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Neoliberalization, social reproduction and the limits to labour in Jamaica

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Since the 1980s the Jamaican state has systematically withdrawn from investments geared towards enhancing the social and psychological welfare of its citizens, shifting the responsibility and cost for the education, health care and socialization of dependent members of the society to households and communities. This shift in responsibility for social reproduction disproportionately and negatively affected women, who have traditionally assumed primary responsibility for this necessary component of capitalist systems. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Jamaicans, primarily women, successfully rendered a spatial fix to the crisis by stretching the space and scale of their everyday means of existence beyond the nation's territorial boundaries. However, as this paper demonstrates, Jamaica is approaching the limits of its population's ability to reproduce the social structures and relations needed for social stability. This situation, that I describe as the 'limit to labour' is increasingly manifested in declining levels of social cohesion and heightened levels of violence in at all levels of Jamaican society. Although crisis has been a defining feature of social reproduction in Jamaica throughout its history, the emerging social crisis should be distinguished in its severity because it has begun to erode the social institutions and norms upon which Jamaica's social order has historically rested. It is the economic costs of this emerging limit to labour that ultimately pose the greatest threat to the sustainability of current neoliberalization processes.

Keywords: social reproduction, neoliberalism, transnationalism, violence, Jamaica

Introduction

Opening the State of the Nation debate in the Jamaican Senate in June 2008, Senator Hyacinth Benett called for a moral rearmament campaign to save the soul of the nation from being threatened by a growing number of disruptive citizens who had embraced a 'culture of callousness, banality and the coarsening of sensibilities' (JIS, 2008). These citizens, moreover, were seen to have a defective or no moral compass and to be suffering from 'an inner sickness which eats away at their psyches and robs them of self esteem and a sound character' (JIS, 2008). The senator's call for a moral rearmament campaign came at a time when many Jamaicans had begun to reflect on the factors contributing to soaring levels of violence: Jamaica had the dubious distinction of having one of the highest levels of violent crime in the world in 2006, with a homicide rate of 49/100 000 persons (UNODC/World Bank, 2007). International development lending institutions such as the World Bank (2007) increasingly view crime and violence as a development issue, because they impose significant negative costs in the form of lost productivity, social fragmentation, loss of governmentality and ultimately declining flows on investment. While these studies correctly draw connections between poverty, inequality and violence, they rarely link the rising levels of physical violence to the economic violence created by the neoliberal economic development strategies that these very institutions have supported over the past 25 years.

This paper examines the relationship between the processes of neoliberalization taking place in the Jamaican economy, the spatial transformations in social reproduction and the rising levels of social disorder since the 1980s. By examining these relationships

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I seek to explore the limits to labour and the role that long-term and exceptional levels of violence play in defining those limits. Drawing on the idea of 'limits', I explicitly seek to make connections between the economic crises that define the limits to capital and the social crises that are symptomatic of the limits to labour. It is recognized that the factors driving increasing levels of violence go beyond Jamaica's declining ability to reproduce its traditional order of social relations. For the heightened levels of violence in Jamaica can be more directly explained by the increasing number of people participating in the international trade in illicit drugs, the anger and frustration produced by the daily humiliations of poverty and unemployment, and the widening inequalities between the rich and the poor within the country's racialized class system (Robotham, 1998; Levy, 2001; Harriott, 2003). Few scholars, however, examine how these immediate causes of violence and social disorder are enmeshed in the workings of the systems of economic production and social reproduction.

