in this category.
- **Household relations**: a mechanism for pooling income and sharing consumption.
- **Social capital**: reciprocity within communities and between households based on trust deriving from social ties. The extent to which a community itself can be considered an asset depends on its “stocks” of social capital, identified as the networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. These are the reciprocal exchanges that exist first and foremost between individuals and households, but that then extend into social institutions at the community level. Such institutions can be either hierarchical or horizontal in terms of structure. The greater the collaboration of horizontally based social institutions at community level, the higher the “stocks” of social capital.

Understanding how each asset relates to violence, and how violence in turn consolidates or erodes it, is critical to unlocking the complex links between poverty and violence. In addition, it is clear that the relationship between poverty and violence is mediated positively or negatively through social institutions, ranging from the family to informal local associations such as sports clubs and dance halls to formal organizations such as the church, schools, and police.
MAIN FINDINGS

A. LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY: ‘WE ARE ALL POOR BUT WE NO POVERTY’

In exploring the violence-poverty-social institutions nexus, researchers did not start with violence. Instead, they used local people's perceptions of poverty as the entry point.

As Box 1 illustrates, initially all the focus groups claimed that everyone in their communities was poor. They were reluctant to put people in different categories. But when they were questioned closely, it was clear that they drew distinctions — between those who “have it” and those who “don’t have it,” as one focus group put it. And it was clear who was who: A group of young children in Greenland drew a picture of a typical “rich man” as a “don”—type figure with gold jewelry, name-brand shoes, and a big house, and a “poor man” as a tiny figure they described as a woman, who had unkempt hair and was standing by a little shack (Figure 2). Moreover, even when describing residents who clearly were poor, the focus groups drew distinctions — between, for example, the “poor” and the “very poor.”

Well-being analysis revealed that, in general, the urban poor of Jamaica conceive of poverty not as an income-based phenomenon, but in terms of asset ownership, with labor the most important asset. Moreover, they identified access to regular work as the most critical precondition for avoiding poverty. A focus group in Zinc City associated well-being with ownership of human capital, through educational attainment and access to health care, as well as through ownership of productive assets such as a shop, bar, housing, bus, or taxi.

Focus groups also associated lack of poverty with physical mobility, particularly the ability to travel to North America and Europe, and with the receipt of remittances through extended household relations from relatives living abroad. Similarly, they perceived having a husband or partner with a job as improving well-being. On the other hand, they perceived a negative impact from having many dependent children and from not having a partner.

Access to physical infrastructure, in particular owning a house, emerged as another important indicator of well-being. A house-owning family in Zinc City identified their housing as a productive asset, allowing them to grow vegetables and raise chickens in their yard.
BOX 1.

Perceptions of Poverty

Greenland: A Group of Men (Mixed Age)

Researchers asked a focus group in Greenland to describe the difference between the poor and the non-poor in their community. They argued that everyone in the community was poor, but drew a distinction between the "poor" and the "very, very poor." The "poor" lacked employment, food or a certain standard of housing, and they had a lot of children. The "very poor" were extreme examples of this and included a local beggar, a blind lady, and an old man living alone in a tiny shack with no money. The emphasis here seemed to be on people without family-support networks and without the necessary human capital to raise income, notably the elderly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor people</th>
<th>Very, very poor people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No good housing</td>
<td>Blind lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial difficulties</td>
<td>Beggar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of employment</td>
<td>Lives in a shack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of children</td>
<td>Elderly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zinc City: A Group of Young Women

A similar reluctance to categorize anyone as "non-poor" emerged in Zinc City, although in this instance a mapping exercise brought out a perception of particular individuals as better off than the others. When the young women produced a map of their street, they drew every yard and included the number of households and number of individuals living in each yard. They were adamant that there were no distinctions between the residents, that everyone was in the same boat. It soon emerged, however, that they had omitted the yard of the local shopkeeper, Miss Blossom, because "she have it" (i.e. she is not poor). And they subsequently crossed off the yard of another street resident, Miss Clara, for the same reason. In contrast, they highlighted the plight of one local boy, Nicholas, as an extreme example of "not having it." When they described these three individuals in detail, their perceptions of well-being became clear.

Not have it (Nicholas)
- No clothes, shoes
- No food
- No house
- No school
- No book or bag
- No clinic
- No one to take care of him
- Them beat him
- Him hungry

Have it (Miss Blossom)
- Have a shop
- Have a big house
- No small children (children live on their own)
- Does not beg
- Have helper to wash her clothes
- Get money from foreign
- Husband have money
- Good woman — give you something to eat but she work you (clean, wash, and clean out the turtle pool)
- Her mother helps people, too, with clothes and rice

Have it (Miss Clara)
- Have a job
- Daughter in big job
- She travels
- Her daughter & granddaughter travel
- Daughter passed her Common Entrance Exam
- She have money
- She have car
- She have concrete fence
- She gives food, clothes, soap, and money if you beg her
1) Listing of Problems in Poor Communities

The PUA methodology is designed to elicit and explore the areas of concern as prioritized by residents of the communities. Table 2 represents an aggregation of the many listings of problems that focus groups across the five communities prepared. This was an “ice-breaker,” allowing researchers to identify the frequency with which issues were raised through listing, but no more.

2) Similarities in Perceptions

All five communities identified problems associated with labor — primarily access to stable employment or skills training. Focus groups often said employers shunned them because of where they live; they said this area stigma constrained them from being offered employment outside the community.

Linked to this were issues of human capital — the difficulty in accessing the basic means for survival as well as health care and education to improve life chances. The groups often discussed the poor condition of physical infrastructure and lack of access to services such as good housing, sanitation and utilities like electricity and telephones. In addition, some groups pointed to deteriorating social relations within and between households, and to a lack of community organizational and leadership.

Finally, all the groups brought up aspects of social capital in terms of relations with different societal institutions; for instance, there was much concern over human rights in general and relations with the police in particular. Moreover, they frequently expressed concern about crime and violence, and they identified a relationship between violence and a lack of work.

3) Differences in Perception among Poor Urban Communities

Differences of emphasis emerged in terms of the frequency with which problems were raised, relating closely to defining characteristics of each community. The Park Town focus group was less concerned about crime and violence than with other problems, such as physical infrastructure; likewise, in Zinc City, concerns over labor, human capital and physical infrastructure outweighed problems of crime and violence. In Campbell Town and Greenland, however, the focus groups mentioned crime and violence often, along with concerns over accessing employment. In Maka Walk there was an even distribution of concerns across all issues.

4) Gravity of Perceived Problems in Poor Urban Communities

After listing the problems they faced, the
focus groups ranked the problems according to seriousness. In all cases labor issues, in particular lack of employment and lack of training, received very high rankings or scorings (see Box 2).

Politics and politicians. Disillusionment with politics and politicians was widespread. Focus groups expressed resentment at politicians’ making empty promises. A typical reaction was that of an elderly lady in Campbell Town: “Me no businesses wit politics ... politicians a fraud.” Resentment in some instances was directed at the way politicians and area leaders give preferential treatment to certain areas or groups within communities. On other occasions, residents expressed anger at what they saw as “divide-and-rule” tactics employed by politicians within their constituencies, which derailed attempts to build community cohesion and distracted individuals trying to earn income independently of political patronage.

Police. A serious problem in all communities was relations with the police, particularly in Greenland, Campbell Town, and Maka Walk. A focus group of young men in Campbell Town ranked police brutality third — equal to, but distinct from war and gang violence. Almost all teenagers and young adults, and many of their elders, had negative views of the police as an institution. They perceived the local police to be ineffective, unresponsive and uncaring, although reactions varied by community and age group. Younger school children and older people in all
### Perceptions of Problems

#### Greenland: A Group of Young Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of work, lack of education = lack of opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>War-killing-gang violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Police brutality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor housing conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Girls get carried away &gt;&gt; pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Decreasing of youth clubs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The youths in this focus group clearly perceived that the major problem facing their community was a lack of work and education, resulting in a lack of opportunity for residents and fueling violence within the community: "Dat is why dem fire so much gun and tink bout war," said one. Even among educated youth the problem of warring exists. The young people felt that the fact that "nutten a gwaan inna de ghetto," along with the poor condition of housing and the decrease in youth clubs, was responsible for the sense of hopelessness that prevailed among the youth. They described a situation of perpetual warfare and killing through gun violence: "Is like you deh 'pon a battlefield." They ranked politics second, saying they got no assistance from their member of Parliament: "This place is like a political wilderness.... Even when the JLP [Jamaica Labour Party] win, we don't get no assistance." Politics was also related to the inter- and intra-community warfare, with one youth arguing that it was the politicians who had created the divisions initially: "Dem come in and influence the youn" bout dis and dat and give dem money and gun." Another blamed the seriousness of the violence on the influence of the "bigger" youths on the "little ones": "The little ones might be in a war, and a bigger one would give him a gun and so it get worse." The group ranked police brutality alongside war as a serious problem, with the claim that the police abuse their power and adopt an unfair single approach to everyone in the community: "The police they believe they can do anything. They don't know who is who, so they treat everyone every way.... Is like dem want we fe hand over we human rights to them."

