

**CHRONIC POVERTY IN THE URBAN GHETTOS IN JAMAICA<sup>1</sup>**  
**(Draft)**

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## ABSTRACT

Every year, since 1989, the Government of Jamaica estimates the levels of poverty using the annual surveys of living conditions. On the macro, poverty levels are on the decline. In 1989, the percentage of persons in poverty was 30.5 per cent. In 2001, the figure was 16.8 per cent. On the national level, the Government has almost achieved the Millennium goals of halving by 2015, the number of persons in poverty.

On the micro level, there are some parishes which report persistent high levels of poverty, above the national average. This paper explores further the levels of poverty in specific years in certain urban ghettos known as “garrison communities”. These communities are so named because they are protected by their political affiliations. Using data from the surveys of living conditions, reports, and the police statistics on crime, drugs and violence, this paper examines chronic poverty in these urban ghettos.

It is argued that even if poverty is reduced at the macro levels, structural poverty has remained the same in these communities. The paper seeks to show that chronic poverty will never be reduced in these communities because their present social and economic framework serves several political ends. Unless, there is the sustained political will and momentum to dismantle these “garrison communities”, their inhabitants are doomed to a life of social exclusion, marginalization and chronic public and private poverty.

## Introduction

Poverty and National Development are intricately linked. Public poverty hinders national development and private poverty retards individual and household progress. Chronic poverty inhibits social and economic progress and sentences marginalized individuals to persistence social exclusion and vulnerability. This paper examines chronic poverty in Jamaica. The emphasis is on urban ghettos in Jamaica and more specifically the “garrison communities”. It is argued that chronic poverty in these urban marginalized communities will never be eradicated because there is no sustained political will to do so and their persistent poverty serves several political ends. The paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of chronic public poverty in Jamaica?
2. What is the level of public poverty in the “urban ghettos”?
3. What are the characteristics of the persons in chronic poverty in the urban ghettos of Jamaica?
4. Why have they remained persistently poor?
5. What are the implications to the answers to the above questions for the poverty-reduction policies?

## Types of Poverty

Several definitions of poverty exist and the focus of this paper is on: chronic poverty, public poverty and private poverty. The discussion of measurements of poverty will focus on the absolute poverty measurement approach.

Hulme and Spencer, 2001 and 2003 have defined chronic poverty as that type of poverty that exists for a period no shorter than 5 years. Essentially too, it includes a set of capability deprivations. Measuring chronic poverty may utilize either relative or absolute approaches. Increasingly, the importance of including both quantitative and qualitative approaches in measuring poverty has been recognized. Hulme and Spencer (2003 p.7) have identified five categories:

1. The “always poor” whose poverty score (income, consumption, nutritional status, human deprivation index etc.) in each period is below a defined poverty line;
2. The *usually poor* whose mean poverty score over all periods is less than the poverty line but are not poor in every period;
3. The *churning poor* with a mean poverty score around the poverty line but who are poor in some periods but not in others;
4. The *occasionally poor* whose mean poverty score is above the poverty line but have experienced at least one period in poverty;
5. The *never poor* with poverty scores in all periods above the poverty line

They further refine the groupings into the *chronic poor* (always poor and usually poor), the *transient poor* (churning poor and occasionally poor) and the non-poor (the never poor, continuing through to the always wealthy) (Hulme and Spencer, 2003).

In this paper, the absolute approach to poverty is the main focus of the discussion although some qualitative data is used to describe the position of the poor. Another important issue in this paper is the differentiation between public chronic poverty and private chronic poverty. We are of the view that a community can experience high levels of chronic poverty without equally high levels of private poverty. The Jamaican Government in its Ministry Paper 13 has defined the two types of poverty:

Public poverty is defined as a condition in which a community lacks such basic amenities and infrastructure as piped water, toilet, electricity, roads, sanitation etc. This in turn affects the life chances of residents of the community.

Private poverty is defined as a condition in which people do not have the means to live above a minimum standard usually referred to as the poverty line, which is determined annually.

In this paper, the concept of “community” goes beyond the usual definition of “definite physical space” to include for the Jamaican context, the electoral constituency. This is in keeping with Figueroa (2002) who underscored the importance of the term “garrison community”:

“To focus on constituencies alone is to miss the significance of the garrison phenomenon as a whole. The presence of a relatively small garrison within a constituency or the presence of a garrison in a neighbouring constituency can fundamentally alter the course of an election in a constituency that is relatively garrison free. The ability of the garrisons to do 'outreach work' greatly enhances their significance. My central concern is therefore with the concept of a garrison community not a garrison constituency” (Figueroa, 2002 p. 86).

## **Methodology**

The research questions will be answered by analyzing three main sources:

1. The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) data sets for the years 1992, 1996 and 2001.
2. Crime data from the Central Police Statistical Department,
3. The community profiles provided by the Social Development Commission, the election results from the Jamaica Electoral Office and existing literature on “garrison communities”.

This paper advances the literature on “garrison communities” since there has been no previous attempt to examine chronic poverty in these communities and link it to the political system. It is also the first time that data from the Jamaica Surveys of Living Conditions will be analyzed to describe the chronic poverty of those persons in these “garrison communities.”

It must be noted, however that the JSLC data does not use the same panels of respondents every year and therefore, we are not discussing the same set of persons in each year and therefore cannot speak to the movement of persons in and out of poverty.

### **Analytical Framework**

To examine chronic poverty in the urban ghettos of Jamaica, a political socioeconomic vulnerability framework (Figure 1) is utilized. At the macro level, the economic and social progress of the State is examined. The data will show the vulnerability of the state given its persistent public poverty. This State's vulnerability impacts on the vulnerability of all communities but more so, the garrison communities because of deliberate political interference and the lack of effort to dismantle all garrison communities. At the micro level the vulnerability of these communities is considered by using such indicators as their chronic poverty, mental insecurity, physical insecurity, social exclusion and other social indicators.

At the level of the analysis of the communities, the units of analysis will be 1. The community and 2. The households and the individuals. Data from the Social Development Commission and the Police provide data for the geographical areas and the communities and the data from the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions is used for the analysis of households and individuals. The years 1992 1996 and 2001 were selected in keeping with Hulme and Shepherd's (2003) definition of "chronic poverty): i.e. poverty that last at least 5 years<sup>2</sup>. Please note that the limitation of these surveys is that the same panels are not interviewed every year and this poses a difficulty in determining movements in and out of poverty.

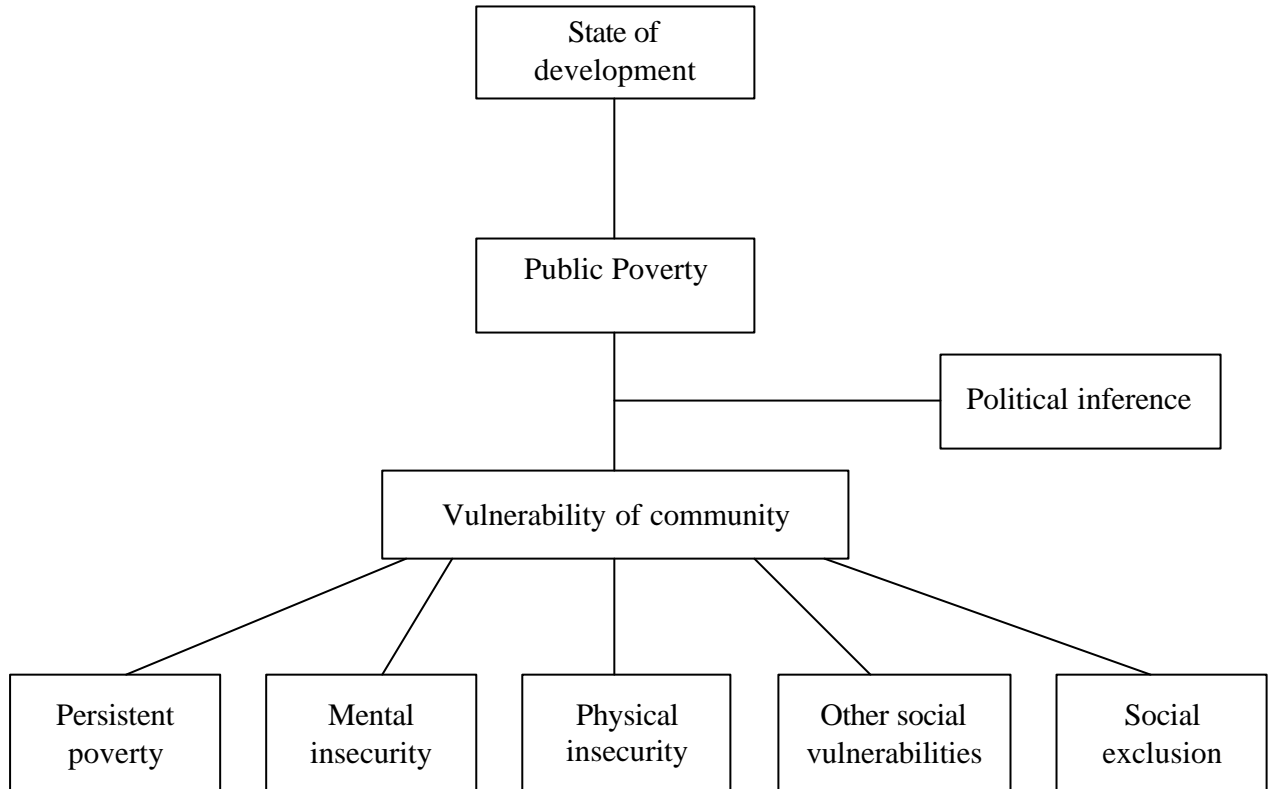
To provide a comprehensive picture of the vulnerability of the chronic poor in the urban ghettos of Jamaica, a modification of the Hulme and Shepherd (2001) table on assets and Moser's (1998) asset vulnerability Framework will be used. Table 1 provides the list of assets that will be analyzed. These include geographical assets, human capital and social capital. The assets of the chronic poor for the years 1992, 1996 and 2001 will be monitored using data from the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions.

