



# The nature of poverty in the garrison constituencies in Jamaica

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1. Kain, John F (1968), "Housing segregation, Negro employment and metropolitan decentralization", *Quarterly Journal of Economics* No 82, pages 32–59.

**SUMMARY:** In 2001, 16.9 per cent of the population in Jamaica was living in poverty, down from 30.5 per cent in 1989. Jamaica is well on its way to achieving the first Millennium Development Goal of halving by 2015 the number of persons living in extreme poverty. However, policy makers are particularly concerned about the persistent high levels of poverty in the rural areas. This paper argues that although the incidence of urban poverty has been consistently lower than that of rural poverty, there are certain urban areas that warrant special policy attention. In spite of a reduction in poverty at the macro level in these "garrison constituencies", the quality of life for the residents has not improved significantly, and any sustained improvement will be extremely difficult given the quality of their political and social capital. There has been no sustained political will to dismantle these garrison constituencies, and everyday life is deeply entrenched in crime, violence and political patronage. Unless there are deliberate and well-targeted policies to dismantle these constituencies and break the stranglehold that the political and criminal elements have on the residents, then they will never experience any sustained improvement in their quality of life.

## I. INTRODUCTION

URBAN BIAS THEORIES have put the blame for the underdevelopment of rural areas on the fact that policies have tended to focus on urban development. However, urban poverty may, in some instances, be more severe than rural poverty, and the problems in urban areas are more particular because of population concentrations and densities. Many theories of urban poverty exist, but only a few will be discussed here. There is the mismatch hypothesis advanced by Harvard economist John Kain<sup>(1)</sup> that draws on the hypothesized negative impact of the movement of blue-collar workers into inner-city belts, whereby the mismatch between their skills and the growth in employment in the city centre for white-collar workers results in blue-collar worker poverty.

Dual labour market theories such as the mismatch hypothesis sought to explain the growth of the cities. Its proponents postulated that there was a two-tiered labour market, where the primary jobs were reserved for the better educated, while the blue-collar jobs were for the less educated. The argument was that certain workers in the urban areas were unable to escape low-waged unstable jobs because of limited opportunities for upward mobility. Access to higher-paid jobs was denied, and they faced perpetual

poverty. These structural theories blamed the changing economy, the labour market, and racial and class segregation for the incidence of urban poverty. Others provided cultural explanations, and saw poverty as a result of individual behaviour and a lack of the necessary values and norms for upward social mobility. Theorists like Oscar Lewis<sup>(2)</sup> blamed the poor for their plight, and saw inter-generational poverty as endemic because of cultural norms and practices.

In this paper, we postulate that most theories do not explain the existence of poverty in the garrison constituencies in Jamaica, and that any explanation must take into account the political, criminal, social and economic processes in these areas. A "garrison constituency" is one in which electoral process is directly influenced by social and economic processes, and it is argued that the persistent existence of garrison constituencies in Jamaica is due to the deliberate social and economic activities carried out by certain members of the society. No single theory can explain the nexus, and this paper tries to clarify the issues by answering the following questions:

- What is the level of public and private poverty in garrison communities in Jamaica?
- What is the nature of public and private poverty in garrison communities in Jamaica?
- What are the causes of poverty in garrison communities in Jamaica?

## II. THE ANALYTICAL CONTEXT

THE NATURE OF poverty in the garrison constituencies was examined using data from the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) for 1992, 1996 and 2001; also crime data from the Central Police Statistical Department; community profiles provided by the Social Development Commission; the election results from the Jamaica Electoral Office; and existing literature on garrisons.<sup>(3)</sup> It is the first time that data from the JSLC have been used to examine poverty in garrison constituencies, but it must be noted that the panels of respondents are not the same for each year and, therefore, we cannot be precise about the movement of particular persons in and out of poverty.

A political socioeconomic framework is used to examine the nature of poverty in these garrison constituencies (Figure 1). We postulate that the level of development of a nation determines the levels of public and private poverty. 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. Public poverty is defined as a condition in which a geographical area lacks basic amenities and infrastructure such as piped water, toilets, electricity, roads and sanitation. This, in turn, affects the life chances of residents of the community. In the last decade, Jamaica has not experienced significant economic growth, and its high level of debt exacerbates the poor economic situation. Arguably, a state that allocates 60 per cent of its revenue to debt servicing cannot provide adequately for its citizens.

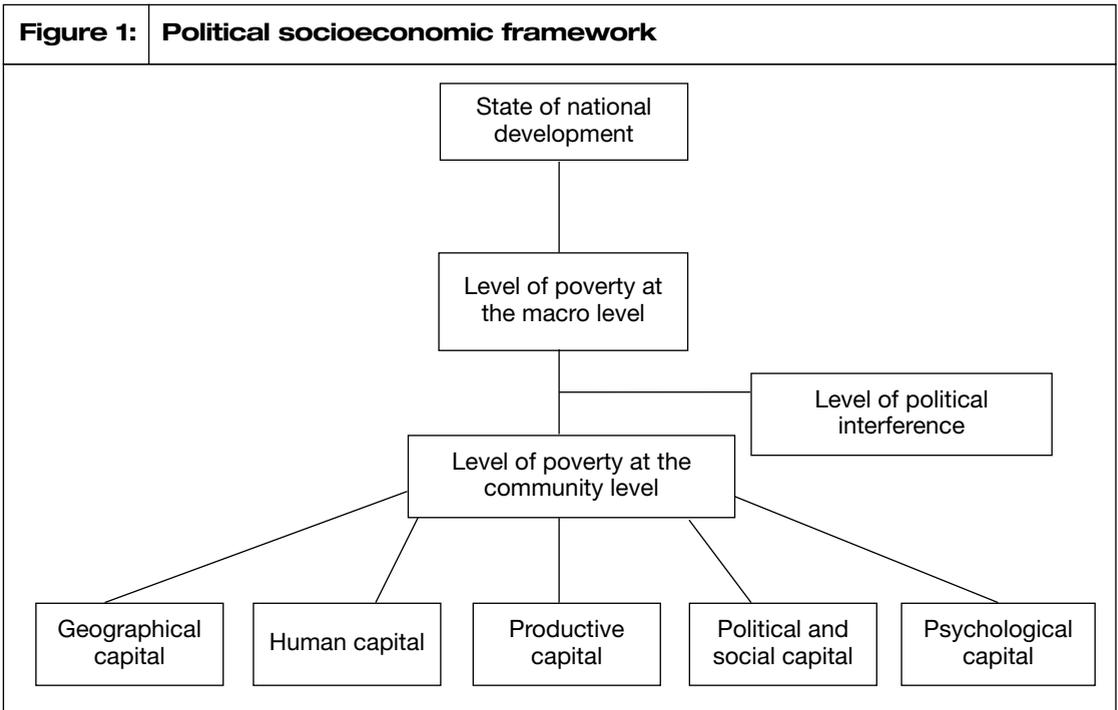
The next step is to examine the levels of public and private poverty at the macro level. Despite economic problems, private poverty at the national level has declined, and some have attributed this decline to the growth of the informal sector and the significant increase in remittances from abroad.<sup>(4)</sup> However, there are some geographical areas that remain particu-