#### Zinc City: A Mixed Group of Young People (Aged 18-25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unfulfilled promises from politicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unskilled youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lack of unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lights/telephones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in Greenland, this focus group immediately raised the problem of getting employment. During ranking, however, they put the effect on the youth of unfulfilled promises by politicians above unemployment. They argued that promises build up hope, often prompting young people to abandon other income-raising activities, only to have to start from scratch later. The actions of the politicians divide the community, they argued. They perceived the biggest cause of unemployment to be the stigma attached to their area, which deters employers. They did not list crime and violence as a problem inside the community, instead, the group described a vicious circle in which, lacking employment, some turn to crime, committed outside the community, thus reinforcing the stigma: "Man can't stay hungry too long, so man start think wicked."
communities tended to be more supportive of police actions in their community, but a group of youths in Campbell Town described the police as a "set of hooligans with guns and legal power." Participants condemned the Anti-Crime Squad (or ACID) and "rat patrols" as brutal and intimidating. They gave many accounts of severe injuries and deaths at the hands of the police. There was also a lack of the trust necessary to approach the police, who were often perceived to be corrupt and in collusion with local gunmen.

So significant were the actions of the police in the lives of youth in Campbell Town that the youth were able to identify, through "seasonality analysis" a timetable of police harassment on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis (see Figure 3). Police are most brutal after 9 p.m., particularly at the end of the week: "Most ghetto youths die on a Friday," one focus group participant said. The police are at their most severe during the week before they are paid the end of the month — the "dead-time zone" after their pay has run out and they have extorted all the money they can from ganja stalls.

This study did not itself define violence as a problem. Instead, it sought to identify, first, the extent to which communities themselves raised it as a problem. Then it determined the priority the communities gave to violence relative to other problems and also the gravity with which they saw different types of violence.

B. DIFFERING LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE

1) Descriptions of Violence

Different focus groups in four of the five communities distinguished 25 different types of violence. (Maka Walk provided no formal listings, but semi-structured interviews revealed similar types of violence, with a particular
Table 3. Listing of Perceptions of Types of Violence in Four Urban Communities (by % within each community)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of violence (%)</th>
<th>Inner-City Kingston</th>
<th>Inner-City Kingston</th>
<th>Peri-City Urban</th>
<th>Secondary City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenland</td>
<td>Campbell Town</td>
<td>Park Town</td>
<td>Zinc City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- political</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- mercenary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- drug</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- cocaine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- gang war</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- war over guns</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- knives/bottles/stones</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- housebreaking</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- stealing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- contract</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- rape</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- verbal abuse</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- physical abuse</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- tenant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pickney war</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- matey war</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- war over women</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- male-female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- adult-child</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PUA field notes from Greenland, Campbell Town, Park Town, and Zinc City.

* Ties in bold were developed for purposes of categorization at the analysis stage.

emphasize on gang violence.) These different types of violence are presented in Table 3. The researchers have placed the 25 different kinds of violence into six main categories, showing the frequency (in percentages) that each community mentioned each type.

The fact that communities make distinctions between so many different types of violence dramatically illustrates the importance of better understanding its complexity in poor urban communities. While political, gang, and economic violence are widely recognized and researched, less weight appears to have been given to other forms of violence identified through the PUA methodology.

2) Main Findings from Perceptions of Violence

The relative importance of the frequency of different types of violence varied across communities. Politically controlled "garrison" constituencies perceived the level of violence — particularly gang warfare — to be lower. Hence in Zinc City, even after the 1986 arrest and removal of the local "don" — what they call a strong paternal leader who ensured stability, distributed jobs and money, and provided protection — the garrison nature of the community meant that, apart from election time, violent occurred largely through economic need: There were "wars" between communities over scarce contracts for jobs, or there were robberies, mainly outside the community. In communities with a relatively well developed set of internal "control mechanisms," such as Park Town, it was interpersonal violence that was mentioned most frequently. But in inner-city communities such as Greenland and Campbell Town, where the rule
of a single donor or political figure was replaced by fractured in-fighting and drugs, gang violence was the most important (see Box 3).

The following section provides a very brief description of the types of violence categorized in Table 3, mentioning their historical roots, prevalence and perceptions as to their relative importance.

### BOX 3.

**Frequency and Seriousness of Violence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of violence</th>
<th>Seriousness*</th>
<th>Frequency**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun violence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug violence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting (bottles and stones)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The seriousness of the crime was shown by a sequence ranking with 1 the most serious.

** The frequency was fixed scoring out of 30 as the average number of incidents per month.

The six schoolgirls attending an after-school program who undertook the listing explained "gun violence" as having to do with gang warfare, "drug violence" as related to people stealing to buy drugs, and "fighting" as being between people with weapons other than guns. They saw gun violence as the most serious problem because it prevented students from attending school and after-school programs, and because it claimed the lives of fellow students. Rape was the next most important problem. Drug violence included the fact that drug users are sometimes beaten by "the community" because of the habit. Although verbal and physical abuse were frequent, they felt it was the least serious type of violence.

**Campbell Town: Group of Mixed-Aged Female Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of violence</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun violence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No jobs</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No job</td>
<td>Everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child abuse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Single parenting</td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group of female teachers saw lack of jobs as the principal cause of both gang violence and criminal activities, such as theft and burglary. They said some people did not want to work, preferring to gamble, thief, and hang out on street corners. They identified a number of specific implications in relation to children. Some were unable to return to school because gang warfare meant they could no longer go into areas controlled by conflicting gangs. In addition, when outbreaks of crime erupted, the school was forced to close. Abuse of children was common, they said, and they also pointed out cases of parents’ giving drugs to children — so that parents could go out at night — which made children sleepy and unable to function the next day.
a) Political Violence

Participants in all the communities, regardless of age, income or sex, perceived that violence started when politicians introduced guns into the areas. The PUA results support extensive research showing that political violence has been a constant feature of Jamaican party politics, although up until the mid-1960s it tended to be low-key, characterized largely by sticks-and-stones clashes. After 1967, partisan politics, with its clientelistic resource allocation, became identified with the rise of political gangs and inner-city gangs were armed with guns instead of sticks and stones. “The community was beautiful when I came from the country,” reminisced an elderly woman from Greenland. “Decent Kingston was Kingston. You would live here. When gun shot came in, it mash up. It started from the election party business. Decent people run away an leave dem place because of it. In the first election dere was no gun.”

Similarly, a focus group of older men in Park Town interpreted the changes in violence in their community in terms of wider political changes. They remembered that in the 1950s, political rivals Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley, who were cousins, would hold popular meetings side by side. Bustamante would tell his followers: “Don’t touch my cousin.” In 1972, when Manley took over, the youths started to take politics more seriously, and “war” started. Boundaries developed between areas controlled by the Peoples National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), across which people couldn’t move. Political violence developed further throughout the 1980s but has quieted down in the 1990s under the new prime minister, P.J. Patterson.

Zinc City residents talked about a period in 1980 when political gun violence escalated as JLP activists successfully ousted PNP residents from the local housing scheme, burning out resisters. Before this period of “pure killing,” argued one resident of the scheme, “you could drop a pin downstairs and hear it” (see Figure 4).

The upsurge in political violence was also noted by a focus group of men from the local football club through trend analysis (see Figure 5). Longer-term political violence involved the importation of strong-arm men to enforce the political agenda to create a garrison. This meant the importation to the area of a big don and other political activists. Subsequently, political violence, and violence in general, was subdued.
Figure 5. Trend Analysis of Types of Violence, Prepared by a Group of Men from Football Club, Zinc City

while this don remained in power. After his arrest and removal in 1986 there was an upsurge in violence, although this never reached high levels because the community was still tightly controlled politically.

Despite the political origins of the violence, however, many participants said that contemporary violence was no longer primarily political. In their trend analysis, the group of older men in Campbell Town showed political violence as climbing steadily through the 1970s, peaking in 1980 and dying down in the 1990s. One older man noted that political violence calmed down and been replaced by gang warfare because the politicians were "no longer handing things out to the people." As a result of the drug economy, he said, gunmen were no longer accountable to the politicians.

Where political violence still occurred, it was as a seasonal phenomenon, primarily affecting communities during election time. The older man in Campbell Town argued that the gunmen remained willing mercenaries, acting for their politicians during the election season.

A second kind of political violence, less seasonal in nature, occurred when politicians favored certain groups or areas within a community, creating internal divisiveness. Two focus groups of youths in Campbell Town said the area councilor or his representative distributed some jobs, but not to everyone — with only "friends get[ting] a taste." They argued that this fueled gang war, which would not stop as long as the practice continued. In Maka Walk there was also the perception that politicians divided the youth through their patronage system: "If the politician were coming in the area and dealing with a thing, the youth would listen," said one young man. "The things that the politicians is dealing wid is to get the youth to war."

b) Drug Violence

All communities made an important distinction between ganja (marijuana), which they perceived as an "herb," and cocaine, which they saw as a "drug." They felt ganja was benign and of no threat to the community. Indeed, ganja often provided critical income: In Park Town a focus group ranked ganja second to work as a survival strategy by men and fourth by women. Ganja also had value for its medicinal properties and for helping to create what they called "unity." A Zinc City group, for instance, saw smoking ganja together as a means of bonding groups and helping them cope with feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

By contrast, the "drug" crack cocaine received widespread condemnation. Communities perceived that violence had intensified with the introduction of cocaine in the mid-1980s; in
Greenland — a community with a long and notorious history of politically related violence dating from the 1970s — focus groups said cocaine brought together gun, drug, and political violence. Other groups had similar experiences.