This paper argues that the geographic capital of these communities/constituencies has impeded the development of their human and productive assets and that despite the improvement in poverty at the macro and regional levels, these communities essentially remain marginalized and in chronic poverty.

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<sup>2</sup> 1992 was also the first year that all three garrison communities were sampled in the JSLC.

**Figure 1: Political Socioeconomic Vulnerability Framework**



**Table 1: Framework for analyzing the assets of the chronic poor**

Type of asset	Indicators
Geographical capital	Physical location, access to basic social services (education, health etc.), environment
Productive Assets	Ownership of house and land and inventory of household goods, consumption
Human Capital	Highest level of education, self reported illness), employment
Social Capital	Link to politicians (level of dependence and patron-client relations), household relations (i.e. who are members of the household
Psychological Assets	Level of physical and mental insecurity, freedom of movement and expression, freedom to vote as desired

### **The Jamaican Context**

Table 2 provides some selected socioeconomic data for Jamaica. These indicators are fairly reasonable and are testimony to the social gains experienced in the last decades. However, these social gains may be reversed if the problems at the micro levels persist. The data shows that crime and violence are at high levels and threaten to destroy the economic and social stability of the nation.

**State of development:** Jamaica needs improved economic performance as the last decade has been one of insignificant economic growth. Figure 2 presents data on Jamaica's economic growth from 1989 to 2001. From a 4.6 per cent growth rate in 1989, Jamaica recorded a growth rate of 1.7 per cent in 2001. Debt servicing has remained problematic and in 2001, was 54.07% of GDP (Table 3).

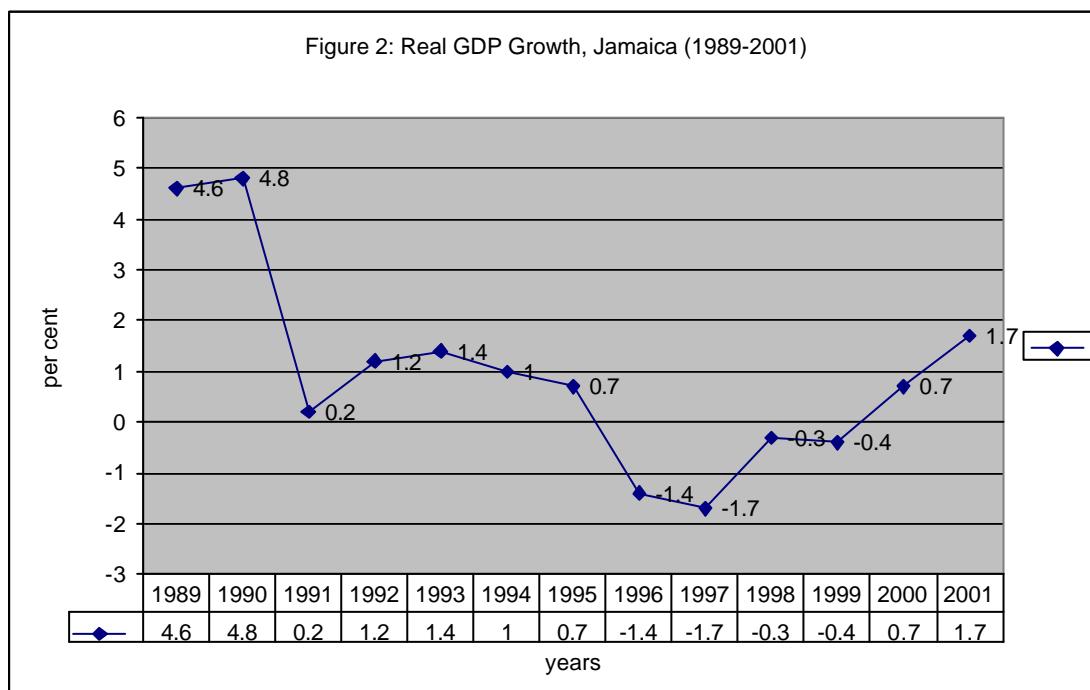
In spite of the less than impressive economic performance, poverty levels have reduced significantly in the last decade, moving from 30.5% in 1989 to 16.8% in 2001 (Figure 3). Jamaica is therefore on target to meet the Millennium Goal: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger (agreed to at the Social Summit) and to halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Several reasons are provided for this ambiguous situation (little economic growth and reduction in poverty). The Jamaican Government attributes this reduction to the success of its poverty eradication programme established in 1995. Other reasons include: increasing importance of remittances and the growth of the informal sector.

**Table 2: Selected socio-economic indicators for Jamaica (2001)**

<i>Total population</i>	2,621,100 est.)
<b>Economic Growth</b>	1.7
<b>Inflation rate</b>	8.7
<b>Debt servicing % of GDP</b>	35.4%
<b>Total fertility rate</b>	2.8
<b>Infant Mortality Rate</b>	24.5 per '000 live births
<b>Maternal Mortality</b>	111 per 100,000
<b>Life Expectancy at Birth</b>	72 years
<b>Percentage of individuals in Poverty (2001)</b>	16.8
<b>Adult Literacy Rate</b>	79.9
<b>Human development Indicator (UNDP)</b>	0.742 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Gini Coefficient</b>	.3843
<b>Percentage of population with access to safe water</b>	84.0
<b>Percentage of population with access to sanitary facilities</b>	99.5
<b>Percentage of children &lt; 1 year old immunized</b>	81.8
<b>(National average)</b>	
<b>Unemployment</b>	
<b>Total</b>	15.0
<b>Male</b>	10.3
<b>Female</b>	21.0

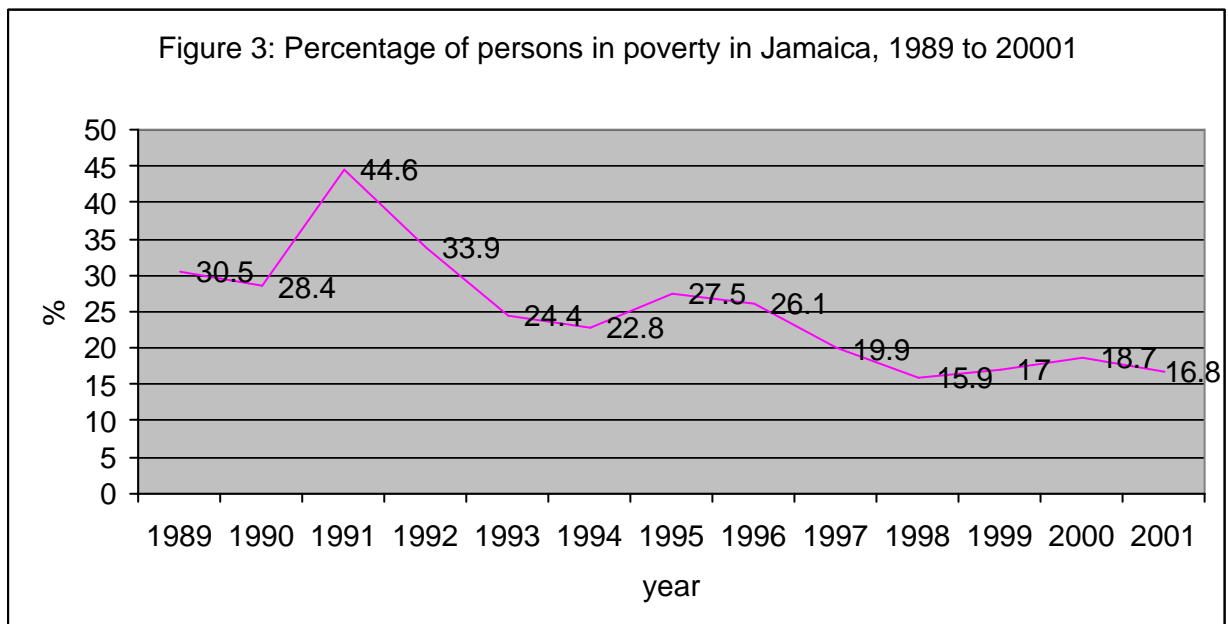
Source: Planning Institute of Jamaica (2001). Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica.  
a: UNDP. Human Development Report, 2002.



**Table 3: Jamaica: External Medium and Long -Term Public Debt and Indicators 1990-2001**

Year	Amount in US\$ millions	Total Debt/GDP
1990	4,152.41	90.37%
1991	3,874.27	100.07%
1992	3,687.18	104.26%
1993	3,677.97	85.39%
1994	3,687.18	82.28%
1995	3,451.90	66.09%
1996	3,284.40	55.16%
1997	3,277.62	48.48%
1998	3,306.35	47.73%
1999	3,024.08	43.35%
2000	3,375.26	47.62%
2001	4,146.03	57.09%

Source:DMU, Ministry of Finance



Source: Planning Institute of Jamaica. *Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions*, 1989 to 2001

## Chronic Poverty at the macro level

Although at the macro levels, the poverty levels have reduced, the Rural Areas continue to have the largest proportions of persons in poverty. In 2001, approximately one quarter, i.e. 24.1% of the residents in the Rural Areas were found to be in poverty. In the Kingston Metropolitan Areas, only 7.6% in 2001 (Table 4). There is no doubt that the Rural Areas in Jamaica need special attention.

However, this paper argues that the chronic poverty in the urban ghettos of Jamaica warrants particular attention given their political importance. These communities are homes to criminal gangs and Drug Dons who have a strangulating hold on the people in the communities. These urban ghetto residents have little alternative and are doomed to a life of chronic poverty and misery. They live in squalor and the cycle of poverty is not broken because their children know only a life of violence and crime.