2. Lewis, Oscar (1961), *The Children of Sanchez: an Autobiography of a Mexican Family*, Random House, New York.

3. Central Statistics Department, Jamaica (2002), *Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions Data Set for 1992, 1996 and 2001*, Jamaica Electoral Office.

4. See, for example, Henry-Lee, Aldrie (2001), "The dynamics of poverty in Jamaica", *Social and Economic Studies* Vol 50, No 1, pages 10-15.

**Figure 1: Political socioeconomic framework**



5. Sen, Amartya (1999), *Development as Freedom*, Random House, New York; also Moser, C (1998), "The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies", *World Development* Vol 26, No 1, pages 1-19.

6. See, for example, Sen, Amartya (1981), *Poverty and Famines: An Essay in Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford University Press; also The World Bank (2000), *Poverty Trends and Voices of the Poor*, Washington DC.

7. See reference 5, Moser (1998).

larly economically and socially deprived, such as the garrison areas.

At the micro level, the nature of the poverty experienced in the garrison communities is examined by looking at access to different types of capital. Sen<sup>(5)</sup> emphasizes that poverty should be viewed as a lack of basic capabilities rather than just having minimal income. His list of basic capabilities includes:

- the acquisition of sufficient food;
- freedom from ill health, ill treatment and disease;
- access to a good education;
- social inclusion;
- participation in community life;
- employment; and
- clothing.

As a result of various studies,<sup>(6)</sup> the assets that the urban poor possess can be categorized into what is known as an "asset vulnerability framework". Moser<sup>(7)</sup> develops the argument to identify the capabilities and assets at the disposal of the poor that will enable them to move out of poverty. Capacities can be physical/material, social/organizational and motivational, and Moser identified the following assets:

- labour;
- human capital (health status, which determines people's capacity to work; and skills plus education, which determine the return on their labour); and
- productivity (for example, housing) and social capital (reciprocity within the communities and between households, based on trust deriving from social ties).

The more access that an individual or household has to these assets, the greater their ability to reduce or avoid poverty.

To provide a comprehensive picture of the nature of poverty in the garrison

Table 1: Framework for analyzing the assets of the 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, inventory of household goods, consumption
Human capital	Highest level of education, self-reported illness, employment
Political capital	Links to politicians (level of dependence and patron–client relations)
Social capital	Households’ relations with each other, relations and links with the community don
Psychological assets	Level of physical and mental security, freedom of movement and expression, freedom to vote as desired

son communities, a modification of the Hulme et al.<sup>(8)</sup> table on assets and Moser’s asset vulnerability framework will be used. Table 1 provides the list of assets that will be analyzed, and it is argued that the geographical capital of these constituencies has impeded the development of their human and productive assets, and that, despite improvements in poverty at the macro and regional levels, these communities essentially remain marginalized. Although their political capital is strong, they have not been able to break the cycle of poverty.

This paper argues that the conventional definition of social capital (discussed above) needs to be expanded in the Jamaican context to include the relations that community members have with “dons”.<sup>(9)</sup> Households within these communities do have relations with each other, but the quality of their existence is dependent on their relations with the don. The nature of these relations is discussed below.

### III. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POVERTY IN JAMAICA

IN THIS PAPER, both quantitative and qualitative measures of poverty are used to describe the nature of poverty in the garrison communities. As noted above, another important issue is the differentiation between public poverty and private poverty. In 2001, 16.9 per cent of the population in Jamaica was living in poverty, down from 30.5 per cent in 1989 (Figure 2). Jamaica is clearly on its way to fulfilling the first Millennium Development Goal of halving by 2015 the number of persons living in extreme poverty.

Despite the unimpressive economic growth and the high levels of indebtedness, private poverty levels have declined. The rural areas continue to have the largest number of people in poverty and, in 2001, 24.1 per cent of the residents in rural areas were found to be in poverty. By contrast, in the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA), only 7.6 per cent were living on or below the poverty lines<sup>(10)</sup> in 2001 (Table 2). There is no doubt that the rural areas in Jamaica need special attention.