Residents distinguished between the use of cocaine and its distribution. Although participants clearly saw the relationship between cocaine distribution and violence, some people also had a positive association with crack distribution — namely, that it led to an affluent lifestyle. In Maka Walk, for instance, a focus group of youths argued that the easiest way to become “better off” was to buy cocaine and sell it. One young man in his late teens made it clear that he would not consume crack, but he said he would like to sell it.

It is not the least-educated young people who sell drugs. Drug leaders target high-school drop-outs as sellers. School teachers say they are particularly at risk because they have some secondary-school education and have the rudimentary skills needed to handle the money and conduct the business.

As for the seriousness of violence arising from the consumption of crack cocaine, there were widely divergent views among the various groups, indicating that crack has had a significant impact on some communities, but much less on others. Some focus groups said that the consumption of crack was minor though annoying, leading mainly to addicts’ committing petty thefts. Young women in Greenland said “coke heads” stole shoes and other small items, and a young woman in Park Town cautioned against leaving possessions unattended around cocaine users.

But other groups perceived a link between crack consumption and unemployment, frustration, and hopelessness. One group in Park Town estimated that 10 percent of the 90 percent of the community who were “unemployed” used hard drugs. A number of groups said that crack addiction makes people more violent. A focus group in Park Town regarded crack as dangerous because addicts can “even kill their own mother to get it.” One woman gave the example of her addicted brother who beat up his baby’s mother, “a quiet girl” who would have done nothing “to deserve it.” Arguing that men can do anything under the influence of drugs, she said dons use this strategically when they “take quiet Christian youth, give them coke, and reduce men to acts of violence.” An older woman in Maka Walk described how her son’s crack addiction had led him to “terrorize” the family, demanding money at 2 a.m. and stoning the house when he did not get it.

c) Gang Violence

Four out of five communities perceived gang violence as the most serious type of violence. In three communities the level of violence was so great that there was a virtual “war,” dominating and pervading all aspects of community life and restricting mobility within the area. A focus group of women in Campbell Town said gang violence was much worse now than in 1980. As one woman put it, back then “there was only one enemy, so we knew our borderline and knew what precautions to take... Now every day we have a new enemy. We don’t know where to walk. If you walk up the road today, you run the risk of enemy road and might be raped as a message to others or killed. Everybody now have their tool [gun] and can do as they want.”

Residents saw gang violence as inversely linked to the existence of a “strong leader” in the community. A powerful don could reduce fractional fighting and maintain cohesiveness. In Zinc City, a focus group of young men from the football club, analyzing trends in different types of violence in their community, argued that the iron-fisted rule of a notorious local don between 1981 and 1986 was reflected in a period of stability in the community during that time. After his arrest, however, individuals fought between themselves to fill the power vacuum, resulting in an upsurge in “power violence” (see Figure 5).

A decade ago gangs were formed by young adults. Today’s gangs comprised youths aged 12–15, and every youth had access to a gun if he wished. Among youths, guns were easily available and brought “respect”: “No gun, no girl” was a common expression. There was also a fascination with guns: “Them [youths] feel them must have
it,” said a man in his 20s. The police maintained that younger men are given guns by older men who recognized the young men caught committing a crime would not be punished as severely as adults. This younger age and greater access to guns made the situation more dangerous for everyone. “You walk down the street and you don’t know which side the gunfire comes from,” one long-time political don commented. “The youth don’t respect life. They neither hold on to the Rasta philosophy nor the Jesus Christ philosophy. All them want is them name brand shoes and pretty up them hair. There’s no love. They’re only interested in TV and video.” A younger leader added: “It’s the youth that shoot the guns. They are either changed by a spell in prison, which leads them to hustle more and become more centered on family life, or they change naturally as they grow older.”

It was not the poorest who were necessarily involved in gangs; rather, it was the educated youth. “Gang crime is not over food” was the way one participant made that point. Moreover, gang loyalty was often stronger than personal friendships, and it was ensured through the fear of being tagged an “informer” by other group members, for which the punishment was often death.

d) Economic Violence

Participants perceived a strong relationship between economic insecurity and levels of crime and violence. A focus group in Greenland consisting mostly of middle-aged people related the changing social climate in their community since 1991 — notably increasing violence and tighter security measures — to an escalation in the cost of living during this period, as well as an associated inability to hold down two jobs (Table 4). They listed a number of important changes during this period that affected their lives. Similarly, a focus group of older men plotted consistently higher levels of crime after 1991.

Gang violence was particularly related to unemployment, lack of work and opportunities, and general hopelessness. As one resident put it, “Dat is why dem fire so much gun and tink about war ... (because) nutten naw gwaan inna de ghetto.”

Men and women responded to this despair in different ways, the panels noted. While men turned to crime and violence, women turned more frequently to dependency on men. A young man in Greenland maintained that “because the mother’s poor, they [daughters] grow up and see things that they want and can’t afford it. Dem have to turn to a man to get it, and in turn they get pregnant. After that is like there is no hope. They get further into poverty.”

e) Interpersonal Violence

Interpersonal violence did not rank as high as other types of violence in terms of seriousness, but it was so widespread (see Table 3) that it pervaded everyday life. Petty interpersonal arguments flared up at the slightest provocation and easily escalated to violence, even gang warfare. A particularly hard tackle in a football game could lead to an argument about “my gun being bigger than your gun.”

One of the most common forms of interpersonal conflict noted was female-female violence. Competitiveness in general — “whose hair style a-carry the swing and whose hair style flop” — was sufficient to create tension. This tension could lead to competition over men, or “matey war,” because relationships with men were important not only to economic survival but also for status and respect. This pervasive tension also could lead to other types of conflict.

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Table 4. Trend Analysis of Community Characteristics, Prepared by a Group of Middle-Aged Women and One Older Man, Greenland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then — 1991</th>
<th>Now — 1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less violence</td>
<td>More violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle and stone</td>
<td>More guns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep with door open</td>
<td>Get inside after 6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No grills</td>
<td>Now tight security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could work two jobs</td>
<td>No second job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low cost of living</td>
<td>High cost of living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Name Brand</td>
<td>More Name Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happier time</td>
<td>Sadness now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
between women, including "pickney war" (arguments starting between children and escalating to a feud between their mothers) and "tenant war" (conflicts between households in tenement yards over use of space and utilities as well as over personal differences).

In all communities, conflicts worsened because of a climate of revenge. There was a widespread perception among participants that violence is a cyclical phenomenon, with old grievances, often spanning generations, never laid to rest. During fieldwork, researchers personally observed several men who got in a very heated argument at a bar after they uncovered old animosities. Greenland participants said that innocent people died on corners because revenge killings, largely carried out by 15- to 17-year-old youths, were so indiscriminate. In the three weeks prior to the study, there had been a funeral every week. Some participants commented that funerals had become macabre parties, with people dressing up and taking camcorders. They found this so abhorrent that they no longer attended them.

There was a widespread perception, particularly among older participants, that interpersonal violence was fueled by a "breakdown" of discipline in society. They felt strongly that the moral and behavioral fabric of their societies had deteriorated, that young people lacked discipline and no longer respected their elders and those in traditional positions of authority. Many participants didn't blame the young people, but rather their elders for this turn of events. A community leader in Greenland said this deterioration in respect began when the older people themselves began to disrespect each other, and a participant in Maka Walk concurred, referring to the uninhibited way adults fought, in full view of their children.

Participants also pointed to lack of education among youth as contributing to the breakdown in discipline. A young man in Greenland commented of the local youth that because "they don't intelligent [i.e., they are not aware of their situation]," their reactions tended to be violent and self-defeating. There was also a widespread perception among older participants generally of the decline in the role of the church and of the priest as a traditional figure of authority. Young people themselves confirmed the church's lack of significance; in their institutional "roti" diagrams, they presented the church as a small — and therefore less important — circle within the community.

There was a perceived link between interpersonal violence and a "breakdown" of the family as an authoritarian social institution. Many older participants argued that parents were increasingly failing in their responsibilities toward socializing their children. A teacher in Maka Walk argued that parents even supported aggressive behavior in their children by coming to school and encouraging their children to "hit back" other children with whom they had arguments. But the teacher also placed some blame on parents' working outside the home: "All dem pickney de should be inside now after having a meal, doing their homework or watching TV. Instead they all playing in the street and unsupervised. Their parents have not come home from work yet."

Participants commented widely on the pervasiveness of sex among young teenagers, and they saw teenage sex, teenage pregnancy, and promiscuous men as normal behavior. A focus group of young men in Maka Walk felt that 14- to 16-year-old girls were the "right age" for sexual intercourse. A group of women in the same community agreed that the ages 11-15 were "peak years" for sexual activity among girls: "When you try to talk to them," one woman commented, "they say you grudge them." They cited examples of 25-year-old grandmothers as proof of early childbearing ages.