**Table 4: Incidence of poverty by geographical area in Jamaica, 1989 to 2001**

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>KMA</b>	15.5	13.3	28.9	18.8	16.7	13.8	15.0	17.2	9.3	8.6	10.6	9.9	7.6
<b>OT</b>	22.0	25.7	31.4	29.9	22.9	20.0	22.8	22.0	14.8	13.4	12.1	16.6	13.3
<b>Rural</b>	40.7	37.5	57.2	42.2	29.6	28.8	37.0	32.8	27.4	19.5	22.0	25.1	24.1
<b>Jamaica</b>	30.5	28.4	44.6	33.9	24.4	22.8	27.5	26.1	19.9	15.9	17.0	18.7	16.8

Source: Planning Institute of Jamaica. *Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions*, 1989 to 2001. KMA: Kingston Metropolitan Area; OT: Other Towns.

## Urban and Rural Poverty: Unmasking the reality

Table 5 provides some indications of the realities of the poverty situation in the Kingston Metropolitan Centre (KMA) in Jamaica. Four categories of the poor are examined:

1. The absolute poor
2. The Ultra poor who consume at 80% or below of the absolute poverty line
3. The Food Poor who are unable to satisfy their minimum nutritional requirements
4. The “vulnerable or those at risk” who consume between 100% and 125% of the absolute poverty line

**Table 5: Characteristics of those who are in selected categories of the poor by geographical area (KMA: Kingston Metropolitan Area and Rural Areas)**

	<i>Mean Age</i>	<i>Mean Years of Schooling</i>	<i>Mean Household Size</i>	<i>Mean Number of children</i>	<i>% who are:</i>	
					<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
<b>Absolute Poverty</b>						
<b>KMA</b>	25.7	7.7	4.5	2.2	<b>59.9</b>	40.1
<b>Rural</b>	25.8	8.3	5.4	2.8	49.4	50.6
<b>Ultra Poverty</b>						
<b>KMA</b>	26.5	7.5	4.7	2.3	<b>62.7</b>	37.3
<b>Rural</b>	25.1	8.1	<b>5.5</b>	2.9	48.5	51.5
<b>Food Poverty</b>						
<b>KMA</b>	26.6	7.3	4.7	2.5	<b>62.3</b>	37.7
<b>Rural</b>	<b>23.4</b>	8.4	<b>6.2</b>	3.4	50.2	49.8
<b>Those at Risk Poverty</b>						
<b>KMA</b>	<b>32.1</b>	8.2	3.6	1.5	<b>59.9</b>	40.1
<b>Rural</b>	28.0	8.0	4.5	2.2	49.4	50.6

Source: Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 1999 data set.

From the above table we note the following:

- ?? There is a male vulnerability in the urban areas for all categories of the poor.
- ?? In Rural Areas there is an equal vulnerability for males and females in all categories.
- ?? Those in food poor in the rural areas are fairly young compared to the other categories.
- ?? All categories have a mean number of years of schooling of at least 7 years. This means that most would have at least completed primary school education.
- ?? Of note also is the large household size of those in “food poverty” and those in “ultra poverty”.

### **Crime and Violence in Jamaica**

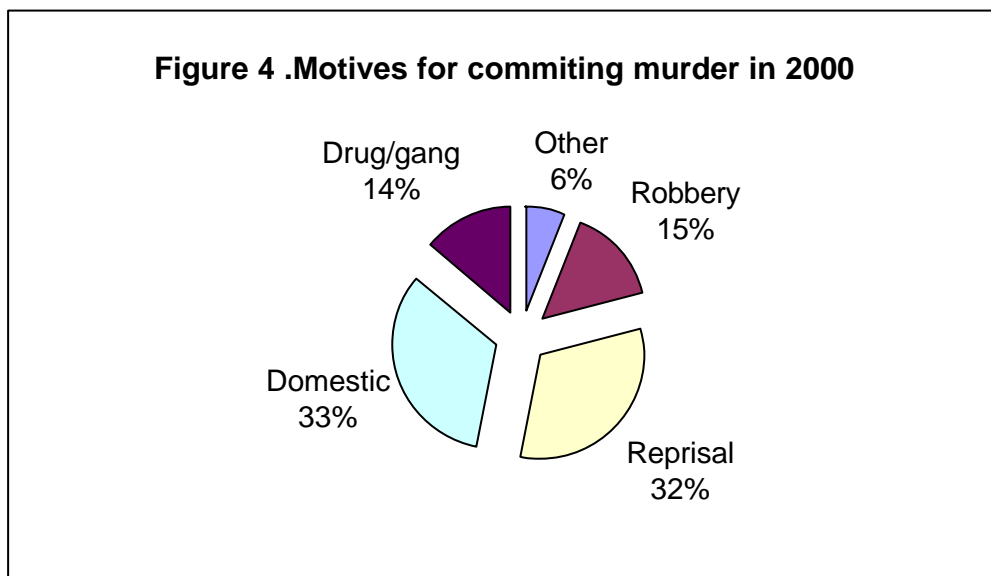
*“The fact is, however that crime is unacceptably high. Jamaica’s homicide rate, at 44 per 100,000 in 2001 is among the highest in the world and of the 1000 people killed in 2001, 69% died by the gun”*

Broadcast to the nation by the Minister of National Security, the Dr. The Honourable Peter Phillips.

[http://www.jhcuk.com/mnsj\\_drpphillips\\_broadcast\\_recrime.html](http://www.jhcuk.com/mnsj_drpphillips_broadcast_recrime.html)

Although, the security authorities are quick to point out that crime in Jamaica is on the decline, Jamaica remains a haven for criminals and violent deviants. Moreover, Jamaica has one of the highest homicidal rates in the world. As the Minister of Security admits, crime is unacceptably high in Jamaica. Table 6 presents trend data on major crimes in Jamaica from 1993 to 2000. Murder, shootings, rape and carnal abuse and suicide are on the increase. Of note are the low levels at which these crimes are cleared. Only manslaughter has a respectable response rate with murder and shootings recording about 50% of their cases cleared. In 2002, the number of murders totaled 1045 while shootings amounted to 1270 (Police Statistics, Jamaica 10/3/03).

Without diminishing the importance of the drug and narcotic links, interpersonal conflict and rivalry have accounted for a significant amount of the high murder rate in Jamaica. In 2000, reprisals accounted for 32% of the motives for committing murder (Figure 4).



Harriot (2000) points to the increase in the rate of inter-group conflict. In 1983, the rate was 8.29 but by 1997, the rate was 25.2% (Table 7). Harriot makes the link between politics and homicide:

*“After 1980, the prevalence and intensity of overt political conflicts progressively declined but a significant number of intergroup, community conflicts that were not attributed directly to politics by the police but which represented (in new ways) continuity with the earlier political battles, has persisted. Although less overt, politics has remained very much a part of gang and community identity and often the unnamed undercurrent in many of these conflicts”* (Harriot, 2002, p.4)

Table 6: MAJOR CRIMES IN JAMAICA: 1993 - 2001

Crimes	1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Reported	Cleared	Reported	Cleared	Reported	Cleared	Reported	Cleared	Reported	Cleared	Reported	Cleared	Reported	Cleared	Reported	Cleared
Murder	653	306	690	300	780	322	925	328	1038	393	953	443	849	515	887	477
Shooting	1121	515	1251	636	1308	665	1797	646	1620	662	1225	713	986	559	1012	519
Rape & Carnal Abuse	1297	569	1070	458	1605	563	1797	646	1620	662	1420	715	1261	515	1304	693
Robbery	5416	1673	5461	1608	4424	1719	4494	1407	3464	1184	2985	1274	2392	1083	2331	965
Manslaughter	54	52	51	48	34	29	30	24	28	28	64	60	48	47	35	34
Infanticide	3	3	2	2	13	13	6	6	8	8	5	5	5	5	0	0
Suicide	21	21	23	23	36	36	37	37	43	43	72	72	53	53	80	80
Felonious	639	421	1065	599	1269	615	1321	580	1297	1132	1738	1495	1625	1268	5636	5187
Others (e.g. Assault)	12071	922	12790	9442	13614	8868	14280	9780	13136	12512	11319	10212	9837	9105	5184	4839
Total	21275	12781	22403	13116	23083	12830	24617	13512	22053	16583	19781	14989	17056	13150	16469	12794

Source: Economic and Social Survey Jamaica (various issues): Planning Institute of Jamaica

**Table 7 Trend in Murder Rates by Category of Murder (per 100,000)**

	1997	1993	1988	1983
Domestic	1.24 (31)	1.17( 29)	1.27(30)	1.20(27)*
Other Inter-Personal	0.95(24)	4.49 (111)	3.22(76)	4.30(96)
<b>Total individualized conflict</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>5.66</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>5.50</b>
Political	0.20 (4)	0.57(14)	0.51(12)	1.42(32)
Gang rivalry\control	14.10(340)	7.04 (174)	3.61(85)	3.12(70)
“Undetermined”**	10.90(273)	6.35 (157)	3.43 (81)	3.75(84)
<b>Total Inter-Group conflict</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>14.00</b>	<b>6.55</b>	<b>8.29</b>
Pursuant of other crimes	5.10(129)	4.00 (99)	2.90(69)	3.40(78)
Other	8.61	2.64	3.66	1.51
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>18.7</b>

Source: *Making Dopies: A study of Criminal Homicides in Jamaica*. Hariott 2000  
Note \* The first figure is rate, that is number of incidents per 100,000 citizens. The second in parentheses represents the number of incidents.