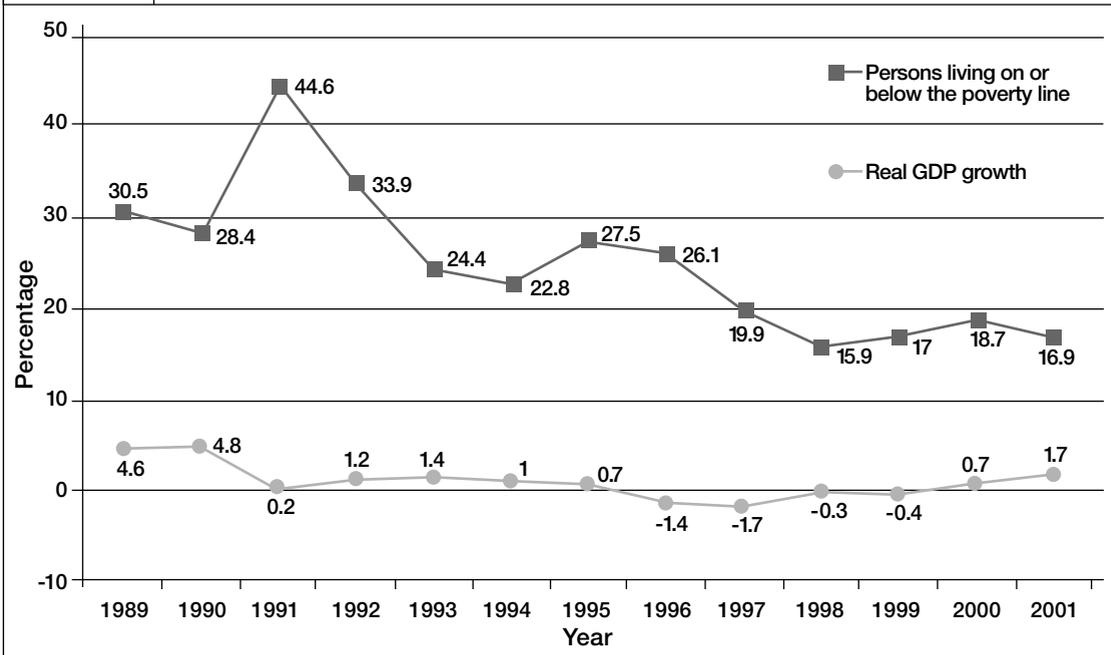
While not seeking to underplay the importance of poverty in the rural areas, this paper argues that the 2001 figure of 7.6 per cent for the KMA masks the depth and levels of poverty in the urban areas. There are some

8. Hulme, D, K Moore and A Shepherd (2001), “Poverty: meanings and analytical frameworks”, Working Paper 2, University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

9. A “don” is usually a community leader who controls the community with the use of violence.

10. A poverty line is estimated for all geographical areas. A national poverty line is also estimated.

**Figure 2: Economic growth and levels of poverty in Jamaica, 1989–2001**



**Table 2: Incidence of poverty by geographical area in Jamaica, 1989–2001**

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
KMA*	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
Other town**	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
Rural	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
Jamaica	30.5	28.4	44.6	33.9	24.4	22.8	27.5	26.1	19.9	15.9	17.0	18.7	16.9

\* KMA: Kingston Metropolitan Area

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

areas in garrison communities that reach levels of poverty never experienced in rural areas, and linked to this poverty are the high levels of crime and violence. Criminal gangs and drug dons, who have a hold on the residents, control the garrison constituencies. The residents live in squalour and the cycle of poverty cannot be broken because of the lack of sustained political will to dismantle the garrison constituencies.

#### IV. GARRISON CONSTITUENCIES

PREVIOUS RESEARCH TO date on garrisons in Jamaica has been confined to garrison “communities”. However, in this paper, the concept of “community” goes beyond the usual definition of “definite physical space”, to include the electoral constituency. Figueroa and Sives highlight the role of

the garrison community in ensuring victory for an electoral candidate:

"... 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..."<sup>(11)</sup>

There are about 15 garrison electoral constituencies in Jamaica, which are all located in the urban areas.<sup>(12)</sup> Two are directly associated with the opposition party, the Jamaica Labour Party. Some garrisons in Jamaica are over 40 years old. Stone first articulated the term in 1986, when he defined a garrison as "...a military stronghold based on political tradition, cultural values, beliefs, myths and socialization."<sup>(13)</sup> He 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. The community achieves political homogeneity within, and entry and exit are monitored by top-ranking gang leaders in the context of scarce benefits; and
- garrisons are maintained by party personnel and a framework of violence, the allocation of scarce benefits and patron-clientelism, representation of the interests of the "faithful", and maintenance of party or political values.

Chevannes added another factor in the formation of garrisons, namely the seizure of territory or territorial invasion.<sup>(14)</sup> He notes the growing drug trade and its related independence from the top-ranking party hierarchy, and raises the question of the extent to which the garrison community is, and will remain, an integral part of the political process. He notes that a feature common to all is their dependence on the wider political climate for success. Figueroa and Sives<sup>(15)</sup> 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; and
- they further concur with Stone and Chevannes that any significant development has to take place with the tacit approval of the leadership.

But what has allowed these garrisons to persist for such a long time? Espeut speculates on 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 private 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?"<sup>(16)</sup>

As the 1997 Kerr report on political tribalism<sup>(17)</sup> points out, the political and social arrangements in these geographical areas have ensured the residents' protection, housing and employment. However, such employment is usually short term and cannot break the cycle of poverty.

### a. Crime and violence at the national levels

Before examining poverty in the garrison constituencies, there will be a brief discussion of the national levels of crime and violence. Given the national context, their high levels in urban areas are not anomalies; however,

11. Figueroa, M and A Sives (2002), "Homogeneous voting, electoral manipulation and the garrison process in post-independence Jamaica", *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* Vol 40, No 1, March, pages 81–106.