A female participant in Greenland described the life-cycle this way: Girls got pregnant very young — as young as 14 — but rarely lived with the fathers of their babies (their "baby fathers"), staying instead with their mothers. By the time girls became "adults," their relationships with the first baby fathers were usually over, and they would start living with a partner who was the father of their second child. Some of these relationships lasted a long time, but some were over "before the baby is out of the belly."

A teenager in Campbell Town said that only 20 percent of teens in her community avoided...
early pregnancy, while half became pregnant, dropping out of school and becoming idle on the street corners. A focus group of young women in Campbell Town explained teenage pregnancy in terms of a lack of parental guidance and control, as well as by a lack of discipline among teenage girls themselves — too much partying, greed and peer influence. They also cited pressure from young men and rape (see Figure 6).

One of the most important reasons cited for early childbearing was youthful parenthood itself. If "pickney [children] have pickney," said one participant, then they were not old enough to be responsible parents. Without the appropriate disciplining...
and socializing that can only come from a mature adult, it was hardly surprising that children were becoming increasingly uncontrollable and getting involved in gang violence at such an early age.

In addition, the focus groups highlighted the negative impact of men having many partners, with a perceived relationship between men having money and their influence over women. Status was also important for women, with women prepared to share their men if they "look good" (see Figure 7). A focus group in Campbell Town perceived the scarcity of men as being a major factor behind men's ability to have multiple partners. But the group in Park Town also pointed to an increase in domestic conflict and an increase in violence between women.

On the other hand, there was a perception among women that pregnancy in some cases spurred young women to return to school in order to improve their prospects and those of their children. They felt pregnancy, particularly teenage pregnancy, did not need to consign a woman to a life of dependency and limited options. A young woman in Campbell Town commented that 30 percent of young women, among whom she counted herself, became pregnant as teenagers but then, through ambition and concern for the future of their children, went on to study and get work.

A group of young women in Park Town agreed. Several focus groups perceived a breakdown of moral codes among some individuals within their community, with references made to sexual offenses against women and children. Rape was seen as a serious problem, particularly by women; for one group of women in Maka Walk, fear of rape was the second most important of five listed fears (see Box 8). One woman confessed that she had been threatened with gang rape by her boyfriend because he did not want to accept paternity for her baby. They agreed that women of all ages were vulnerable to rape, carried out by men from both inside and outside the community. And they said rape also could take on a cyclical character, when one rape was committed in revenge for another rape.

Severe constraints existed for women who want to talk openly about their experience of rape, with fear of retaliation a major deterrent. A 24-year-old young woman in Campbell Town said she had been raped twice, but she reported neither assault. She said if a woman reported a rape and the man was sent to prison, his friends "will hunt you down and kill you." She had never been counseled about her experiences; "you have to keep it to yourself," she said. She had never even discussed it with her boyfriend, even

![Figure 8. Causal Analysis of Domestic Violence, Prepared by a Group of Young Women, Campbell Town](image-url)
though she knew that he was aware of the first rape.

f) Domestic Violence

In all communities woman-beating was perceived as a common occurrence in daily life. On occasions when women felt able to speak openly about their experiences, stories of everyday domestic brutality, fear, and a sense of being trapped emerged. One woman in Greenland talked about how her man of 18 years, whom she loved dearly, continually treated her as a "beating stick.

Two young women in Maka Walk described "bad men" as those who "love beating girls." They said most women were beaten, but "most women hide it." A group of young women in Campbell Town explained domestic abuse in terms of the attitude of both men and women (see Figure 8), but they also stressed the influence of frustration arising out of unemployment and feelings of hopelessness. The local police in Greenland blamed male-female domestic violence on the weakening of men's role as breadwinners for their family.

Because of the gang warfare in Maka Walk, going to work could be dangerous, and a focus group of young women there related restricted access to work to domestic violence. There was an overdependence on men who "brave it" to go to work, and that could lead to quarrels, fights, and even death. A focus group of women in Campbell Town corroborated this view with their description of how women's unemployment led to dependency on men and unwanted pregnancies, which resulted in frustration, often taken out on children, but also caused a cycle of male-female violence followed by partners "making up." On rare occasions this cycle was broken by the woman's hitting the man or leaving him, or getting him jailed through police involvement (see Figure 9). A female focus group in Park Town

![Figure 9. Effects of Unemployment, Analyzed by a Group of Women (Mixed Age), Campbell Town](image)
A woman in Maka Walk commented that child abuse is “like a disease” in her community, perpetrated particularly by women, and particularly when times are hard and money is in short supply. She argued that as a consequence children turn away from home and “become evil.” She listed types of child abuse as including:

1. verbal abuse;
2. harsh flogging;
3. kicking; and
4. burning a child’s hand or body parts.

commented that while one-quarter of physically abused women leave their partners, more than one-third have no alternative but to stay.

In some instances both male and female participants interpreted domestic abuse in terms of affection, identifying being beaten with being loved and not being beaten as a sign of lack of interest — “he only loves me if he beats me.” But some female participants perceived this attitude to reflect the low level of self-worth among women in their community. As one woman in Campbell Town put it, any woman who says that beating reflects love “don’t love herself.”

Physical abuse of children was also seen as widespread and a part of everyday life (see Box 4). Some participants called physical beatings justified, especially if they related to disciplining the children. For these participants, physical punishment played an important part in achieving and maintaining a hierarchical structure within the family. But other participants condemned such beatings, calling them wrong and damaging to the children. The local police in Greenland maintained that it is young children who suffered most from domestic violence, and a focus group in Campbell Town argued that the “wicked lick” that parents gave their children built up violent feelings inside them, ultimately increasing gang violence.

Behind the perceptions of physical abuse of children was a view that there was a lack of communication within families that had damaging consequences. A male community leader in Maka Walk, for example, said that “a parent

Figure 10. “Solar System” Diagram Analysis of Community Programs, Prepared by a Group of Boys, Greenland
should talk and reason with their youth,” even if they chose to administer physical punishment as a means of enforcing discipline.

Figure 10 shows the importance children themselves gave the problem of child abuse. A group of boys in Greenland were asked what they saw as the most pressing problems in their community. Instead of making a list, the boys drew circles, with the ones closest to the center being the ones they felt had the most immediate impact on them. Environmental problems like pollution, dirty water, and garbage were the most serious to them, but child abuse was close behind.

3) Gravity of Different Types of Violence

Residents of the poor urban communities in this study perceived themselves to be at war. They showed it not only in the way they conducted their daily lives, but even in the language they used to identify the different types of conflict in which they were involved (see Box 5).

While significant distinctions occurred between communities, as well as between different focus groups within communities, overall the groups ranked gang and gun violence as the most serious forms of violence, followed by rape and drug violence. Other interpersonal violence was the least serious, although it was the most prevalent type of violence in the communities.

Gang, economic and political war were seen primarily as involving men, while much of the interpersonal violence, such as “matey,” “pickney,” and “tenant” war involved women.

Police brutality was perceived as a serious problem affecting the community, but it was seen as being imposed on the community from the outside, rather than as a form of violence within the community itself. Thus, although participants graphically described occurrences of police brutality, they did not include it on any of their listings or rankings of violence.
ANALYSIS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSETS AND VIOLENCE

THIS SECTION OF THE PAPER EXAMINES how each asset of the urban poor relates to violence, and how violence in turn erodes or consolidates each asset.

Two assets, at different levels, are particularly important: labor as an individual asset and social capital as a community asset.

A. LABOR AND VIOLENCE

All of the communities perceive lack of work and employment opportunities as a direct cause of poverty, and they see poverty as directly affecting levels of economic violence. The overall perception in both of the inner-city Kingston communities was one of high unemployment levels, with scarce work opportunities both inside and outside the community. One group of young women said that 90 percent of employable adults in the community were unemployed; another group pegged unemployment at 75 percent. One young man put the situation this way: “When two men a’ work, one hundred naah work.”

Participants saw a direct and immediate link between this unemployment and violence. Work opportunities for men were largely contractual and seasonal in nature, which had two effects: First, violent robberies, generally outside the community, increased when men were out of work; second, what they call “contract wars” were a serious problem, as communities fought each other over scarce contracts for jobs. In contrast, when there was work, violence decreased. For instance, in the peri-urban community of Park Town, situated close to factories, employment levels were relatively high at the time of the PUA because contract work was available to the local male work force. As a result, levels of crime and violence were perceived to be low. Nevertheless, Park Town participants also saw the direct link between unemployment and violence, noting that once the present contract work on the construction of a nearby power plant was finished, levels of crime and violence would increase again.

With such a fluid employment situation, residents of these poor communities turned to many different strategies to earn money. Some were clearly illegal — theft, robbery, drug-selling — others were clearly legal, and still others were in a gray area. Many of the legal jobs were seasonal or
cyclical. A group of apprentice tailors in Zinc City, for example, said they could find work only during August and December, the peak demand seasons for back-to-school clothes and for Christmas presents, respectively. Clearly, this led to great insecurity, so much so that some men in Greenland even said they would prefer steady jobs with lower pay to the current erratic situation.