### Garrison Communities

*“I entirely agree with former US President and recent Nobel Peace Prize Winner Jimmy Carter who referred to such communities as “blight upon the nation’s democracy, with their strong-arm men imposing political conformity”*

The Gleaner -November 2, 2002,- Page D8 by Harvey G. Willis (Contributor)

Some garrisons in Jamaica are over 40 years. The term was first articulated by Carl Stone in 1986. Stone (1986) defined a garrison, as a military stronghold based on political tradition, cultural values, beliefs, myths and socialization.

Stone (1986) noted that garrisons were formed through:

- Housing projects set up by the ruling party and peopled with supporters
- Chasing out all political opposition at gunpoint. Either way the community achieves political homogeneity within; while entry & exit are monitored by top-ranking gang leaders in the context of scarce benefits
- Garrisons are maintained by party personnel and the framework of violence, scarce benefits allocations and patron-clientelism, interest representation of *faithfuls* and maintenance of party or political values.

Chevannes (1992 ) added a third factor in the formation of garrisons i.e. the seizure of territory or territorial invasion. He notes the growing drug trade and its related independence from the top ranking party hierarchy, raises the question of the extent to which the garrison community is now and will remain an integral part of political process. Chevannes (1992) notes that a feature common to all factors is their dependence on the wider political climate for success.

Winston Witter ( ) argued that Garrison constituencies are havens for political gangs and incubators for political activists who enforced territorial and political allegiance on those who are domiciled in areas, which are clearly and rigidly defined within constituencies (with link between power elite systems and gangs).

?? Figueroa and Sives (2002) articulated that:

- Homogeneous voting, electoral manipulation and gun violence is the reality of the garrison process in post-independence Jamaica.
- They define a garrison community as one in which any individual/group that seeks to oppose, raise opposition to or organize against the locally dominant party would be in physical danger, thus making continued residence in the area extremely difficult, if not impossible.
- They posit that a garrison community can be identified by the electoral process
- They further concur with Stone, Chevannes and Witter that any significant development has to take place with the tacit approval of the leadership

Based on a modification of the definitions provided in the literature, in this paper “garrison communities” are characterized by the following:

- ?? Homogenous voting patterns
- ?? Political stability
- ?? Political tribalism
- ?? Protected by the politicians
- ?? Chronic poverty
- ?? High Levels of crime

What has caused these “garrison communities” to continue for such a long time?. This writer sums up some of the causes:

*“But from where shall the end of this evil system come; from the politicians guilty of creating it? From the pliable civil service guilty of implementing it? From the greedy privates sector guilty of funding it? From the police force guilty of enforcing it? From the church guilty by silence? From the media guilty of cheerleading? From the Middle Class guilty of contempt for those they consider beneath them? From academia, who are so out of touch it isn’t funny? (The Gleaner, September 30, 1998,– Page A4 & A8 by Peter Espeut: The Rule of the Dons)*

The community members within the communities have not insisted that the dismantling takes place because as the 1997 Kerr Report on Political Tribalism stated:

*The benefits to the residents of the garrison communities are obvious: protection, housing and employment (The Gleaner, Monday, October 8, 2001,– Page A2 by Justice Writes Changing the Garrisons)*

## Patterns of voting by Select “Garrison Communities”

Political Stability is one of the main features of these communities. They have been represented by the same political party for the last 14 years. Kingston Western has been represented by the The Right Honourable Edward Seaga, Leader of the Opposition for the past 20 years. St. Andrew South West is represented by Mrs. Portia Simpson Miller who has been a Minister of Government for the past 14 years. St. Andrew Southern has been represented by the Minister of Finance for the past 10 years. These communities were selected because their representative has consistently won by over 80% of the votes (Table 8) and they exhibit the characteristics outlined by Stone (1986) and Figueroa (2002) and also this author’s inclusion of the feature of “chronic poverty”

**Table 8: Pattern of Voting in Select Garrison Communities, for the last three General Elections .**

Constituency	Political Party	1993	1997	2002
		Percentage of Votes Received by the Winner		
Kingston Western	Jamaica Labour Party (JLP)	95	85	84.3
St. Andrew South Western	People’s National Party (PNP)	99.5	98	94
St. Andrew Southern	People National Party (PNP)	76	92.1	91

Source: Jamaica Electoral Office

### Brief Description of the garrison communities

#### Kingston Western

“A safe seat 'built by Uncle Eddie'<http://www.jamaicaelections.com>

“The constituency of Kingston Western is bounded by a point on the sea coast opposite East Street, northerly along the western side of East Street to its end at South National Heroes' Circle, westerly along the southern side of South National Heroes Circle to West National Heroes' Circle, along the western side of West National Heroes' Circle to the Kingston-St. Andrew parish boundary at Torrington Road, westerly and southerly along the parish boundary to where it meets Spanish Town Road, north westerly along the southern side of the parish boundary on the southern side of Spanish Town Road to the Theatre, thence southerly along the eastern side of the parish boundary to the seacoast, easterly along the seacoast to the starting point.” (<http://www.jamaica-elections.com/history/0046.html:March> 11, 2003).

Kingston Western consists of Bumper Hill, Tivoli Gardens, Denham Town, Hannah Town among other communities. West Kingston is a hub of commercial activities, and in spite of being the major area of ghetto life in the city, it has always been a focus of attention for its trading, its markets, its music, its port activity and the principal meeting

place for rural and city folk. Indeed, West Kingston has always attracted a high level of political activity which has only intensified with the passing years where the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Edward Seaga has served as Member of Parliament for about 40 years. (<http://www.jamaicagleaner.com/gleaner/20020505/focus/focus1.html:March> 11, 2003)

### **St Andrew South Western**

*“ST. ANDREW South West is the strongest PNP seat in Jamaica and the electors "face life with Portia Simpson Miller.”* <http://www.jamaicaelections.com>

The St. Andrew South Western constituency in the parish of St Andrew is encompassed by Maxfield Park Avenue to Spanish Town Road which continues with an imaginary line to the sea. The constituency also includes Marcus Garvey Drive, Payne lands, the fishing village near to the causeway bridge, Majesty Gardens and extends to Hagley Park Road and the southern part of Waltham Park Road. The St. Andrew South Western constituency is the strongest PNP seat in Jamaica. This constituency is served by the Hon. Portia Simpson Miller as Member of Parliament. The terrain is flat land slightly sloping at most 20 degrees towards the sea. As an old alluvial fan very little flooding ever occur. This is also true for the other two constituencies herein noted.

### **St. Andrew Southern**

St. Andrew Southern constituency consists of Trench Town, Arnett Gardens, Wilton Gardens (Rema), Jones Town, Lyndhurst Park, Rose Town, Craig Town, parts of Maxfield Avenue among other communities. The St. Andrew Southern is bordered by the constituencies of St. Andrew South Western, St. Andrew East Central and Kingston Western. It is one of the strongholds of the PNP. The constituency boasts the home of the Arnett Gardens premier league football team and is the defending champion for the last two years. Dr. the Hon. Omar Davies serves as the Member of Parliament for this constituency.

### **Chronic public poverty in the “garrisons”**

We have chosen to discuss more in-depth two areas in each of the three garrisons. In this section, we examine the public poverty in 2 areas in the each of these “garrison communities”. Table 9 provides data on Kingston Western. Table 10 looks at St. Andrew South West and Table 11 features St. Andrew South. An assessment of the **geographical capital**, reveals a high level of **public poverty** with all six areas discussed having infrastructural and environmental problems. The latter includes problems of poor waste management, inconsistent supply of electricity, abandoned and useless structures. These abandoned structures provide some evidence that there is a flight of individuals in violent periods. In Majestic Gardens (St. Andrew South West), no piped water was identified in the area and in Rose Town (St. Andrew South), there was no health facility.

**Productive Assets** measured by ownership of land was generally low ranging from a high of 22% to a low of 6.5%. This has implications for security of tenure and productive use of the land as some of the residents engage in agricultural production.

**Human Capital** did not extend beyond secondary schooling. Even so, the proportion of persons with secondary school education was low and not more than 45% in any case. Unemployment figures were high in most cases with Wilton Gardens (Rema) recording a high of 57%.

**Social Capital** refers to the collective value of all "social networks" [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other ["norms of reciprocity"] Social capital creates value for the people who are connected and - at least sometimes - for bystanders as well. <http://www.bowlingalone.com/socialcapital.php3>

What is significant about the social capital in these communities is the strong political links and relationships with individuals are usually molded by political links. The communities and the constituency take on a level of high importance during election time and the hustle and bustle around the politician is remarkably high. At non-election times, the residents promote their alliances through their political network and many writers have written about political patronage in Jamaica. As we see from the community profiles, today, several social problems persist e.g. high crime rate and high unemployment.

The **psychological dimension** of life in the inner cities can never be fully understood. Living in these communities is a nightmare during the volatile periods. The fact that some of these bouts of violence are unpredictable is nerve racking.

Room (1995) has described **social exclusion** as 'the process of becoming detached from the organization and communities of which the society is composed and from the rights and obligations that they embody'. In other words people become disqualified from enjoying the fruits of living in a community. This isn't simply a matter of people not being able to access material goods, it is also about the nature of the social relationships they can engage in.

Despite the overwhelming support for the politician, the communities can live like "**separate**" entities. Dr. Davies, Member of Parliament for St. Andrew South:

*"Dr. Davies stated that there were 12 independent 'states' in Arnette Gardens. 'South St. Andrew is really a confederation, there are like 12 independent states. There is Brooklyn, Texas, Havana, Mexico, Angola. They are all independent states and the natural tendency is for them to live as independent states. But they are also isolated, not only from each other, but they can be isolated from the rest of the country,' he said.*

The Gleaner , Friday, January 11, 2002- Page D8 by Balford Henry (Senior Staff Reporter)West Kingston Enquiry

Another aspect of the social exclusion that the residents of the "garrison communities" experience is the "**restriction of movement**" which is especially so when there is gang warfare and shootings. Communities have been known to be "shut down" for days when there is warfare. This "closure" of the communities has a negative impact on employment, education, business, sports, entertainment, sex and family (Levy, 1996 p.26). Young children are excluded from the education system because they cannot attend school.