12. <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20020929/cleisure/cleisure2.html>

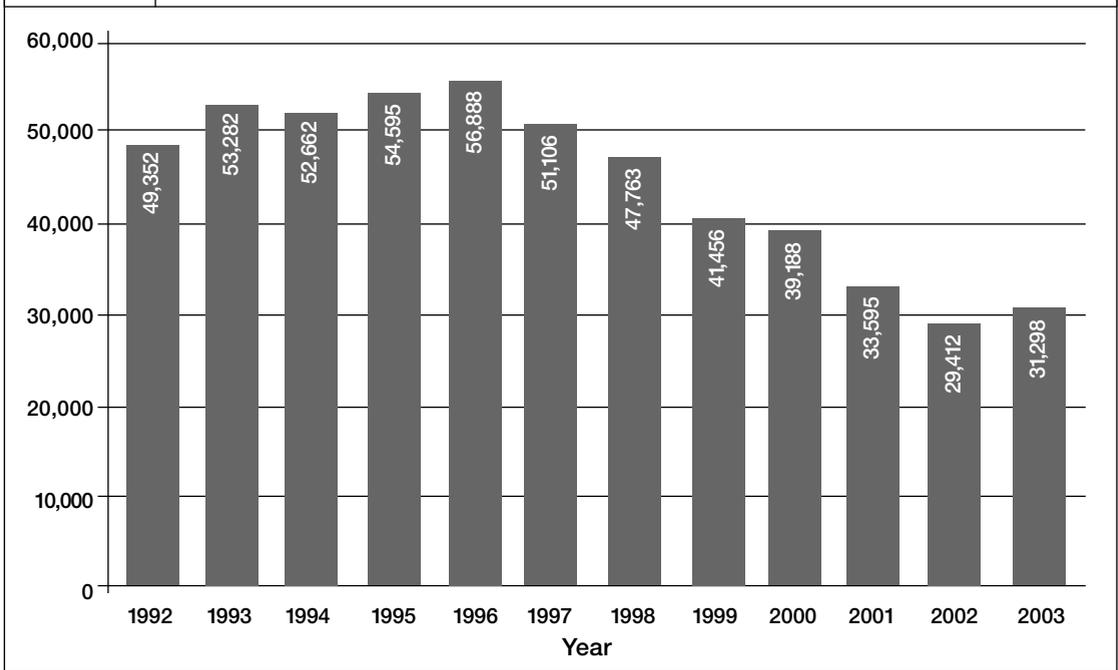
13. Stone, C (1986), *Class, State and Democracy in Jamaica*, Praeger, New York.

14. Chevannes, B (1992), "The formation of garrison communities", *Grassroots Development and the State of the Nation Symposium*, Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica.

15. See reference 11.

16. Espeut, P (1998), "The rule of the dons", *The Jamaica Gleaner*, 30 September, pages A4 and A8.

17. Kerr, James (1997), *Report of the Jamaica National Committee on Political Tribalism*, July.

**Figure 3: Reported crimes in Jamaica, 1992–2003**

18. Planning Institute of Jamaica (2002), *Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica 2002*, Kingston, Jamaica.

19. Harriott, A (2002), "Social identities and the escalation of homicidal violence in Jamaica", paper presented at the Centre for Hemispheric Defence Studies, Research and Education in Defence and Security Studies (REDES), 7–10 August, Brasilia, Brazil.

reported crime has declined in Jamaica since 1992 (Figure 3).

The homicide rate in Jamaica remains one of the highest in the world, and preliminary figures for 2004 show that the murder rate for the year was 55 per 100,000 population. In 1993, there were 653 murders but, by 2002, the number had increased to 1,045.<sup>(18)</sup> This is mostly the result of inter-personal violence, and Harriott points to the increase in the rate of inter-group conflict. In 1983, the rate was 8.29 per cent but, by 1997, it had increased to 25.2 per cent. He makes the link between politics and crime:

*"After 1980, the prevalence and intensity of overt political conflicts progressively declined, but a significant number of inter-group, community conflicts that were not attributed directly to politics by the police but which represented (in new ways) continuity with the earlier political battles, have 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."*<sup>(19)</sup>

## V. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED GARRISON CONSTITUENCIES

THIS PAPER FOCUSES on the three garrison constituencies in the KMA (Kingston Metropolitan Area): Kingston West, St Andrew South West and St Andrew South. These garrison constituencies were selected because their representatives have consistently been elected with 76 per cent or more of the vote (Table 3). It is argued that they exhibit all the features of garrisons, and political stability is one of their main features; the same political party has represented each of them for the past 14 years. The Right Honourable Edward Seaga, Leader of the Opposition, has represented Kingston West for the past 20 years; Mrs Portia Simpson Miller (a government minister)

<b>Table 3: Pattern of voting in three garrison constituencies for the last three general elections</b>				
	Political party	Percentage of votes received by the winner		
		1993	1997	2002
Kingston West	Jamaica Labour Party (JLP)	95.0	85.0	84.3
St Andrew South West	People's National Party (PNP)	99.5	98.0	94.0
St Andrew South	People's National Party (PNP)	76.0	92.1	91.0

SOURCE: Jamaica Electoral Office.

has represented St Andrew South West for the past 14 years; and St Andrew South has been represented by the Minister of Finance for the past 10 years, and has been represented by the same political party for the last 14 years.

## VI. THE NATURE OF POVERTY IN GARRISON CONSTITUENCIES

EXAMINING POVERTY IS no easy task. As Sen<sup>(20)</sup> has emphasized, poverty is more than just income deprivation, and includes the lack of basic social capabilities e.g. social inclusion. Based on the model presented above, we examine the nature of poverty in these garrison communities by looking at both consumption levels and qualitative issues, including psychological, social and political capital. The data show that these garrison constituencies experience poverty, crime and violence, and a high level of electoral control. In many ways, the quantitative data mask the depth of poverty and social exclusion that the residents in these areas experience. As will be revealed, poverty measured by consumption levels has declined in all three constituencies over the years but qualitatively, it may appear that life is not much better.