In the gray area, residents developed innovative income-raising strategies, often centered on "hustling" (ad hoc buying and selling, using begged or borrowed money). A sophisticated hustling system had grown up around the nearby prison, with women buying food for the prisoners, arranging for visitors' food parcels to get to the prisoners, buying bulk goods from prison warders to sell outside, and begging/"negotiating" for money from prison guards on their paydays in exchange for sex.

Focus groups also emphasized the importance of remittances from relatives abroad in day-to-day survival, and they looked favorably upon those who were able to live and work abroad. Maria, for instance, spent two years working in Great Britain in temporary low-paid positions in order to send money back for her children. She returned only because she missed her children so much.

Residents also developed informal support structures among family, friends, and neighbors. In some instances parents continued to help each other even when their children were in rival gangs.

1) Gender-Based Perceptions

There were clear gender differences in perceptions of the nature of work, as well as in how it related to violence.

Men generally saw work as wage-earning employment for which they needed training. Women, on the other hand, often felt it was better to work for themselves rather than for someone else. Although women did recognize the value of the greater security that came from certain waged employment, such as security-guard work, they also saw problems with other kinds of

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**Figure 11. Causal Impact Analysis of Lack of Work for Men, Prepared by a Group of Young Men, Park Town**

![Diagram showing causal impact analysis of lack of work for men, prepared by a group of young men, Park Town]
Many young Zinc City women in their teens and early 20s, for example, were employed in garment factories in the Free Zone, and they complained of the conditions, status, and pay.

As for how unemployment led to violence, men said that high unemployment led to frustration and idleness, and that in turn led to an increase in gang violence, interpersonal conflict, and domestic violence. Although a group of young men in Park Town said there was a possibility that a lack of work could unite youth, they said the more likely outcome was that young people would resort to stealing or participating in gang violence (see Figure 11). Crime led to death and imprisonment of men, and that increased the trend toward a maleless society.

Women perceived that high unemployment led to a greater dependency on a man for income, and that dependency led to an increase in domestic violence. A group of young women and one young man in Park Town, for example, saw an increase in abuse and domestic violence as a direct outcome of this dependency (see Figure 12). Often a woman was so dependent on the man's support that she had no option but to continue living in an abusive relationship. One group of young women in Park Town said it wasn't just female dependency but male unemployment itself that exacerbated violence. They said unemployed men who had no means to support their dependents took out their frustration on their women.

2) Lack of Mobility

Residents in all areas felt that their lack of mobility added to their difficulty in finding employment and this led to increased violence. Many participants painted a circular picture, saying that the violence itself was a cause of the lack of mobility. That's because of what they call "area stigma" — that is, discrimination against
residents of certain low-income areas because their communities are riddled with violence. One group of youths said everyone in their community was disrespected by outsiders and the police alike, was branded either a criminal or an accomplice to one, and was therefore unable to secure a job or learn a trade. They said this area stigmatization led to hunger, frustration, and idleness, which encouraged gang war and gun violence, with death or imprisonment the ultimate price (see Figure 13).

There were other causes of lack of mobility, too. Working adults in communities with gang violence told how public transportation, often the only way to get to a job outside the community, did not serve very violent communities. Such was the case in Campbell Town, where participants said they might even be unable to get a taxi to take them home in broad daylight. Within Campbell Town mobility was highly restricted, too, particularly for young men, because of gang warfare that has divided the community into three rival sections. Women preferred not to work in export-processing Free Zone partly because they had to pass through opposing communities.

Maka Walk was split into an upper and lower section by a raging gang war. While residents in the lower section could get work in the city, those in the upper section were physically cut off from the city. They risked their lives if they passed through the lower section to get to a job. The only way to get into the city was by taxi. A focus group of young women in the upper section explained how people were afraid to go to work, especially if they had to return home after 6 p.m. Men from the upper section who used to work or hustle in town could not work because they rarely had taxi fare.

Schoolchildren in communities with gang violence experienced reduced physical mobility and access to school, and schools closed early on days when levels of tension and violence were high. Under such conditions children were less supervised and more likely to be drawn into crime and violence. In Maka Walk “most boys stop from school because of the war,” one resident said. Schoolgirls in Greenland said sometimes students were killed, so when shooting got very bad, it prevented children from attending school and after-school programs.

3) Effects on Local Businesses

Local small-business people complained not only about low profitability because of poverty in the community, but also about the effect of violence on their operations. A local cabinet-maker in Maka Walk said he could only survive by working outside the community. For one thing, he said, customers inside the area could not pay on time, if at all. Outstanding credit within the community was very high, and he said he was owed “a lot of cash.” But making matters worse, he added, was the fact that most of the people who owed him money were those “you have to leave alone” because they might...
react with violence. Campbell Town residents said that people with a skill could not start a business in the area because shops were regularly burglarized.

**B. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND VIOLENCE**

The PUA found an extensive range of social institutions within communities. Some were informal institutions, such as families and households. Others were more organized — local associations and recreational activities such as sports, music and dancing. Still others were formal political, religious and educational organizations. Institutional “roti” diagrams, such as the one from Greenland (see Figure 14), identified the different institutions that the communities perceived as important, rated their relative importance, and showed whether they were negative or positive influences on people’s lives.

Social institutions can be broken down into those based on hierarchical relationships, and those based on horizontal relationships. Potentially, these can provide very different avenues to reduce poverty and violence. In addition, they often interact differently with violence.

1) **Social Institutions with Horizontal Relationships**

Barry Chevannes has pointed out that in Jamaica there are communities with a “highly developed system of belief in reciprocity, that is a system of relationships to society based on mutual dependence.” Indeed, inter-household trust and collaboration based on “horizontal” linkages are the bread and butter of coping strategies. These frequently occur between women and include inter-household child-care obligations and loans of money, water, food, and clothing.

**Family living arrangements.** A good example of this was the map that Maria drew of her yard in Greenland. It revealed how Maria herself, her mother, her sister, and a brother — four related households totaling 24 people — all lived in the same yard, along with three other families. Another sister and brother and their families were in the adjoining yard. The six related households shared the same water standpipe and divided up the electricity bill among them. They also shared meals and took care of each other’s children on an ongoing basis. There were similar examples in the same community, and focus groups in all the communities often mentioned how relatives and non-relatives frequently adopted or cared for children abandoned or orphaned by gang violence, domestic violence, or drug use.

**Raising money.** Financial support networks are critically important in times of crisis. Miss Agony (Box 6), for instance, relied on a friend to help her pay the legal costs when her son was indicted on a murder charge. A number of focus groups emphasized the importance of remittances from relatives abroad and of informal social support structures among family, friends, and neighbors.

Raising credit informally by “throwing a pardner” is a long-standing tradition among poor communities in Jamaica. “Pardners” are informal, rotating credit associations, and pardner bankers are often identified as leaders. Again, this was mentioned as an important coping strategy. However, acceptance into a pardner was often based upon being regularly employed, so a woman who operated a betting shop could use her pardner “draws” to buy a bed, TV, and refrigerator. But others without regular income were increasingly excluded as too risky by the pardner banker. Most of those with “pardners” used their “draw” for basic everyday necessities rather than for longer-term income-generating investments. And occasionally the pardner bankers robbed their clients.

**Teen clubs and other institutions.** People in the community ran a number of demand-driven social institutions, many externally financed. These institutions tended to relate to music or football and other sports, and by their structure and objective created horizontal linkages between individuals and groups that promoted community ownership of projects.

Leaders were often either Rastafarians in the case of the sports clubs, young youths in street-corner groups, local women, and community-based workers. Lenky, a Rastafarian sports
The Effects of Inter-Personal Violence: Miss Agony’s Story

Miss Agony’s son Steve had good prospects in life. He graduated from high school, passing the final exams in seven different academic subjects. His father had been living in the United States, during which time he had been in jail on drug charges. Steve was brought up by Miss Agony and his stepfather, with whom he had a good relationship. Problems started, however, when Steve’s father returned from the United States and gave him $300 and a lot of clothes and shoes, promising to “send him” [apply for a visa for him]. After that, said Miss Agony, “him get bummy” (meaning it turned his head), and he fell in with a local gang. Soon afterward he was arrested for murder.

Miss Agony was devastated by this turn of events: “I never dream about this... Central, GP, Courthouse... me never have that in me diary... Me was imagining me flying in the plane when he turns pilot.” She believed that the events affected her more than him, “because sometime I get very depressed. It leave me feeling under. Mentally, physically, and emotionally it have me a way... I am not me. I de bes’ o’ me you see right now compared to the past. I was withdrawn, I was giving myself a sentence. But you know your mind control your body... Even my son said to me, ‘Mama, how you look so’... But when me cry, me feel better.”