**Table 9: Profile of Assets of Select areas in Kingston Western**

Asset	Community	
	Denham Town	Tivoli Gardens
Geographical capital	<p><b>Location:</b> Adjacent to Tivoli Gardens and Wilton Gardens.</p> <p><b>Access to Basic Services:</b> 2 Basic Schools, 2 Primary schools and 1 high school in fair condition. Computer training available at SDC office</p> <p><b>Health Care:</b> Denham Town Health Centre and Retirement Home in average condition.</p> <p><b>Sanitation:</b> Piped water in yard, Sewer/WC &amp; Pit latrine, and 35.34% share toilet facilities. Garbage picked up mainly by truck. <b>Infrastructure:</b> Poor road surfaces/drainage, illegal land use, no/few recreation facilities. <b>Environmental Hazards:</b> High emissions of effluence, &amp; poor waste management.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Located adjacent to Denham Town and within close proximity to the Coronation market (downtown).</p> <p><b>Access to Basic Services:</b> 1 Basic school, 1 vocational and 1 comprehensive high in fair condition. Post Office and telephone facilities - 60% telephone in homes and 47% call boxes.</p> <p><b>Health Care;</b> Charles Chin Health Centre in good condition.</p> <p><b>Sanitation:</b> Water piped into yard 12%, Sewer/WC 89%. Pit latrine 47.42% share toilet facilities. Garbage disposal picked up by truck &amp; community receptacle. <b>Infrastructure:</b> Low water pressure, inconsistent access to electricity, no/ few recreation facilities and poor road surfaces.</p> <p><b>Environmental:</b> Abandoned/useless structure, poor waste management practices &amp; high emission of effluence</p>
Productive Assets	<p><b>Ownership of property and use:</b> 75% of houses in good condition, 19.5% own land engaged in farming.</p> <p><b>Employment Level:</b> Male Household Head employed 27%; female Household Head employed 60.87%. Working population unemployed <b>40%</b>.</p>	<p><b>Ownership of property and use:</b> 80% of homes are concrete structures in good condition. Land ownership 22.68% farming. Livestock rearing 50% cash crop 50%.</p> <p><b>Employment; 79.3%</b> Household head employed -females, 49.6% male. Self employed 49.6% male 63.65% female. Working population unemployed <b>37%</b>.</p>
Human Capital	<p><b>Education level:</b> Secondary Level Education 43% female and 29.85% male. Tertiary level 3.1% female and 2.45% male.</p> <p><b>Employment categories:</b> Most Households Are employed in elementary occupations and to a lesser extent as service workers and shop and sales workers.</p>	<p><b>Education Level:</b> Secondary level education average– 28.65% males females 39.03% Basic / Elementary education is second highest – 4.32% males 6.29% female. Tertiary level only 1.8% male and 3.42% female.</p> <p><b>Employment categories:</b> 29% employed as shop and market sales workers, 15% craft &amp; related trade workers &amp; 10 % service workers.</p>

Source: The Social Development Commission

**Table 9 (continued) Profile of assets of areas in Kingston Western**

Asset	Community	
	Denham Town	Tivoli Gardens
Social Capital	Voted for the Jamaica Labour Party (i.e. the Main Opposition Party for the last 40 years <b>Social Problems:</b> <sup>3</sup> High crime rate, high unemployment, high teenage pregnancy, high school dropouts, drug use	Voted for the Jamaica Labour Party (i.e. the Main Opposition Party for the last 40 years <b>Social Problems:</b> High unemployment, high crime rate, high teenage pregnancy, high drug abuse, insufficient access to training.
Psychological Assets	Social Exclusion: Mental Insecurity that there may be sporadic violence. Children fear going to school during gang war. Do not see that to break the cycle of poverty, they must disengage from the politician	Social Exclusion: Mental Insecurity that there may be sporadic violence. Children fear going to school during gang war. Do not see that to break the cycle of poverty, they must disengage from the politician

Source: The Social Development Commission

<sup>3</sup> Only the salient ones are highlighted.

**Table 10: Profile of Assets of Select areas in St. Andrew South West**

		Community
Asset	Majestic Gardens	Tavares Gardens
<b>Geographical Capital</b>	<p><b>Location:</b> Close to Marcus Garvey drive and near to 3 Miles area and Greenwich Town.</p> <p><b>Access to Basic Social Services:</b> 1 Basic school, 1 library, 1 community centre and football field in fair condition. Community served by divisional post office.</p> <p><b>Health care Facilities:</b> No health care facility within community- services provide by Kingston Public hospital.</p> <p><b>Sanitation:</b> No piped water identified in area although 28% of residents have sewer&amp; WC (other sources of water used). 28% have toilet facilities other than pit latrine and 42% have no toilet facilities.18.48 share toilet facilities. Garbage is disposed of by burning 23%, community receptacle 22% and garbage picked up by truck 34%.</p> <p><b>Infrastructural Problems:</b> High illegal housing, poor road surfaces, illegal land use, squatting, inconsistent electricity, poor drainage and poorly maintained schools.</p> <p><b>Environmental Hazards:</b> Poor waste management and frequent foul odour from business areas.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Located within Payne Lands area, close to Spanish Town Rd and Haile Selassie Dr.</p> <p><b>Access to Basic Social Services:</b> 1 school library in fair condition, 1 primary school and 1 comprehensive school in fair condition. 1Basic school; 1 community centre and a Park in poor condition. 1Heart Vocational Skills Training centre and 1 SDC office providing capacity building.</p> <p>Industrial activities in areas-shoe manufacturing and auto parts.</p> <p><b>Health Care Facilities:</b> No health care facilities in community – KPH provides health care.</p> <p><b>Sanitation:</b> Piped water into yard 13% and Public standpipe 0.63%. Sewer/ WC 66.67% &amp; pit latrine 30%. 44.65% share toilet facilities. Garbage disposed of by burning 11.95%, communal receptacle 22.64% and picked up by truck 75.47%.</p> <p><b>Infrastructural Problems:</b> High illegal housing, poor road surfaces, illegal land use, squatting, inconsistent electricity, poor drainage and poorly maintained schools.</p> <p><b>Environmental Hazards:</b> Poor waste management and abandoned and useless structures.</p>
Productive Assets	<p><b>Ownership of property and use:</b> Houses are made from board, wood, concrete and block – 20% in very good condition while 45% are in poor condition. Only 6.5% of residents own land, which is engaged in farming of cane, green banana, fruits and ground provisions.</p> <p><b>Employment Level:</b> Household head employed male 60.44% and 55% female Self employed 35.56% male, female 78.26% Working population unemployed- none</p>	<p><b>Ownership of property and use:</b> 40% of homes in good condition- 20 % are in poor condition. Land ownership 22.64% engaged in farming green, green bananas, cash crops, fruits and livestock. Household</p> <p><b>Employment Level:</b> heads employed male 70.15% and female 67.39%. Self employed male 45.45% and female 57.52% Working population unemployed 41.758%</p>
Human Capital	<p>Secondary level education- 25% male, 31 % female, All age 9.5% male and female 13.4%. Tertiary level education only 1% and .5% female.</p> <p>Household occupation covers a wide range of skill areas including craft, fishery, assembly &amp; sales. 19% are in craft &amp; related services while 18.4% occupy elementary jobs.</p>	<p><b>Education Level:</b> Secondary level education - male 31.78% and female 44.86%. Tertiary Level – male 3.12% and female 5.6% 15.66% employed in Craft and Trade related areas, 18.18% as shop and market sales workers and 14.65% as service workers.</p>

Source: The Social Development Commission

**Table 10 (continued) Profile of assets of Select areas in St. Andrew South West**

Community		
Asset	Majestic Gardens	Tavares Gardens
Social Capital	<p><b>Social problems:</b> Poor Sanitation practices, high unemployment and underemployment, high school dropouts, high crime rate and high drug use.</p>	<p><b>Social problems:</b> Poor Sanitation practices, high unemployment and underemployment, high school drop outs, high crime rate and high drug use.</p>
Psychological Assets	<p>Social Exclusion Mental Insecurity that there may be sporadic violence. Children fear going to school during gang war Do not see that to break the cycle of poverty, they must disengage from the politician</p>	<p>Social Exclusion Mental Insecurity that there may be sporadic violence. Children fear going to school during gang war Do not see that to break the cycle of poverty, they must disengage from the politician</p>