Similarly, while a number of scholars have documented the crisis of social reproduction that has accompanied the economic restructuring of the Jamaican economy and the wider Caribbean (Anderson & Witter, 1994; Bolles, 1996; Mullings, 1999; Trotz, 2004), few have examined how the qualitative shifts in the organization of economic production and social reproduction have affected the intensity of the ongoing crisis. I argue that Jamaica's engagement with a strategy of neoliberal development over the past 25 years has significantly eroded the social relations and institutions that historically maintained the stability and reproducibility of the social order of this postcolony (Mbembe, 2001).[1] I frame my discussion by first examining some of the emerging debates around the changing responsibilities of states, households and civil society in the provision of social reproduction as well as the impact of neoliberal restructuring processes on contemporary modes of social reproduction. Second, I explore key moments of change in the relationship between the state and civil society in the provision of the social investments needed to maintain and reproduce Jamaica's social order. Focusing in particular on the period between 1980 and 2007, I examine how the declining role of the state in social reproduction affected patterns of poverty and inequality. Third, I explore the spatial strategies that Jamaican households and communities have deployed to maintain levels of social and economic stability by examining how migration and transnational household networks, and community gang leaders linked to transnational drug networks have transformed the space and scale of the household and of social reproduction. Viewed as a spatial fix to the crisis of social reproduction produced by the withdrawal of the state from the provision of welfare, I examine the extent to which the remittances and welfare investments generated through transnational household networks and community gang leaders can compensate in the long run for the loss of public investments in social reproduction. Fourth, examining if articles and commentaries in Jamaica's leading daily newspaper make associations between the rising levels of violence and social instability and the crises within the space of social reproduction, I evaluate whether Jamaica can be considered to be approaching limits to labour.

Neoliberalism and the changing social reproductive roles of states, households and civil society

Studying social reproduction facilitates an understanding of not only the ways that people secure their daily and long term means of existence within capitalist systems, but also how they maintain the social structures and relations that reproduce a given social order. Embedded in practices linked to the care and socialization of societal members, social reproduction is both a necessary component of capitalist systems and the essential foundation of human development (Katz, 2001). While social reproduction occurs at multiple scales – for example, at the level of the state in the form of government social expenditures, or at the level of the community through religious practices – it is at the level of the household, often in the form of unpaid caring labour that much of the work of social reproduction takes place. In her attempt to integrate social reproduction into global political economy, Spike Peterson (2003) examines the centrality of processes of socialization to the reproduction (or transformation) of an economic order. Inscribed during childhood, early socialization processes play a key role in the creation of identities, habits of thought and norms and practices that are deeply held, which, she argues, has important implications for analyses of continuity and change.

Social reproduction provides an important frame for examining the long-term developmental impact of neoliberal restructuring because it explicitly links changes in the social conditions within which individuals, households and communities are remade on a daily basis with changes in the organization and structures of economic production in capitalist economies and societies. Focusing on the dialectical relationship between social reproduction and economic production also allows us to examine the extent to which a given regime of capital accumulation can continue to expand, given the mode of social reproduction that it generates. Examining the limits to labour's ability to secure a collective means of existence makes it possible to challenge directly the continued desirability and legitimacy of neoliberal restructuring processes.

In much of the 'third world'[2] the retreat of the state from social reproduction was part of a broader general set of measures endorsed by Washington-based economic institutions that included the US Treasury and Federal Reserve, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Peet with Hartwick, 1999). Countries that implemented these policy reforms tended to shift social investments towards more narrowly targeted social investments in basic levels of health, education and public infrastructure, in the process also shifting responsibility for social welfare functions such as care of the sick, the elderly and the indigent away from the state and towards the individual citizen (Antrobus, 1989; French, 1994). Referring to similar changes in the industrialized world, Bakker (2003) argues that these shifts represent the reprivatization of social reproduction in two main ways. First, through the deinstitutionalization of functions which were once a part of state programmes of universal provision; and second, through the commodification of forms of social reproduction once considered outside of the market domain. I argue that a similar process of reprivatization can be seen in Jamaica, in the declining levels of spending and state provision on health and education that took place in the 1980s and 1990s and the consequent transfer of the cost or provision of these activities to households and the private space of the home during that period. The introduction, for example, of user fees in Jamaican public hospitals in 1984, which culminated in a 877 per cent increase in the average revenues collected by three of the island's hospitals between 1983–4 and 1987–8 (Lewis, 1993), represented a reprivatization of this aspect of social reproduction that forced families who were not able to pay for their health needs to turn to home-based remedies.