Miss Agony dropped out of secondary school at the age of 16 when she was pregnant with Steve and had been trying to give her son what she missed out on. Her mother had wanted her to abort the child, but she refused, although now she feels she should have done so. She knows that her son needs her now, but he also wants to blame her, “saying me never love him, maybe me was too strict as a mother, maybe if me never stand up, him would have broke out earlier.” She told him that his father would never make the sacrifices for him that she had made. Miss Agony has been receiving strong support from friends in the community, and a woman friend who lives in the United States regularly sends her money.

coach and mediator of gang violence, for instance, was identified as the most important local leader in the Greenland “roti” (see Figure 14), as was a community-based worker, Miss Help. All had earned the respect of the community by remaining apolitical and non-threatening. Likewise, a mixed-age focus group in Maka Walk scored the “soundman” 8 out of 10 and the “dread” 10 out of 10 as role models in their community. Also important were the health aide and the teacher, both female community workers, while the “dollar man” (a money lender), although he earned a significant amount of money, was not viewed as a community role model.

Teen homework clubs and better-parenting projects have started up, often with outside assistance. For instance, in 1990 a private voluntary organization started a Teen Centre in Greenland in response to a poll showing that 40 percent of inner-city children dropped out of school before fifth form (15-16 years old), and that even graduates did not have enough qualifications to go on to college or to get a good job. The teen center catered to students living in central Kingston who wanted to pass the Common Entrance Exam for high school. (In Jamaica, there are two educational streams for teenagers: One, called “secondary school,” is more technically oriented, while “high school,” which requires passing the Common Entrance Exam to enter, has a more academic focus.) At the center students could get help with their homework and also receive computer training. Two trained teachers worked there, and the center was trying to use tertiary level students as volunteers to assist.

The center had child-care facilities for local working mothers, caring for 14-15 babies
daily. And it provided financial assistance to one out of every three students who had passed the Common Entrance Exam. Such aid was essential for many students, because the government now requires students to share in the cost of their education, and it is difficult for many poor parents to afford school supplies and fees. The center sponsored 169 students, seven of whom were enrolled in tertiary institutions such as CAST (the College of Arts, Science, and Technology) and the University of the West Indies.

The teen center made its mark on the community. When one group of students drew a “roti” diagram of the workings of the community, they put the teen center right in the middle as a large circle, clearly demonstrating its importance. The center, and others like it, do have limitations, however. One resident complained that they “only take high school kids, not secondary, and it is difficult to get in.” On the other hand, established dons felt that the community needed more programs like these.

2) Social Institutions with Hierarchical Structures

Jamaica also has had an extensive tradition of hierarchically structured formal social institutions, many of which are mechanisms for the top-down delivery of services. These institutions include not only national and local governments, but also schools, churches, and the social welfare systems.22

Political power. Political parties in Jamaica historically have maintained control of much social interaction at the local level. Within their physical jurisdictions they can control community centers, sports fields, dance halls, and so on. During the last decade, however, politicians have become less powerful. Leading politicians are increasingly unable to unite warring factions
BOX 7.

The Importance of Education

Many participants viewed education and training as among the most important means of increasing access to work and reducing poverty and frustration. They recognized that being skilled increased income, and they repeatedly emphasized the need for a training center. Although some community members did mention that the availability of training facilities does not guarantee employment, a group of young men in Zinc City ranked a training center as the No. 1 priority in their "dream community." There were mixed perceptions of the value of formal, non-vocational education. Through a causal impact analysis, a young man in Greenland explained lack of education in terms of the deficiency of resources for schools, the lack of access for children from poor households, or families who do not themselves prioritize education. Computerization, he argued, is leaving youths even further behind. Among the effects of lack of education he included poverty and frustration, which led to idleness and violence (see Figure 15). A focus group in Zinc City related a lack of work to, among other factors, a lack of education and skills (see Figure 16).

A group of schoolboys in Park Town ranked their school first in the their listing of social institutions in the community, based on the fact that school improves opportunities in life for students. Similarly, groups of women, one in a local church, another in a better off section of the community, argued that education is very important in improving employment opportunities. There was some dissent, however. Two groups of young men in Park Town were more skeptical of the value of education. One group claimed that “[the] educated work harder and for less money,” while the other group pointed out that they knew people with Caribbean Examination Council qualifications who were unable to find work. Some said that the education system is overly academic and does not have the vocational element appropriate to the work force of their community.

within communities, and many politicians are now perceived to deliver hollow promises and accused of dividing communities to remain in control — “mashing up” communities by intervening in all aspects of local life.

"Dons” historically have provided strong leadership within communities, ensuring stability and paternally distributing jobs and money, as well as providing protection. Some are political-party activists, while others have created their own wealth and patronage base, often with drugs, working for politicians during election periods. In order to remain unchallenged and maintain the respect of the youth, a don must have a “reputation.” “If the youth are not afraid of him,” a 30-year-old man in Campbell Town said, “they will challenge him.” A focus group in Campbell Town described how a don sent a “soldier” to "terrorize" people and then intervened, thereby demonstrating his power over the soldier. By contrast, in the Greenland “roti” (see Figure 14) Namebrand, a longtime don, was given a small circle because he was seen to have lost his power.

The long-term tradition of “paternal” dependency on political leaders meant that some people, particularly the elderly, found it difficult to conceive of an alternative institutional structure, hanging on to a nostalgic desire for politicians to rediscover the strong leadership traditionally associated with community stability. Thus, some older residents looked favorably on the presence of a strong don. A group of adults in Campbell Town believed that the war in their community started because of a lack of leadership and that a strong don could stop it — “a man to deal with the problem, one who will say, 'do X and not Y,' or 'stop now,'” one participant explained.

Church and school. Churches and schools are other important hierarchical institu-
tions closely allied to traditions of top-down welfarist intervention. Participants in general perceived schools in a positive light, and teachers were highly respected. A group in Maka Walk, for instance, gave the teacher a maximum score of 10 as a role model in the community.

Perceptions of the role of the church as an institution varied, depending on the particular church or church leader under discussion. Some focus groups saw the church as a positive influence; others saw it as a negative one. In Greenland, for example, most groups were indifferent or negative about the church. In three out of four “roti” diagrams prepared, the church was represented by small circles, signifying a lack of importance. Groups also expressed varied opinions concerning high-profile church figures running social projects in the community. One local priest was represented as a small circle on the boundary of a “roti” diagram to show the group’s criticism of his turning local training centers into homes for the elderly and disabled, which, they felt, served the priest’s own interests. “Him claim him helping poor people, but him only helping himself,” one middle-aged woman said. “Every day him write another article in the paper, dem article no help de community.”

In direct contrast to this, participants in the same community highly approved of another leading Greenland church figure who helped provide employment and training opportunities. In Campbell Town, although church attendance was perceived to be low, participants approved of the welfarist activities of the church, such as a church-run dental and blood pressure clinic.

The police. Police are a central part of the everyday life of the urban poor, yet are perceived as reinforcing fear and divisiveness. Focus groups in all communities felt that the relationship between the police and the urban poor served only to exacerbate existing conflict. The actions of the Anti-Crime Squad, or “ACID” — and in Campbell Town the “rat patrol” — were singled out as being brutal and intimidating (see page 10). Young people in particular argued that through their wholesale harassment of youth on street corners, the actions of the police “mek the youth dem behave wicked.” Their actions instill fear and hatred amongst the youth. Even women, who are harassed less, are fearful.
Local police were perceived more positively than ACID. Nevertheless, participants believed even local police did not generally serve community interests, but stigmatized them, prejudicially branding all residents as criminals and devaluing their lives through their uncaring attitude. "The police are trained to think that [a community such as ours] can only have bad people," said a youth in Campbell Town. "Regardless of your age or sex they 'dis' [show disrespect to] you every day. Even if you are employed, when you show your work ID, they tell you that you work in the days to buy bullet ... to kill in the night... Everyone is guilty until proven innocent."

Women complained universally that the police were unresponsive or even derisory in their response to reported instances of domestic abuse or rape. Similarly, the police did not respond to crimes reported in the community, sometimes using the excuse that they did not have vehicles. But if someone outside the community reported being robbed by a ghetto resident, the police came in force, participants said.

The police were perceived as corrupt and partisan. Participants in Maka Walk claimed that the police were directly involved in illegal activities that promoted violence, division, and instability. There were widespread accusations that the police colluded with local dons, making people afraid of communicating with the police.

At the same time, the police were perceived as part of the solution. Children, the middle-aged, and the elderly particularly expressed a need for the police. Schoolchildren, in their mapping and institutional "roti" diagrams, showed the police as important for maintaining security in their communities. Older participants, in talking about their need for telephones, stressed that they would be able to call the police if they saw any crime committed. Even a group of young men in Campbell Town said that people would have to give information to the police in order to get rid of gunmen, although there was so much fear of being branded an informer by the dons that this was unlikely to occur.

Efforts to build bridges between the police and the community met with mixed results. Overall, there was a perception that the attitude of the police had improved under the new police commissioner. Although an attempt to start a "Neighbourhood Watch" scheme in Zinc City failed because the police responded on only one occa-
sion, participants praised the efforts of the local police in Greenland to build up a police youth club and become more involved in the social life of the community. The club had been a part of the community since the late 1970s. It had an active membership of 30-35 youths, with ages ranging from 12-17. This group organized educational trips, job placement, skills training such as arts and crafts and sewing, and it also provided the young people with the opportunity to interact with other youths from different communities.