Source: The Social Development Commission

**Table 11: Profile of Assets of Select areas in St. Andrew South**

	<b>Community</b>	
Asset	Wilton Gardens (Rema)	Rose Town
	<p><b>Location:</b> Located near Jones Town and Denham Town.  <b>Access to Basic Social Services:</b> 1 basic school in fair condition. 1 All age in fair condition. Boys Town Skills centre and Heart Skills Training centers in good condition.                      Telephone in homes 97.93% call boxes 85.5%.                      Health Care Facility: No health care facility within immediate community. Community served by the Kingston Public Hospital.  <b>Sanitation:</b> Piped water in yard 4.14%. Sewer/WC 93.79%, Pit latrine 2.07%. Garbage disposed of by burning 4.145 and picked up by truck 55.86%  <b>Infrastructural Problems :</b> Poor road surfaces, illegal land use, inconsistent electricity, poor drainage and poorly maintained schools.  <b>Environmental Hazards:</b> Poor waste management and roads not paved</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Located close to Maxfield area.  <b>Access to Basic Social Services:</b> 1 Basic school.                      Telephone in houses 94% Call Boxes 64%  <b>Health Care:</b> No health care facilities  <b>Sanitation:</b> Piped water into yard. 14.29%                      Sewer/WC 84.52%                      Pit Latrine 10.71%                      Garbage disposal by burning 11.95% communal receptacle 21.43% and picked up by truck 76.19%  <b>Infrastructural Problems:</b> Poor road surfaces, illegal land use, inconsistent electricity, poor drainage and poorly maintained schools.  <b>Environmental Hazards:</b> Poor waste management practices</p>
Productive Assets	<p><b>Ownership and property use:</b> 75% of homes are concrete and 25% block. 50% in fair condition, 15% in good condition and 35% in poor condition  <b>Employment Level:</b> Household head employed- male 54.72% and female 38%.                      Self employed- male 65.5% and female 43%.                      Working Population unemployed 57.03%</p>	<p><b>Ownership and Property Use:</b> 40% of houses in good condition, 40% in fair condition and 20% in poor condition. Land ownership 17.86% engaged in farming of ground provisions and cash crops.  <b>Employment Level:</b> Household hold heads employed – male 81.08% female 65.96%                      Self employed- 32.% male and female 48%                      Working Population unemployed 41.17%</p>
Human Capital	<p><b>Education Level 1:</b> Secondary level education – male 29.365 and female 44.04%. Tertiary level education – 4.59% male and 11.93% female. All age 5.5% male female 1.83%. 16% are employed as service workers, 12.96% as shop and market sales workers. 5.56 % as professional/Senior Official &amp; 23% in unspecified occupations.</p>	<p><b>Education Level:</b> Secondary level education- male 17.09% and female 32.28%                      Tertiary 10.76% female 8.91%                      All age 5.7% male and female 5.7%                      Elementary/ Basic male 5.06% Female 8.23%                      20.88% employed as shops and market sales workers, craft &amp; related Trade workers 13.19% and Service Worker 17.58%.</p>

Source: The Social Development Commission

**Table 11 (continued) Profile of assets in select areas in St. Andrew South**

	<b>Community</b>	
Asset	Wilton Gardens (Rema)	Rose Town
Social Capital	<p><b>Social problems:</b> Poor Sanitation practices, high unemployment and underemployment, high school drop outs, high crime rate and high drug use.</p> <p>.</p>	<p><b>Social problems:</b> Poor Sanitation practices, high unemployment and underemployment, high school drop-outs, high crime rate and high drug use.</p> <p>.</p>
Psychological Assets	<p>Social Exclusion Mental Insecurity that there may be sporadic violence. Children fear going to school during gang war. Do not see that to break the cycle of poverty, they must disengage from the politician</p>	<p>Social Exclusion Mental Insecurity that there may be sporadic violence. Children fear going to school during gang war. Do not see that to break the cycle of poverty, they must disengage from the politician</p>

Source: The Social Development Commission

**There is a restriction of social relationships**. Persons outside of the inner cities do not want to associate with the inner city residents. It would have been possible to widen their social network through employment but this easier said than done. There is a stigma attached to the persons who live in “garrison communities” and residents find it difficult to find jobs: Levy in his study of the inner cities was told that”

*Employers refuse to consider applicants, even those with adequate education or those who have passed job requirement tests, once they hear their address. Some employers do not hesitate to say why they reject an application: you come from a bad area, where only robbers and gunmen and their families live<sup>4</sup>.*

The employment issue is further complicated by the fact that if and when they obtain jobs, their employment is jeopardized by the physical insecurity that they experience during periods of violence. They are unable to go to leave their homes during times of heavy shootings. Ultimately, employers are forced to relieve them of their tasks.

*“Gun man all kick off yuh door. All down a Rose Town, everyday a shooting, shooting, just one hol’ heap a shooting”.*

*“...sometimes, it not safe for you to go stay in either because they fire through the wall and through the windows. Sometimes, you have to go into the 4<sup>th</sup> room, way round at di back”.*

(Pals Base-Line Study In Trench Town And Flankers, Jamaica, W.I., CIDA, 2002).

This mental insecurity is pervasive throughout Jamaica but is more so in the inner cities. The high level of psychological insecurity is evident in the increase in the number of neighbourhood watch groups in the country over the years. Table 12 shows the number of active neighbourhood watch groups. The data does not take into account the informal neighbourhood watch groups.

**Table12: Active and New Neighbourhood Watch Groups**

Year	No. of active groups	New Neighbourhood Watch Groups
1991	230	99
1992	335	105
1993	351	31
1994	382	31
1995	384	2
1996-1998	No data	No data
1999	527	25
2000	556	29

Source: ESSJ, Various years

The extent of the crime problem in these garrison communities under discussion is highlighted when we examine murders and shootings for 2000. St. Andrew South accounted for 150 of the 1045 murders and 202 of the 1270 shootings in Jamaica.

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<sup>4</sup> Emphasis that of this author’s

Kingston Western accounted for 192 of the total numbers of shootings and 66 of the 1045 murders (Table 13).

<b>Table 13: Crime Statistics Year 2002</b>							
<b>Type of Crime</b>	<b>Murder</b>	<b>Rape</b>	<b>Robb ery</b>	<b>Larcen y</b>	<b>Shootings</b>	<b>Carnal Abuse</b>	<b>Breakings</b>
<b>Kgn. Central</b>	82	34	128	26	96	4	32
<b>Kgn Eastern</b>	62	38	71	6	76	17	48
<b>Kgn Western</b>	66	30	50	11	192	10	27
<b>St Andrew Central</b>	79	103	327	14	113	20	121
<b>St Andrew North</b>	72	62	190	10	84	26	165
<b>St Andrew South</b>	150	110	153	12	202	25	43
<b>St Catherine North</b>	106	80	170	12	132	25	165
<b>St Catherine South</b>	96	71	135	7	95	22	144
<b>National Total</b>	1045	875	2021	251	1270	270	1769

Source: Dept. of Statistics, Jamaica Constabulary Force

\*\*St Catherine North include Spanish Town

\*\* St. Catherine South include Portmore, Central Village & Old Harbour

N.B: The crime is recorded in terms of police divisions not communities.

### **Chronic private poverty**

Based on the community profiles obtained from the Social Development Commission, the public poverty in these areas was highlighted. Using data from the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, the private poverty in these three constituencies is studied. These characteristics of the persons living in these communities are examined. Their human capital, social capital, productive assets and quality of life are discussed in the following tables.

We begin by looking at the Leader of the Opposition's constituency- **Kingston Western**. The decline in the national figures in poverty is reflected in the figures for the constituencies. Poverty in Kingston Western declined from 32.3% in 1992 to 24.1% in 1996 (Table 14). However, the figure has not changed for 2001. Food poverty also declined in 1996 but increased slightly in 2001. Those with only primary or "new secondary" schooling still represent significant proportions in 2001 and is indeed a reflection of the national situation. The household arrangements have changed with more persons opting to be in common-law relationship. Based on the respondents in the sample, land ownership was high but ownership of house was lower. The issue of land is always problematic and is the subject of many adjudications. Illegal land use has already been mentioned by the Social Development Commission as a problem in these communities. Persons have been known to claim land for which they have no title. For an

indication of the quality of life, one can discuss the type of toilet facilities and the main water source. In 2001, the use of indoor tap/pipe as a main source of drinking water still remained a luxury available to less than 40% of the population. The pit latrine was still used by 1/5 of the residents in this constituency and 23.7 % continued to share toilet facilities. Electricity as a main source of lighting was accessible to 85% but there is no indication in the SLC whether the connection was legal or not. The households had electricity while the streets were much darker. Based on this data, Kingston Western appears to be suffering from high levels of chronic public and private poverty.

**St. Andrew South West** represented by Mrs. Portia Simpson painted a better picture. Mrs. Portia is a Minister of Government and has represented the constituency for the last 15 years. Both absolute poverty and food poverty have declined and in 2001, only 7% of the persons were in poverty while nobody was in food poverty (Table 15). A higher proportion of persons are opting to remain single and not be in any common-law relationship. Indoor pipe was used by 63.4% of the residents in 2001 but as in Kingston Western, 1/5 of these residents used the pit latrine as their main toilet facility. Sharing of toilet facilities was also high at 26.7%. Electricity in the home was not as severe a problem as on the streets. Again public poverty with the limited availability of basic social services remained a chronic poverty while private poverty was reduced.

**St. Andrew South** is represented the Minister of Finance is also in a better condition than the constituency represented by the Leader of the Opposition. Private poverty based on consumption has reduced significantly through the years (Table 16). Food poverty remains at 4.8% Marriage is not as attractive as it was in 1992 and persons are opting to be in other types of relations. Ownership of land and house remains a controversial issue given the high levels of illegal use. Quality of life measured by type of toilet facility and main source of drinking water, is reasonably fair compared to the other constituencies under discussion. However, compared to the other two, this constituency has the highest percentage of persons sharing toilet facilities (48.4%). Access to electricity is very high at 99% but there is no qualifying indication as to how much of it is legal. Again as is the case in the other constituencies, chronic public poverty persists even as private poverty is on the decline.

In summary, based on the data provided by the Social Development Commission, chronic poverty plagues all these communities and the derelict appearance is an eye sore in the nation's capital. However, private poverty (specifically absolute poverty and food poverty) are on the decline with Kingston Western being the only constituency whose residents remain in chronic private poverty. In the other cases, consumption levels are higher and therefore chronic private poverty is not so marked. Based on Hulme (2003) 's definitions Kingston Western is experiencing both **chronic public and private poverty** (i.e. *‘always poor’* and *‘usually poor’*). St. Andrew South West and St. Andrew South record *‘chronic public poverty’* and *‘transient private poverty’* (churning poor and occasionally poor).