Tables 4–6 examine private poverty in the three garrison communities. We start by discussing Kingston West (Table 4). The decline in the national figures for poverty is reflected in the figures for the constituencies. Poverty in Kingston West declined from 32.3 per cent in 1992 to 24.1 per cent in 1996; however, the figure remained almost unchanged for 2001. Food poverty (an inability to meet basic nutritional requirements) had also declined by 1996, but had increased slightly by 2001. In 2001, there was still a significant proportion of the population with only primary or “new secondary” schooling, and this reflects the national situation. Based on the respondents in the sample, land ownership was high but house ownership was relatively low. The issue of land is always problematic and is the subject of much adjudication. Illegal land use has already been flagged as a persistent problem. People have been known to claim land for which they have no title. The type of toilet facilities available and the main water source are further indications of quality of life. In 2001, indoor taps/pipes as a main source of drinking water were still a luxury, available to less than 40 per cent of the population. Pit latrines were still used by one-fifth of the residents and 23.7 per cent continued to share toilet facilities. Electricity as a main source of lighting was available to 85 per cent of the population, but there is no indication in the Survey of Living Conditions as to whether or not the connec-

20. See reference 5, Sen (1999).

<b>Table 4: Private and public poverty in Kingston West</b>						
	1992		1996		2001	
	Kingston West (N=539)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=3812)	Kingston West (N=149)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=1673)	Kingston West community (N=195)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=1605)
Male (%)	46.8	49.7	45.0	58.7	51.3	47.2
Female (%)	53.2	50.3	55.0	41.3	48.7	52.8
In poverty (%)	32.3	18.8	24.1	15.0	24.7	7.6
In food poverty (%)	16.2	4.7	3.4	3.1	5.4	0.7
Mean age (years)	28.3	26.8	24.3	36.3	25.4	20.2
Highest level of education (primary (all age)/new secondary only)* (%)	61.4	73.7	71.4	51.6	71.7	42.6
Mean household size	5.1	3.55	5.4	3.66	4.09	2.93
Reported illness in reference period (4 weeks) (%)	9.7	9.5	6.2	10.0	14.9	11.5
Mean number of days ill	12.5	9.2	9.4	7.0	11.5	8.0
With health insurance (%)	8.5	21.3	2.8	15.8	17.9	21.9
Ownership of land (%)	54.6	38.2	100	78.2	98.2	86.9
Ownership of house (%)	63.4	40.5	49.7	55.3	29.0	42.3
<b>Ownership of household goods:</b>						
- radio (%)	n/a	77.7	55.7	69.6	50.9	54.8
- television (%)	n/a	77.2	57.0	70.0	66.7	65.9
<b>Main source of drinking water:</b>						
- indoor tap/pipe (%)	30.4	67.6	19.5	74.4	38.5	71.6
- outside tap/pipe (%)	23.5	28.2	0	22.0	29.7	26.7
- public standpipe (%)	11.6	2.6	10.7	2.6	12.8	1.3
- well (%)	0	0	n/a	0	0	0
- river, lake, spring, pond (%)	12.9	0.3	12.1	0.2	6.2	0
- rainwater (tank) (%)	19.2	0.1	55.7	0.2	11.3	0
- other (%)	2.5	1.3	2.0	0.7	1.5	0.4
<b>Type of toilet facilities:</b>						
- WC linked to sewer (%)	21.4	41.7	24.8	48.0	32.3	46.8
- WC not linked (%)	27.6	43.9	6.7	37.1	42.6	45.8
- pit (%)	44.5	13.0	66.4	14.7	22.6	5.9
- other (%)	3.0	10.4	2.0	0.2	n/a	0.5
- none (%)	3.6	1.0	0	0.2	2.6	1.0
Toilet facilities shared (%)	24.7	28.6	30.9	18.9	23.7	21.6
Electricity as main source of lighting (%)	71.4	84.3	65.8	90.0	85.6	94.2

\* Does not include traditional secondary school. "New secondary" is a form of elevated primary school.

SOURCE: Planning Institute of Jamaica, Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 1989–2001.

**URBAN POVERTY, JAMAICA**

<b>Table 5: Private and public poverty in St Andrew South West</b>						
	1992		1996		2001	
	St. Andrew South West (N=779)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=3812)	St Andrew South West (N=788)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=1673)	St Andrew South West (N=779)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=1605)
Male (%)	48.7	49.7	49.5	58.7	48.7	47.2
Female (%)	51.3	51.3	50.5	41.3	51.3	52.8
In poverty (%)	54.9	18.8	15.6	15.0	7.0	7.6
In food poverty (%)	22.7	4.7	3.8	3.1	--	0.7
Mean age (years)	28.2	26.8	26.23	36.3	32.0	20.2
Highest level of education (primary (all age)/new secondary only)* (%)	74.3	73.7	57.4	51.6	63.2	42.6
Mean household size	6.3	3.55	5.7	3.66	2.1	2.93
Reported illness in reference period (4 weeks) (%)	11.4	9.5	8.2	10.0	13.6	11.5
Mean number of days ill	9.99	9.2	7.57	7	8.7	8.0
With health insurance (%)	4.9	21.3	10.5	15.8	14.5	21.9
Ownership of land (%)	65.2	38.2	74.3	78.2	84.0	86.9
Ownership of house (%)	70.9	40.5	62.2	55.3	39.3	42.3
<b>Ownership of household goods:</b>						
- phone (%)	7.0	n/a	25.9	n/a	78.3	n/a
- radio (%)	n/a	77.7	83.2	69.6	67.5	54.8
- television (%)	n/a	77.2	79.6	70.0	70.9	65.9
<b>Main source of drinking water:</b>						
- indoor tap/pipe (%)	20.1	67.6	46.1	74.4	63.4	71.6
- outside tap/pipe (%)	16.8	28.2	30.1	22.0	36.6	26.7
- public standpipe (%)	16.1	2.6	11.5	2.6	0.05	1.3
- well (%)	1.8	0	n/a	0	0	0
- river, lake, spring, pond (%)	12.9	0.3	3.2	0.2	0	0
- rainwater (tank) (%)	27.2	0.1	6.3	0.2	0	0
- other (%)	5.1	1.3	2.0	0.7	0	0.4
<b>Type of toilet facilities:</b>						
- WC linked to sewer (%)	11.5	41.7	8.8	48.0	15.7	46.8
- WC not linked (%)	25.5	43.9	46.1	37.1	60.7	45.8
- pit (%)	61.8	13.0	45.1	14.7	23.6	5.9
- other (%)	0.4	10.4	0	0.2	0	0.5
- none (%)	0.8	1.0	0.1	0.2	0	1.0
Toilet facilities shared (%)	15.6	28.6	19.3	18.9	26.7	21.6
Electricity as main source of lighting (%)	53.4	84.3	88.5	90.0	96.3	94.2

\* Does not include traditional secondary school. "New secondary" is a form of elevated primary school.