Other “strong men.” Integrated into local low-income urban communities were two further hierarchical structures, based, like dons, on the notion of “strong men” — cocaine-trafficking and gangs. “Micro-gangs” resulting from the pervasiveness of guns, particularly in the inner-city Kingston communities, had accelerated the fragmentation of communities. There was an important distinction made between the social cohesion enforced by a single strong don and the destructiveness of the multi-don situation. Although this could be characterized as a shift from hierarchy to anarchy, such micro-gangs still had their own hierarchical structures.

3) Does Violence Erode Social Capital?

A group of youths in Greenland said that three-quarters of the direct victims of gang war were young men 12-22 years old, one-eighth were children younger than 12, and another one-eighth were women. Although some of these victims were innocent bystanders, they said, increasingly women were being targeted as suspected police informers.

Not surprisingly, there was widespread fear in these communities, and the fear eroded “stocks” of social capital. In Maka Walk, which residents saw as a community “crippled by fear,” young women ranked five different types of fear (see Box 8).

Violence eroded social relationships, not only through death, but by restricting physical mobility and increasing levels of tension. Focus groups in different communities identified how divisive the spatial implications of violence had been in shattering family life. For example, in Campbell Town, a “baby father” was killed when he failed to heed the warning of his best friend and continued to visit his “baby mother” after gang warfare had changed turf boundaries. When “baby fathers” cannot visit “baby mothers,” not only are the women denied money for their babies, but also love and companionship.

Fear had led some family members of families to migrate. “Who no dead gone America,” said one woman. Left behind, the less mobile faced other types of interpersonal violence. In particular, “matev” war — conflict between women over a man — intensified with a scarcity of men, and this scarcity was due not just to their death or imprisonment, but also to men’s lack of mobility from the tight spatial boundaries associated with gang warfare. (On the other hand, the scarcity of men was sometimes perceived to have the opposite effect. One focus group of women in Campbell Town argued that it was so important to have a man that it was necessary to put up with sharing them, without conflict arising — since they were now so scarce.)

Restricted physical mobility and limits on the times of day when people could leave their houses also increased other types of interpersonal stress. “Tenant wars” could erupt between neighbors living in high-density, overcrowded housing, hemmed in behind zinc fences. Within households there might be fights between older couples. Finally, primary school teachers in Campbell Town drew a connection between overcrowding, with its ensuing early exposure of children to

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**Box 8.**

**Fear Resulting from ‘War’**

**Ranked by a Young Women’s Group, Maka Walk**

1. Fear of being tagged an informer.
2. Fear of rape.
3. Fear of being robbed.
4. Fear of stone throwing.
5. Fear to have meeting outside.
adult sex, and the increase in teenage pregnancy.

Despite the tense atmosphere, in all communities there was a strong feeling that inter-household trust and cooperation had not totally broken down. Participants provided numerous examples of support. In Greenland some people still continued to share food when their children were in rival gangs. A Maka Walk street seller stressed that “people support each other.... Anybody would take your child to the doctor.” A local artisan in Campbell Town emphasized that people still got together despite the divisions and the crime.

4) Spatial Implications of Violence on Community Association

Gang war restricted mobility for social interaction. This, in turn, eroded space for community association. In many areas dance halls, youth clubs, and sports facilities no longer functioned because of the levels of violence. For young people, this was serious. In many poor urban communities, the dance hall was the central institution for young people. A group of young men in Campbell Town saw it as the point of convergence out of which other institutions, both good and bad, emanate (see Figure 17). It was important, therefore, for building up trust, cooperation and collaboration — the “stocks” of social capital.

Youth clubs also were identified as critical, not only for recreational purposes but for creating trust and cohesion. In many respects these are the formalized manifestations of street-corner groups, playing an important role in resisting peer pressure to engage in gang wars. Young people themselves saw the importance of these clubs in building peace and harmony (see Figure 18).

5) Violence, Infrastructure, and the Erosion of Social Capital

Violence prevented the installation or maintenance of infrastructure, which in turn exacerbated crime and “war” and eroded community-level cohesion. Lack of infrastructure or its inadequate maintenance as a direct consequence of violence could indirectly increase fear and mistrust and reduce community space for association. In Maka Walk, for instance, focus group participants recounted how local gang members had knocked out street lights to keep the area dim so that it would be easier to rob people.

A focus group in Campbell Town analyzed the effect of a community’s having “light” (i.e., electricity) (see Figure 19). They perceived a lack

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**Figure 17. “Roti” Diagram Showing Institutions Liked and Disliked, Prepared by a Group of Young Men, Campbell Town**

Important Institutions (THE ONES ON TOP)
School
Church
Gang man
L S (another club)
Mikey
Post office

Institutions which are disliked
The police & soldier
Cocaine
The gunmen
of electricity as contributing to growing fear, robbery, police harassment, violence and the breakdown of community cohesion. With electricity, they said, youths would be kept entertained and off the streets through music and television. This would reduce crime and violence and make for a peaceful community.

Telephones also were widely perceived as a mechanism to reduce violence. Park Town participants frequently pointed out that their one telephone box had never been vandalized — demonstrating its importance. At the same time, however, their repeated requests for private telephone lines had not been filled. In fact, many residents had applied for phones long ago, but installers would not enter the community because of the violence. In Maka Walk telephone workers had been stoned by local youths as they began laying lines, and installation was never completed.

6) Institutional Implications of the Erosion of Social Capital

While “stocks” of social capital varied among and within communities, it was clear that community cohesion had been devastated by the interplay of different types of violence. Decline in the control of strong hierarchical leaders resulted in an institutional vacuum in many communities. Police moved in to fill this vacuum and reduce violence, but that more often than not had simply fueled more tension. Despite the increasing recognition of the value of community policing, overall the police and judicial system had limited success in effectively controlling or reducing the levels of violence.

Informal justice systems have developed within poor communities as a response to the lack of law and order. These alternative systems, mainly hierarchical in structure in the form of
councils, committees, or even ad hoc groups, were headed by dons or other powerful leaders. Given their illicit nature, little is known about them. However, focus group participants mentioned two examples to illustrate their mandates: In one, a cocaine addict was beaten up and driven out of an area; in the other, a widely accused child beater was “tried by the people” and forced to leave the community.

Community-formed associations based on cooperative horizontal relationships were severely constrained in their attempts to organize. Although such institutions provided potential entry points for policy intervention designed to strengthen social capital, they were extremely vulnerable to co-option by the political directorate or don structures. In some instances they were perceived as a threat to existing hierarchical control systems. One young man in his 30s recounted how he had tried on two occasions to set up a citizen’s association in Zinc City, the tightly controlled, or “garrison,” community. In order to break up the association, the local member of parliament branded him a member of the opposing party during the election campaigns when partisanship was running high, and the man was forced to leave the community on each occasion, returning only after the election fever had died down.

In addition, individual efforts to organize within communities could cause suspicion and resentment among gang leaders. The leader of a youth club in Campbell Town described how he had received death threats because he was perceived as trying to become a gang leader. He and other leaders of the club could not walk down nearby streets in Campbell Town.
TO ELICIT PERCEPTIONS OF SOLUTIONS, focus groups described their "dream community." Participants' descriptions fell into two broad categories — ideals for the future and concrete solutions. These have been separated for the purposes of this analysis, with the latter subdivided into the different subproject categories of the upcoming Jamaican Social Investment Fund.

- Describing their “dream community,” focus groups in all five communities gave the highest ranking to peace — articulated as “unity” or the end of “war” (see Table 5).

- While a small number perceived the need for strong leadership or greater political involvement as part of this dream, far more perceived the issue in terms of a range of “empowering”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Aggregate Listing of “Dream Community” Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dream community characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity/love/togetherness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End violence/no gang war/remove guns/stop attending funerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect/upliftment/look to Marcus Garvey/prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude/discipline/family stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove party politics/get an apolitical leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove area stigma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater involvement from politicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PUA field notes from Greenland, Campbell Town, Park Town, Zinc City, and Maka Walk.
characteristics such as “uplifting themselves,” “gaining respect,” or “changing attitudes” (also see Table 5).

- Projects and programs that brought people together and built social capital were by far the most important concrete solutions provided by focus groups. Participants prioritized community-based activities, with an emphasis on youth activities, particularly by the youth themselves, some of whom are already meeting informally as street-corner groups. In addition,
safe centers for counseling to reduce violence and improving family and interpersonal communication received top priority by focus groups of all ages (see Table 6).