Incidentally, the constituency that has exhibited the least reduction in public poverty is the one represented by the Leader of the Opposition while the other two are have been represented by Ministers of the Ruling Party. Access to political favours and social goods may explain why persons in these two areas have improved their quality of life through the years. The question remains why it is that in the same way that private poverty has declined in these two areas, public poverty in the form of limited access to basic social services are persistent critical problems. Our thesis is that the sustained political will is lacking to completely dismantle all three of these “garrison communities” and provide them with the same social amenities as their up-town neighbours. Neither the PNP or the JLP have made any sustained effort to dismantle their garrison communities. In their usual short-sightednes, the politicians see only the “next election” and the securing of votes and therefore will not dismantle these garrisons to such an extent that they are not absolutely sure that the persons who may come to live in the improved communities will cast votes in their direction. The long term goal of social development and creating a secure Jamaica has not gained enough momentum to warrant deliberate State action in the dismantling of these “garrison communities”.

Table 14: Private poverty in Kingston West

	1992		1996		2001	
	Community Figure (N=539)	National Figure (N=18,245)	Community Figure (N=149)	National Figure (N=7249)	Community Figure (N=195)	National Figure (N=5913)
<b>HUMAN CAPITAL</b>						
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	46.8%	48.9%	45.0%	49.2%	51.3%	49.9%
Female	48.7%	51.1%	55.0%	50.8%	48.7%	50.1%
% in poverty	32.3%	33.9%	24.1%	26.1%	24.7%	16.8%
% in food poverty	16.2%	14.0%	3.4%	8.7%	5.4%	5.5%
% employed	60.4%	59.0%	62.9%	59.7%	56.9	56.9%
Mean Age	28.3 years	27.6 years	24.3 years	26.89 years	25.4 years	29.0 years
Highest level of education (primary all age/new secondary only) <sup>5</sup>	61.4%	68.6%	71.4%	60%	71.7%	74.3% <sup>6</sup>
Mean household size (members only)	5.1	5.8	5.4	5.7	4.09	4.9
% reported illness in reference period (4 weeks)	9.7%	10.6%	6.2	10.0%	14.9%	13.0%
Mean number of days ill	12.52	11.05	9.4	10.48	11.5	9.7
% with health insurance	8.5%	7.8%	2.8%	9.4%	17.9%	12.7
Mean no. of days for last week children sent to school	---	---	(last week) 4.56	(last week) 4.58 days	(last month) 19.41	18.67
<b>SOCIAL CAPITAL</b>						
<b>Union status</b>						
Married	21.1%	24.2	23.2%	23.8%	18.5%	24.9%
Common Law	16.6%	16.0	22.0%	17.5%	27.7%	14.6%
Visiting	15.7%	15.6	17.1%	15.1%	19.3%	18.9%
Single	34.6%	33.9	29.4%	32.5%	30.3%	24.7%
None	12.0%	10.2	8.5%	11.2%	4.2%	17.0%
<b>PRODUCTIVE ASSETS &amp; QUALITY OF LIFE</b>						
Ownership of land	54.6%	63.0%	100%	81.6%	98.2	87.7%
Ownership of house	63.4%	69.0%	49.7%	69.0%	29.0	63.1%
<b>Ownership of household goods:</b>						
Phone	6.1%	8.8%	3.4%	29.6%	57.8%	51.9%
Radio	--	--	55.7%	75.8%	50.9%	67.0%
Television	--	--	57.0%	69.4%	66.7%	71.3%
<b>Main source of drinking water</b>						
Indoor tap/pipe	30.4%	31.1%	19.5%	41.8%	38.5%	43.3%
Outside tap/pipe	23.5%	19.2%	0.0%	23.5%	29.7%	23.0%
Public Standpipe	11.6%	20.8%	10.7%	15.0%	12.8%	15.7%
Well	0.0%	0.5%	---	.1%	0.0%	0.3%
River, Lake, Spring, Pond	12.9%	7.6%	12.1%	2.6%	6.2%	4.5%
Rain Water (tank)	19.2%	17.1%	55.7%	13.9%	11.3%	12.3%
Other	2.5%	3.5%	2.0%	3.0%	1.5%	1.0%
<b>Type of toilet facilities</b>						
W.C. linked to sewer	21.4%	14.0%	24.8%	20.9%	32.3%	17.0%
W.C. not linked	27.6%	27.6%	6.7%	28.4%	42.6%	41.7%
Pit	44.5%	56.5%	66.4%	49.8%	22.6%	40.0%
Other	3.0%	.6%	2.0%	.2%	---	0.4%
None	3.6%	1.3%	0.0%	.7%	2.6%	0.9%
<b>Toilet facilities shared</b>	24.7%	14.4%	30.9%	15.9%	23.7%	17.3%
<b>Electricity is main source of lighting</b>	71.4%	66.5%	65.8%	79.1%	85.6%	87.9%

Source: Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

<sup>5</sup> Does not include traditional secondary school. "New secondary" provides less quality education than the traditional secondary schools.

<sup>6</sup> Represented % with no passes. Question changed to "highest academic exam passed?"

Table 15: Private Chronic Poverty in St. Andrew South West

	1992		1996		2001	
	Community Figure (N=779)	National Figure (N=18,245)	Community Figure (N=788)	National Figure (N=7249)	Community Figure (N=191)	National Figure (N=5913)
<b>HUMAN CAPITAL</b>						
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	48.7%	48.9%	49.5%	49.2%	48.7%	49.9%
Female	51.3%	51.1%	50.5%	50.8%	51.3%	50.1%
% in poverty	54.9%	33.9%	15.6%	26.1%	7.0%	16.8%
% in food poverty	22.7%	14.0%	3.8%	8.7%	-----	5.5%
% Employed	60.7%	59.0%	61.4%	59.7%	56.9%	56.9%
Mean Age	28.2 yrs.	27.6 years	26.23 years	26.89 years	32.0 years	29.0 years
Highest level of education (primary all age/new secondary only) <sup>7</sup>	74.3%	68.6%	57.4%	60.0%	63.2%	74.3% <sup>8</sup>
Mean Household size	6.3	5.8	5.7	5.7	1.1	4.9
% reported illness in reference period	11.4%	10.6%	8.2%	10.0%	13.6%	13.0%
Mean number of days ill	9.99 days	11.05 days	7.57 days	10.48 days	8.7 days	9.7 days
Has health insurance	4.9%	7.8%	10.5%	9.4%	14.5%	12.7%
Mean no. of days for last month children sent to school	----	----	(last week) 4.67	(last week) 4.58 days	(last month) 18.26	(last month) 18.67
<b>SOCIAL CAPITAL</b>						
<b>Union status</b>						
Married	23.8%	24.2%	23.4%	23.8%	27.4%	24.9%
Common Law	14.0%	16.0%	16.6%	17.5%	5.9%	14.6%
Visiting	15.6%	15.6%	20.1%	15.1%	12.6%	18.9%
Single	34.8%	33.9%	29.7%	32.5%	36.3%	24.7%
None	11.9%	10.2%	10.2%	11.2%	17.8%	17.0%
<b>PRODUCTIVE ASSETS AND QUALITY OF LIFE</b>						
Ownership of land	65.2%	63.0%	74.3%	81.6%	84.0%	87.7%
Ownership of house	70.9%	69.0%	62.2%	69.0%	39.3%	63.1%
<b>Ownership of household goods:</b>						
Phone	7.0%	8.8%	25.9%	29.6%	78.3%	51.9%
Radio	--	--	83.2%	75.8%	67.5%	67.0%
Television	--	--	79.6%	69.4%	70.9%	71.3%
<b>Main source of drinking water</b>						
Indoor tap/pipe	20.1%	31.1%	46.1%	41.8%	63.4%	43.3%
Outside tap/pipe	16.8%	19.2%	30.1%	23.5%	36.6%	23.0%
Public Standpipe	16.1%	20.8%	11.5%	15.0%	0.05%	15.7%
Well	1.8%	0.5%	--	.1%	0.0%	0.3%
River, Lake, Spring, Pond	12.9%	7.6%	3.2%	2.6%	0.0%	4.5%
Rain Water (tank)	27.2%	17.1%	6.3%	13.9%	0.0%	12.3%
Other	5.1%	3.5%	2.0%	3.0%	0.0%	1.0%
<b>Type of toilet facilities</b>						
W.C. linked to sewer	11.5%	14.0%	8.8%	20.9%	15.7%	17.0%
W.C. not linked	25.5%	27.6%	46.1%	28.4%	60.7%	41.7%
Pit	61.8%	56.5%	45.1%	49.8%	23.6%	40.0%
Other	0.4%	.6%	0.0%	.2%	0.0%	0.4%
None	.8%	1.3%	0.1%	.7%	0.0%	0.9%
<b>Toilet Facilities shared</b>	15.6%	14.4%	19.3%	15.9%	26.7%	17.3%
<b>Electricity is Main source of lighting</b>	53.4%	66.5%	88.5%	79.1%	96.3%	87.9%

Source: Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

<sup>7</sup> Does not include traditional secondary school. New secondary is a form of elevated primary school

<sup>8</sup> Represented % with no passes. Question changed to "highest academic exam passed?"