SOURCE: Planning Institute of Jamaica, Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 1989-2001.

<b>Table 6: Private and public and poverty in St Andrew South*</b>				
	1996		2001	
	St Andrew South (N=788)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=1673)	St Andrew South (N=779)	KMA (entire urban area) (N=1605)
Male (%)	47.8	49.7	50.5	47.2
Female (%)	52.2	51.3	49.5	52.8
In poverty (%)	46.8	18.8	6.5	7.6
In food poverty (%)	11.8	4.7	4.8	0.7
Mean age (years)	26.12	26.8	28.3	20.2
Highest level of education (primary (all age)/new secondary only)* (%)	65	73.7	71.7	42.6
Mean household size	6.1	3.55	2.07	2.93
Reported illness in reference period (4 weeks) (%)	9.9	9.5	10.6	11.5
Mean number of days ill	9.39	7	6.3	8.0
With health insurance (%)	3.2	15.8	9.4	21.9
Ownership of land (%)	90.0	78.2	61.4	86.9
Ownership of house (%)	64.7	55.2	28.8	42.3
<b>Ownership of household goods:</b>				
- phone (%)	13.4	n/a	57.5	n/a
- radio (%)	70.4	77.7	76.8	54.8
- television (%)	54.2	77.2	75.6	65.9
<b>Main source of drinking water:</b>				
- indoor tap/pipe (%)	35.3	67.6	43.9	71.6
- outside tap/pipe (%)	37.8	28.2	41.4	26.7
- public standpipe (%)	19.7	2.6	6.1	1.3
- well (%)	0	0	0	0
- river, lake, spring, pond (%)	0	0.3	4.5	0
- rainwater (tank) (%)	6.6	0.1	2.0	0
- other (%)	0.6	1.3	2.0	0.4
<b>Type of toilet facilities:</b>				
- WC linked to sewer (%)	15.3	41.7	29.3	46.8
- WC not linked (%)	17.2	43.9	57.1	45.8
- pit (%)	66.6	13.0	9.6	5.9
- other (%)	0	10.4	0	0.5
- none (%)	0.9	1.0	4.0	1.0
Toilet facilities shared (%)	12.3	28.6	48.4	21.6
Electricity as main source of lighting (%)	77.5	84.3	99.0	94.2

\* No data for 1992 for this constituency.

\*\* Does not include traditional secondary school. "New secondary" is a form of elevated primary school.

SOURCE: Planning Institute of Jamaica, Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 1989–2001.

tions were legal; the households had electricity, while the streets were much darker. Based on this data, Kingston West appears to be suffering from high levels of public and private poverty.

St Andrew South West presents a better picture. Both absolute poverty and food poverty have declined and, in 2001, only 7 per cent of residents were in poverty, while nobody was in food poverty (Table 5). Indoor piped water was available to 63.4 per cent of the population in 2001 but, as in Kingston West, one-fifth of the residents still used pit latrines as their main toilet facility and 26.7 per cent shared toilet facilities. Access to electricity in the home was less of a problem than provision in the streets. Again, public poverty, with limited access to basic social services, persisted, while private poverty declined.

In St Andrew South, private poverty based on consumption has declined significantly over the years (Table 6). In 2001, 4.8 per cent of the residents suffered from food poverty. Land and house ownership 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 fair compared to the other areas under discussion. However, this area has the highest percentage of persons sharing toilet facilities (48.4 per cent). Access to electricity is very high, at 99 per cent, but there is no indication of how much of it is legal. Again, as in the other garrison constituencies, public poverty persists, even as private poverty is on the decline.

When comparing poverty in the three constituencies, a few issues need to be highlighted. For all three years, 1992, 1996 and 2001, Kingston West had a greater percentage of people in poverty than the whole of the KMA. However, this was not the case for St Andrew South and St Andrew South West. In St Andrew South West, poverty levels decreased from 54.9 per cent in 1992 to 7 per cent by 2001, and in St Andrew South, poverty levels went from 46.8 per cent in 1992 to 6.5 per cent in 2001. Nationally, 1992 recorded one of the highest levels of poverty, and food poverty was lower in the KMA overall than in any of the three constituencies. Food poverty in Kingston West also declined over the years, but remained at higher levels than in the KMA. In St Andrew South West, the number of people in food poverty declined significantly and, in fact, there was no recorded food poverty for that area in 2001. In St Andrew South, food poverty levels remained higher than in the KMA. The whole urban area had better access to water, electricity and improved toilet facilities than any of the three garrison constituencies. Educational levels were lower in the garrison constituencies than in the KMA.

Quantitative data cannot reveal the depth of poverty in any geographical area. The Social Development Commission<sup>(21)</sup> has prepared community profiles that highlight some of the problems in these constituencies. Although consumption levels have improved, the qualitative data reveal that there still exists a high level of public poverty. An examination of other secondary data reveals that, qualitatively, the lives of residents in these constituencies have not improved significantly. Some of the data are based on informal discussions with residents who withheld their identities.

The living conditions of some of the people in most of the "tribalized" communities reek of abandonment and neglect.<sup>(22)</sup> As reported by the Social Development Commission, sub-standard housing, poor sanitation and numerous environmental hazards are immediately apparent. Keeping in mind the model presented in Figure 1, an assessment of the geographical capital in these garrison constituencies reveals a high level of public poverty and problems with infrastructure and the environment. These include prob-

21. Social Development Commission (2002), "Community profile (Jamaica)", unpublished data received from the SDC.

22. See reference 17.

lems of poor waste management, inconsistent electricity supplies and abandoned structures; these abandoned structures provide some evidence that people leave during outbreaks of violence. Furthermore, there did not appear to be any piped water in Majestic Gardens (St Andrew South West) and no health clinic in Rose Town (St Andrew South).