- Of all the other recommendations made, by far the most important were training, education and jobs (see Table 7). It should be noted, however, that on the issue of generating employment there was an inability to perceive concrete initiatives requiring interventions — only a welfarist request to “provide work.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Solution</th>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social infrastructure projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/Training Center</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/school/school equipment</td>
<td>Young men</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports fields/playing area/sports center for both boys and girls — provision,</td>
<td>Young women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehabilitation and equipping</td>
<td>Middle aged and older</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health clinic/nurse/family planning</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Infrastructure Projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply and sanitation</td>
<td>Young men</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community rehabilitation of rented/captured housing and zinc fences, and</td>
<td>Young women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reclamation of open lots</td>
<td>Middle aged and older</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone installation</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage/gully repair</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable garbage collection</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Legal) electricity</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix up physical environment/&quot;war zone&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street-light installation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems to ensure transport can move through communities</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income generating projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program to provide incentives for businesses in inner-city areas</td>
<td>Young men</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-level workshops, e.g. welding</td>
<td>Young women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping center</td>
<td>Middle aged and older</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business center</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSIONS

THE PUA FOCUSED ON THE WAY that violence in poor urban communities erodes two key assets that are vital for reducing poverty — labor and social capital. At the individual level, violence limits the ability of poor men and women to utilize their most important asset, labor, efficiently and productively. At the community level, the society is dominated by fear and distrust. Communities often lack very basic forms of cooperation or communication, and despite heroic efforts of individuals and local organizations, violence in all its forms — political, drug, gang, economic, interpersonal, and domestic — has left communities bereft of the most basic stocks of social capital.

The PUA clearly demonstrates that poor Jamaicans perceive these two assets as integrally linked in self-perpetuating cycles. As long as violence results in “area stigma” and as long as it keeps people locked in their communities, afraid to venture far from home, residents of these poor areas cannot access existing jobs, businesses are reluctant to invest in their communities, children have trouble getting to school, and the communities themselves are unlikely to improve their neighborhoods by investing in housing and other local infrastructure.

To date the primary tool to control or reduce the violence has been through the different branches of the police force — an approach that alone cannot resolve the problem.

If the Jamaica Social Investment Fund is to provide an entry point to the violence-poverty-institutions nexus, it will need to go beyond the traditional role of SIFs. Social Investment Funds were originally designed to help mitigate the “social impact” of Structural Adjustment Programs by providing financing of small-scale public works projects that would offer temporary employment opportunities. Later SIFs were designed to provide effective administrative mechanisms to rehabilitate and repair social and economic infrastructure for human capital devel-
opment. The PUA in Jamaica points the need to expand SIFs to include promoting the development of social capital. Interventions must build not just human capital, but also social capital. Local institutions must be involved throughout the process, because ultimately the communities themselves, not the police, hold the solutions to their problems.

There is, of course, no such thing as a social-capital “project”; social capital cannot be “engineered.” But key features of the JSIF, including the subproject menu and key procedures within the subproject cycle, were designed both to ensure as far as possible that social capital was not further eroded, and to try to build on existing “stocks” to consolidate social capital in poor communities.

A. MENU OF ELIGIBLE SUBPROJECTS

The JSIF includes typical investments designed to increase human capital and the use of productive assets found in other social funds, such as rehabilitation and equipping of schools, health facilities, and daycare centers; rehabilitation of water and sewage systems, as well as drains and canals; and upgrading of urban access roads. But in line with the recommendation of an expanded role for SIFs in situations like Jamaica’s, the JSIF also incorporates more innovative interventions that aim to “build” social capital by providing support, training, space, and opportunities. These include:

- rehabilitating and equipping “integrated community spaces,” such as sports facilities, teen centers, and training facilities;
- conflict-resolution programs;
- drug-abuse counseling;
- family-life education and parenting courses;
- career guidance and job-placement services;
- training in different kinds of technical skills.

B. ELIGIBLE SUBPROJECT SPONSORS

The PUA study noted the importance of community-level institutions for social cohesion and economic development, and it recognized that informal as well as formal institutions can help combat violence and poverty. It also distinguished between hierarchical and horizontal institutions in its examination of how formal and informal institutions relate to poverty and violence. The JSIF reflects these observations in the following features:

a. In order to build on existing stocks of social capital, the JSIF seeks to work with established community-level institutions rather than creating new “project committees,” as some social funds have done.

b. In order to restrict the influence of individual-led, hierarchical institutions that favor top-down delivery of services, the JSIF prohibits individuals from sponsoring subprojects. Instead, projects must be sponsored by community groups, and the community must have participated actively in identifying the project.

c. In order to be as inclusive as possible and not restrict informal associations from participating in the JSIF, subproject sponsors need not be legally registered entities. Their responsibilities at all stages of the subproject cycle are matched to their capabilities.

d. In order to help provide the means for sponsors to undertake these roles, the subproject menu includes technical assistance and training of sponsors and executing agencies to upgrade their skills in the preparation, implementation, and management of community projects.

C. SUBPROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND APPRAISAL

The PUA also noted that the delivery process of services itself is critical to building social capital. This means getting the communities involved and keeping them involved. Therefore, the JSIF requires communities to participate in the identification of subprojects; moreover, to ensure the quality of the community’s involvement, the JSIF will train interested non-governmental organizations and central- and local-government entities in the latest participatory techniques. The JSIF also will retain in-house capacity to undertake participatory project iden-
tification and needs assessments in the poorest communities.

Community participation in decision-making is one of the most important appraisal criteria, and it goes beyond the mere identification of appropriate projects. Thus, under the JSIF, sub-project sponsors must agree to contribute a minimum of 5 percent of the cost, monitor the sub-project, and oversee the ongoing maintenance of the investment.

D. CONTRACTING AND DISBURSEMENTS

The existence of high levels of violence influenced the design of the JSIF's contracting and disbursement procedures. The PUA emphasized how community institutions, particularly horizontally based groups, are vulnerable to co-optation by political, gang, and other forces. By directly controlling the contracting and disbursement process of JSIF subprojects, community organizations would increase their vulnerability. Indeed, the flow of money to particular groups and not to others could prove divisive and actually increase violence in communities. Thus, sponsors will authorize the JSIF to contract on their behalf with the agency executing the sub-project and disburse funds directly to the agency.

For instance, if the JSIF approves a proposal from a parent-teacher association to furnish and equip a basic school, the PTA will sign a sponsor agreement authorizing the JSIF to contract with a supplier of the goods. The JSIF will then make disbursements directly to the supplier.

E. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A social investment fund, of course, cannot on its own solve such deeply entrenched problems of widespread poverty as those articulated by the residents of the five communities involved in this research project. Nevertheless, when distrust and fear dominate the daily lives of men, women, and children, the SIF may provide a modest entry point to break contextually specific cycles of poverty and violence, and thus improve the quality of life for the people it touches. Moreover, in the longer term, studies such as this one may themselves prove to be an important stepping-stone to reducing violence. Their participatory techniques tend to foster cooperation and dampen conflict. And ultimately, it is the communities themselves that must reduce the violence by rebuilding the trust and reciprocity implicit in their “stocks” of social capital, and thus start to find a way to break the violence-poverty-institutions nexus.
NOTES

1 Phillips, 1988, p. 22.
5 One of the PUA ground rules is ownership through named acknowledgment. Given the sensitivity of the issue of violence, however, this was considered inappropriate.
6 See Chambers, 1989, for a comprehensive detailed review of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), whose techniques are equally applicable for urban settings and therefore are those utilized in this study. The World Bank's Participation Sourcebook (World Bank, 1995) includes this as one of the techniques currently being integrated into World Bank operational work. This methodology has already been incorporated into a number of recent World Bank studies, including country poverty assessments in Zambia, Ghana, and South Africa (World Bank, 1994; Norton et al., 1995).
9 This simplified classification of assets, the asset vulnerability framework, was developed in a recently completed World Bank research project on “Urban Poverty and Social Policy in the Context of Adjustment” (see Moser, 1996), building on the work of Sen, 1981; Swift, 1989; World Bank, 1990; and Putnam, 1993.
10 Putnam, 1993, argues that organizational structures based on horizontal linkages, are more likely to increase the trust and cooperation, necessary for the development of "stocks" of social capital than are those organizations based on vertical, hierarchical linkages.
11 “Don” is the term participants used for a strong paternal leader who ensured stability, distributed jobs and money, and provided protection.
12 Given the strong causal relationships between different types of violence, it is recognized that such a typology is overly simplified. Nevertheless, it provides a broad framework for analysis.
15 Munroe, 1988, p. 3. Political gun violence ebbed in 1972, “but returned on a massive scale in 1976” (Stone, 1992, p. 136). The “tribal war” that began in 1976 and lasted until the general elections of 1980 left more than 2,000 people dead, almost three-quarters of them in the metropolitan area (Eyre, 1983, p. 236). At its zenith in 1980, some 500 people were killed in gang warfare and 20,000 people abandoned homes that had been burnt down (Stone, 1992, p. 136).
16 “The gun as a tool of guided democracy … became the symbol of power. The political agent with the gun became the symbol of authority” (O’Connor, 1992, p. 2).
17 In September 1991 the Jamaican government liberalized the exchange rate, which caused the prices of basic food items, most of which are imported, to rise.
18 Local perceptions of employment opportunities and constraints using PUA tools (particularly listing, ranking, pairwise ranking, and scoring) show both similarities between communities and variations within communities, particularly in terms of local work opportunities.
19 Women, however, expressed the common sentiment that men are unable or unwilling to help in the upbringing of their children. One explanation for this was that young “baby fathers” are dying so quickly, largely through violence, but a young woman in Zinc City said simply that men were “cruff” (unfeeling).
21 Chevannes, 1989.
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