Table 16: Chronic Poverty in St. Andrew South(1996, 2001)<sup>9</sup>

	1996		2001	
	Community Figure (N=320)	National Figure (N=7249)	Community Figure (N=198)	National Figure (N=5913)
<b>HUMAN CAPITAL</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	47.8%	49.2%	50.5%	49.9%
Female	52.2%	50.8%	49.5%	50.1%
% in poverty	46.8%	26.1%	6.5%	16.8%
% in food poverty	11.8%	8.7%	4.8%	5.5%
% of h/households employed	50.5%	59.7%	65.1%	56.9%
Mean Age	26.12	26.89 years	28.3 years	29.0 years
Highest level of education (primary all age/new secondary only) <sup>10</sup>	65%	60%	71.7%	74.3% <sup>11</sup>
Mean household size	6.1	5.7	1.07	4.9
% reported illness in reference period	9.9%	10.0%	10.6%	13.0%
Mean number of days ill	9.39	10.48	6.3 days	9.7
Has health insurance	3.2%	9.4%	9.4%	12.7
Mean no. of days for last month children sent to school	(last week) 4.74	(last week) 4.58 days	(last month) 19.59	(last month) 18.67
<b>SOCIAL CAPITAL</b>				
<b>Union status</b>				
Married	22.5%	23.8%	15.0%	24.9%
Common Law	13.0%	17.5%	20.0%	14.6%
Visiting	24.5%	15.1%	22.5%	18.9%
Single	21.5%	32.5%	18.3%	24.7%
None	18.5%	11.2%	24.2%	17.0%
<b>PRODUCTIVE ASSETS AND QUALITY OF LIFE</b>				
Ownership of land	100.0%	81.6%	61.4%	87.7%
Ownership of house	64.7%	69.0%	28.8%	63.1%
<b>Ownership of household goods:</b>				
Phone	13.4%	29.6%	57.5%	51.9%
Radio	70.4%	75.8%	76.8%	67.0%
Television	54.2%	69.4%	75.6%	71.3%
<b>Main source of drinking water</b>				
Indoor tap/pipe	35.3%	41.8%	43.9%	43.3%
Outside tap/pipe	37.8%	23.5%	41.4%	23.0%
Public Standpipe	19.7%	15.0%	6.1%	15.7%
Well	0.0%	.1%	0.0%	0.3%
River, Lake, Spring, Pond	0.0%	2.6%	4.5%	4.5%
Rain Water (tank)	6.6%	13.9%	2.0%	12.3%
Other	0.6%	3.0%	2.0%	1.0%
<b>Type of toilet facilities</b>				
W.C. linked to sewer	15.3%	20.9%	29.3%	17.0%
W.C. not linked	17.2%	28.4%	57.1%	41.7%
Pit	66.6%	49.8%	9.6%	40.0%
Other	0.0%	.2%	0.0%	0.4%
None	0.9%	.7%	4.0%	0.9%
<b>Toilet Facilities shared</b>	12.3%	15.9%	48.4%	17.3%
<b>Electricity is Main source of lighting</b>	77.5%	79.1%	99.0%	87.9%

Source: Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

<sup>9</sup> No eds. from this constituency sampled in 1992

<sup>10</sup> Does not include traditional secondary school. New secondary is a form of elevated primary school

<sup>11</sup> Represented % with no passes. Question changed to "highest academic exam passed?"

## Poverty Reduction Policy and Politics in Jamaica

The Government is proud of its National Poverty Eradication Programme and attributes the reduction in national poverty to the success of its programmes. By the end of the 2001/2002 financial year approximately J\$ 29.417 billion would have been spent on the NPEP programmes and projects since its inception in 1995. Of this amount approximately J\$ 4.82 billion has been allocated for the 2001/2002 financial period. This represents an increase of approximately J\$ 170 million compared to the previous financial year, when approximately J\$4.65 billion was allocated to the programme (<http://www.npep.org.jm/Reports/2001-2002/2001-2002.html>)

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP) was designed to reduce and eventually eradicate absolute poverty (ESSJ, 1999). There are four components to the programme: Human Resources Development/Welfare; Environment and Natural Resource Protection; Community-based development and the Environment. The Government lists the following as some of the successful projects under the NPEP:

- ?? The Jamaica Social Investment Fund which has spent about J\$355,195,129.45 to date on providing communities with much needed social and physical infrastructure.
  - ?? The Rural Electrification Programme, whose aim is to provide electricity to households in rural Jamaica, has been boosted with a US\$1.82 million dollar expansion of the programme in February 2002,
  - ?? The Micro Investment Development Agency (MIDA) disbursed approximately J\$118.48 million dollars which funded 1,437 small and micro business projects
- Other poverty reduction/eradication programmes include the inner-city renewal programmes

Much has been spent on poverty reduction and at the macro level, the poverty levels have reduced significantly in the last decade. However as the profile of the communities show, the constituencies continue to exhibit high levels of poverty and social exclusion. Not enough has been done to dismantle these garrison communities. And it is not just a question of money as millions have been spent since 1995 on poverty eradication. However, the emphasis has been on what Hulme and Shepherd, 2003 p.4) have described as “the easy to assist poor”.

These constituencies continue to vote for the same political parties and so it would appear that the state and structure of these communities suit the political agenda of the politicians. In Jamaica, the phenomenon of the “Disabled State” is predominant and politicians cannot free themselves physically and mentally from the “Dons”, these community leaders who “secure” the community for their political gains. This is true of both the Opposition and the Ruling Party.

## Summary and Conclusions

This paper sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of chronic public poverty in Jamaica?
2. What is the level of public poverty in the “urban ghettos”?
3. What are the characteristics of the persons in chronic poverty in the urban ghettos of Jamaica?
4. Why have they remained persistently poor?
5. What are the implications to the answers to the above questions for the poverty-reduction policies?

These questions were answered by examining life in three electoral communities regarded as “garrison communities” because of their high level of homogenous voting. One constituency, Kingston Western is represented by the Leader of the Opposition and the other two, At. Andrew South and St. Andrew South West are represented by members of Ruling Party.

Using data from the Social Development Commission and the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, an attempt was made to answer the research questions. Based on the data, it was concluded that in all three “garrison communities.” chronic public poverty has continued through the years. However, chronic private poverty (“*always poor*” and “*usually poor*” ) as defined by Hulme (2003 p.8) has been more pronounced in Kingston Western, which is represented by the Opposition Party. The other two constituencies, St. Andrew South and St. Andrew South West experience “*transient private poverty*” (“churning poor” and “occasional poor” as defined by Hulme (2003 p.8). It is argued in this paper that chronic public poverty and to some extent private poverty remains a feature of the “garrison communities” despite the reduction in poverty at the macro levels.

After 40 years, garrisons still exist in Jamaica and their political representatives appear “helpless” . What are the implications of these findings for the poverty-reduction policies? Chronic poverty has persisted because of the lack of determined and sustained efforts at “dismantling” garrison communities and dis-empowering the “Dons”. There have not been any sustained efforts at empowering the residents of these communities such that their human and social capital increases.

Within the political socioeconomic vulnerability framework (Figure 1 and Table 1) presented earlier, in the face of the state’s development (expressed in economic terms) remaining unimpressive, the vulnerability of the State and the politicians is intensified. Using political pressure, the politicians safeguards these constituencies and secure votes for themselves. Both Opposition and Ruling Party are guilty of this practice and thus there is little hope for change. This mix of politics with community life is an explosive situation. “Dons” protect the political territories from political opposition from outside. Over the years , the “Dons” have become more and more autonomous and are reportedly involved in may illegal activities. The politician dare not dis-empower the Don unless he or she is politically suicidal. The crime, drugs, gang warfare intensify and often it is difficult to discern the true cause of violence when it occurs. The names of the “Dons”

are known to the populace and the security authorities but the chase for them never takes place. Witnesses are reluctant to come forward due to fear of retaliation which almost always includes death. Although, there have been no attempt to bring all “Dons” to justice. When 27 persons were allegedly killed by the security forces in Kingston Western Kingston, the Leader of the Opposition called it “political victimization” . The security forces claimed that they were under sustained gunfire. It is doubtful whether the true story will ever unfold.

All this volatility increases the vulnerability of these communities is evidenced by their chronic poverty, mental insecurity, physical insecurity and social exclusion.

### **Policy Recommendations**

*“Politics, not just economics determines what we do – or don’t do – to address human poverty. And what is lacking are not the resources of economic solutions- but the political momentum to tackle poverty head on.. ...”*  
(UNDP, 1997 p.94)

### **Macro Level**

The fact that garrisons are over 40 years proves that they have been allowed to exist and provided political support. Politicians in the attempt to secure a term in offices are reluctant to dismantle these communities and face political suicides. For these communities to civil action and continuous calls for State action can be the only hope. This is unlikely given the general apathy that has gripped the nation (evidenced by the low voter turn-out in last General Elections.

### **Micro Level**

Many reports and commissions of enquiry have examined the problem of “garrison communities” and made several recommendations. Many of them have not been implemented. Some useful suggestions for attaining peace within these communities are again provided in the Kerr Report as follows:

- 1) Politicians must be divested of the responsibility of issuing scarce benefits. This should be the responsibility of professional civil servants
- 2) Politicians must disassociate themselves from questionable characters in their constituencies, including dons, protectors and enforcers.
- 3) Political leaders must identify party members who are associated with criminals, political or otherwise, and take disciplinary action which may result in removal from office of those found in breach of the terms of the Peace Accord.

Other strategies put forward by this author include:

1. Politicians should disassociate themselves with these communities by not offering themselves for Parliamentary Positions.
2. Dismantling these communities by arresting the “popular” Dons who are given political protection.
3. Building the infrastructure: e.g. heavily lit roads, high- rise buildings and school.
4. Providing protection for the police “informers” and eye witnesses.

Any strategy to eradicate chronic poverty in the “garrison communities” is subject to failure as there are many people who have a vested interest in the perpetuation of poverty. This statement in the UNDP Human Development Report 1997 rings true for Jamaica:

*“ The poor can also be politically convenient...They can also serve as a useful pool of voters for politicians who claim to serve their interests... Any strategy to eradicate poverty must therefore take into account the fact that many people have a vested interest in the perpetuation of poverty” (p.95).*

Until the poor disengage themselves from the current political process, these “garrison communities” will be forever gripped by chronic poverty for many decades to come.

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