Generally, human capital in the three garrison constituencies did not extend beyond secondary schooling. Even so, the proportion of people with secondary school education was low, and never more than 45 per cent. Data from the Social Development Commission show that unemployment figures were high in most cases, with the community of Wilton Gardens (St Andrew South) recording a high of 57 per cent.

The psychological dimension of life in the inner cities may never be fully understood by researchers. Living in these communities is a nightmare during volatile periods. Some researchers<sup>(23)</sup> speak of the fear that people have of the disruption to their lives from sudden outbreaks of violence. Another aspect of social exclusion experienced by the residents of the garrison constituencies is restrictions on movement, especially when there is gang warfare and shootings. Communities have been known to “shut down” for days when there is warfare. This has a negative impact on employment, education, business, sports, entertainment, sex and family.<sup>(24)</sup> Young children are excluded from the educational system because they cannot attend school regularly due to the violence. When gunfights begin, the children either have to stay home or, if they are at school, they must leave school early.

There are also restrictions on social relationships. People outside the inner cities do not want to associate with inner-city residents. It might have been possible to widen social networks through employment, and break the cycle of poverty, but this is easier said than done. There is a stigma attached to people who live in “garrisons”, 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>(25)</sup>

The issue is further complicated by the fact that employment may be jeopardized by physical insecurity and restrictions on movement during periods of violence. People are unable to leave their homes when there is a lot of gunfire, and consequently they might lose their jobs.

*“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 fourth room, way round at di back.”*<sup>(26)</sup>

The extent of the crime problem in these garrison constituencies is highlighted by the number of murders and shootings. In 2002, St Andrew South accounted for 150 of the 1,045 murders and 202 of the 1,270 shootings in Jamaica. Kingston West accounted for 66 murders and 192 shootings (Table 7). According to police officials, St Andrew South has consistently recorded the highest number of murders for the last five years. Census data are available by parish and not by police district, hence a more detailed analysis is not possible.

These garrison constituencies exhibit peculiar levels of social and political capital. Social capital refers to the collective value of all “social networks” (i.e. who people know) and the inclination, based on these networks, to do things for each other (“norms of reciprocity”). Social capital

23. Levy, Horace (1996), “Urban violence and poverty in Jamaica”, The Centre for Population, Community and Social Change, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica.

24. See reference 23, page 26.

25. See reference 23. Author’s emphasis.

26. Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (2002), “Pals baseline study in Trench Town and Flankers, Jamaica”, CIDA.

<b>Table 7:</b>		<b>Crime statistics 2002</b>					
Type of crime	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Larceny	Shootings	Carnal abuse	Break-ins
Kingston Central	82	34	128	26	96	4	32
Kingston East	62	38	71	6	76	17	48
Kingston West	66	30	50	11	192	10	27
St Andrew Central	79	103	327	14	113	20	121
St Andrew North	72	62	190	10	84	26	165
St Andrew South	150	110	153	12	202	25	43
St Catherine North*	106	80	170	12	132	25	165
St Catherine South**	96	71	135	7	95	22	144
National total	1,045	875	2,021	251	1,270	270	1,769

\*St Catherine North includes Spanish Town.

\*\* St Catherine South includes Portmore, Central Village and Old Harbour.

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

SOURCE: Department of Statistics, Jamaica Constabulary Force.

creates value for the people who are connected and – at least sometimes – for others as well.<sup>(27)</sup> Political capital is based on the extent of the link to politicians (level of dependence and patron–client relations).

What is significant about these garrison constituencies is that there is strong political capital. They become very important at election times, and the level of activity surrounding the politicians is remarkably high. The constituencies' political importance is emphasized by Figueroa and Sives, who reveal that:

*“The creation, development and maintenance of garrisons are neither accidents of history nor geography, but part of a process deliberately fostered for political ends. The garrison phenomenon has become central to the practice of electoral manipulation and victory in Jamaica. The garrisons involve a process whereby geographical areas are chosen to be political strongholds.”<sup>(28)</sup>*

During non-election times, the residents promote their alliances through their political networks. Their quality of life depends on the degree of social capital that they enjoy with the don, who acts as the politician's political guardian for the constituency. The residents' movements in and out of the communities, and their access to the social goods considered valuable in the society, are based on the closeness of their links to the don. Residents of garrison constituencies have caused great civil unrest when their don has been captured by the police. For example, Zekes (a don) was arrested in September 1998, and this resulted in a massive demonstration in Kingston between September 23 and 25.<sup>(29)</sup> Cargill captured the nature of the relationship between the don and his community members:

27. <http://www.bowlingalone.com/socialcapital.php3>

28. See reference 11.

29. *The Jamaica Gleaner*, 3 March 1999.

30. Cargill, M (1999), "The release of Zekes", *The Jamaica Gleaner*, 11 March.

"This whole business of our dons is a good demonstration of the Robin Hood syndrome. All those years ago in England, Robin Hood was a folk hero. He was, of course, a first class scoundrel, but he had the sense to realize, just as our dons realize, that if he gave part of his ill-gotten gains to the poor, they'd always protect him. Robin was a constant headache to the sheriff of Nottingham, just as our dons are to our Jamaican equivalents. There is, of course, a big difference. Robin had only bows and arrows, while our modern Robin Hoods have a large selection of high-powered firearms. Robin had Sherwood Forest to hide him. Our dons have a different sort of jungle."<sup>(30)</sup>

Fear is also a major part of this "loyalty". If captured, a don will eventually be released, as no witnesses will come forward. Some witnesses, who have braved the courts, have either disappeared or have suddenly suffered severe memory loss.

The quality of life of the residents is based on how much social and political capital they can draw on. Residents receive protection from the don and his supporters, which means that they are not robbed. Any violations are reported to the don, who uses his localized justice system to deal with "deviants". Individuals who commit crimes can be beaten, maimed or killed, depending on the severity of their crime.

Households are known to receive school fees, food and payments for medical bills from the don. Housing, though usually of poor quality, can be secured with the don's blessing. It has been used as a deliberate strategy to gain political mileage. There is a practice, common within the party in power, of allocating houses to supporters, in order to establish a homogeneous voting community.<sup>(31)</sup> The don and the politician have a strong political link in these geographical areas. The don secures votes for the politician, and for the politician to anger the don is political suicide, as the don can turn the constituents against him or her. Politicians are "...prisoners, hostages of garrison politics."<sup>(32)</sup>

31. See reference 17.

32. *The Jamaica Gleaner*, 14 May 2001.

In return for the don's support, residents must be prepared to pledge undying loyalty and even allow sexual abuse: "There are many young boys who have to bring their sister to a don or to a community leader so they can be raped."<sup>(33)</sup>

33. *The Jamaica Gleaner*, 27 September 2002.

Hence, violence is one of the main features of these constituencies that impacts negatively on the quality of life of the residents. A further problem identified in the Kerr Report<sup>(34)</sup> is the border wars between neighbouring constituencies, which have caused:

34. See reference 17.

- increased difficulties in maintaining law and order;
- an inability to maintain social infrastructure (roads, water, sewage, garbage disposal, electricity, shops, supermarkets, markets), which border or pass through disparate communities;
- restrictions on movement through these areas, which affects human rights, transportation, and job attendance and opportunities; and
- a restriction of business opportunities to the localized area, as customers from other communities are denied access because of blocked roads and real or perceived threats of violence.

Ultimately, although private poverty may have decreased on the macro level, the quality of life of the residents is poor, and they experience social exclusion, violence and crime on a daily basis. They are seen as "puppets and pawns" of the politicians and dons, who are not prepared to dismantle these garrisons.

## VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

GARRISON CONSTITUENCIES ARE distinguished by their homogenous voting patterns. They are urban communities with political stability and political tribalism; they are protected by the politicians, and exhibit high levels of crime and poverty. The three garrison constituencies under discussion, Kingston West, St Andrew South and St Andrew South West, all have political representatives who have always been elected with more than 76 per cent of the vote.

This is the first time that public and private poverty in these areas has been analyzed using quantitative and qualitative data. The data show that in all three garrison constituencies (except Kingston West), private poverty has declined significantly but public poverty has remained over the years. This paper argues that public poverty, and to some extent private poverty, remains a feature of the "garrison communities" despite the reduction in poverty at the macro level. When compared with macro figures for the whole Kingston urban area, the garrison communities fared worse on most of the socioeconomic indicators. The qualitative data showed that, despite a reduction in poverty at consumption levels, the quality of life of the residents has not improved, and political manipulation, violence and control by the local dons are still the main features of their lives. Their political and social capital is entrenched in a system that renders them "powerless" and socially excluded from the rest of the society.

Forty years on, garrisons still exist in Jamaica, and their political representatives appear "helpless". What are the implications of these findings for poverty reduction policies? Public poverty has persisted because of the lack of determined and sustained efforts to "dismantle" garrisons and disempower the dons. And there have not been any sustained efforts to empower the residents of these communities, to increase their human and social capital.

Poverty in the three garrison constituencies was examined within a political socioeconomic framework (see Figure 1 and Table 1). The state's development (expressed in economic terms) remains unimpressive, with insignificant economic growth. Politicians safeguard these garrison constituencies and secure votes using political pressure. Both the opposition and ruling parties 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 political territories from political opposition from the outside. Over the years, they have reportedly become more and more autonomous, and are reportedly involved in many illegal activities. However, politicians dare not disempower the dons. Crime, drugs and gang warfare intensify, and it is often difficult to discern the true causes of violence when it occurs. The people and the security forces know the names of the dons, but their capture is not a priority. Witnesses are reluctant to come forward because of fears of retaliation, which almost always includes death. There have been few attempts to bring all dons to justice. When the security forces in Kingston West allegedly killed 27 persons, the leader of the opposition called it "political victimization". He said similar raids had not taken place in constituencies that supported the government. 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 garrison constituencies, as evidenced by their poverty, mental insecurity, physical insecurity and social exclusion. It is the "culture of political irresponsibility" that maintains these garrison constituencies.

## VIII. 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..."<sup>(35)</sup>*

### a. Macro level

The fact that garrisons have existed for more than 40 years proves that they have been allowed to exist and provide political support. Politicians are reluctant to dismantle these constituencies for fear of losing their seats. For these communities, civil action and continuous calls for state action are the only hope, but this is unlikely given the general apathy that has gripped the nation, as evidenced by the low voter turnout in the last general election.

### b. Micro level

Many reports and commissions of enquiry have examined the problem of garrison constituencies, and have made various recommendations. Many of these have not been implemented. Some useful suggestions for achieving peace within these communities are again provided in the Kerr Report<sup>(36)</sup> as follows:

- Politicians must be divested of the responsibility of issuing scarce benefits; this should be the responsibility of professional civil servants. Currently, members of parliament are given funds to improve their communities, and there have been reports that these funds are only given to party supporters.
- Politicians must disassociate themselves from questionable characters in their constituencies, including dons, protectors and enforcers.
- Political leaders must identify party members who are associated with criminals, political or otherwise, and take disciplinary action, even if it means that they are removed from office.

Other strategies could include:

- dismantling these garrisons by arresting the "popular" dons who are given political protection;
- building infrastructure e.g. brightly lit roads, high-rise buildings and schools;
- providing protection for the police "informers" and eyewitnesses.

Any strategy to eradicate poverty in the garrison constituencies is subject to failure, as there are many people who have a vested interest in the perpetuation of poverty. This statement in a UNDP Human Development Report 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."<sup>(37)</sup>*

Unless there is a concerted and sustained effort to dismantle these garrison constituencies, their residents will suffer from a poor quality of life for many decades to come.

35. UNDP (1997), *Human Development Report*, UNDP, New York, page 94.

36. See reference 17.

37. See reference 35, page 95.