The shift in responsibility for social reproduction away from the broader society and towards the family has been a highly gendered process. Feminist scholars have argued that the failure to consider the effects of the reprivatization of social reproduction on families, especially those (primarily women) responsible for them, is a consequence of the ongoing conceptual separation of social reproduction from economic production (Antrobus, 1989; Katz, 2001; Bakker, 2003; Mitchell *et al.*, 2003). The tendency to view crises of social reproduction as somehow separate from the policies associated with neoliberal restructuring can be attributed to the absence of a comprehensive theory of the limits to labour within social reproduction. For without a comprehensive account of the crisis created when labour is no longer able to reproduce the social relations needed to maintain the viability of households and communities, the crucial link between economic production and social reproduction is lost.

Crisis and the changing role of the state and civil society in social reproduction in Jamaica

Through the 1960s and 1970s, newly independent Jamaica invested significantly in social and economic welfare to the extent that by 1970 Jamaica had one of the most equitable income distributions in the Latin American and Caribbean region (Londoño & Székely, 2000). This was a remarkable achievement for a post-plantation economy society that prior to decolonization (between 1944 and 1962) had remained as deeply stratified across race and class as it was in the early post-emancipation years.[3] Up until the 1920s in Kingston, the capital city, black Jamaicans remained concentrated in unskilled labouring occupations and domestic service while a middle segment of largely people of mixed race, Jews, Chinese, Indians and Syrians dominated the commercial sector, reserving the professions for a small white and Jewish group. The outcome of this racialized social order was the creation of a highly unequal society where a small white and brown minority enjoyed the lion's share of the country's wealth and consumed the best education, health and housing resources, while the black majority remained trapped in poor quality housing with minimal access to good education or health (Stone, 1991; Clarke, 2006).[4]

Throughout the 1970s, government programmes in health, education, housing and social services actively reduced levels of income inequality. State sponsored national literacy programmes reduced functional illiteracy levels by 40 per cent within two years while investments in free secondary and tertiary education in 1973, a fund for housing construction through compulsory contributions in 1977 and in 1979 a policy of paid maternity leave that facilitated the growing entry of women into the labour force all contributed to falling levels of income inequality (Manley, 1982; Huber & Stephens, 1986). Combined with subsidies for basic consumption items like cooking oil and flour, state investments in social reproduction brought many households out of poverty whilst simultaneously reducing the gap between the rich and the poor. The gains brought about by adult literacy programmes, universal and social security, however, came to a halt after the 1974 oil price crisis, in the wake of the upward spiral of debt in the region and the decline of a development strategy that was heavily influenced by Keynesian macroeconomic policies.

The World Bank and IMF programmes of structural adjustment, transformed the relationship between labour and the state in the reproduction of Jamaica's social order. Throughout the 1980s, public spending in social sectors such as health, education and housing declined steadily as the state relinquished its role in the maintenance of social welfare. In the area of health, Boyd (1988) documents a decline of over 35 per cent in government spending between 1975–6 and 1985–6; he similarly records a decline in government spending on education of 40 per cent between 1981–2 and 1985–6. By the late 1980s the social effects of the decline in state spending in areas directly linked to social reproduction could be seen in the rising rates of poverty (World Bank, 1994; CGCED, 2002). Further declines in government spending in areas related to social reproduction took place after 1991 when the Jamaican state implemented the bulk of structural adjustment policies (Handa & King, 1997). Between 1988–93 government spending on social and community services fell from 28 per cent to 22 per cent, as user fees in the health and education sectors were implemented.

As previously argued, women in Jamaica (as elsewhere in the third world) shoulder a greater share of the burdens associated with poverty (Safa & Antrobus, 1992; Safa, 1995; Bolles, 1996). Women, for example, not only experience higher levels of unemployment and wage discrimination, but also assume higher levels of responsibility for the social wellbeing of households than men. Furthermore, they are also more likely than men to be single heads of households with dependants (45 per cent), a situation associated with higher levels of poverty: households headed by women account for 66 per cent of single headed households in poverty (PIOJ/STATIN, 2000).

Over 25 years (1980–2007) of neoliberal restructuring has brought little economic success to Jamaica. In 2002 the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development (CGCED, 2002) calculated that growth rates in the 1990s were lower than the levels attained during the 1970s. In fact, Jamaica and Haiti were the only islands in the region that registered both declining *and* negative levels of real income growth between the 1980s and 1990s (CGCED, 2002). Yet, despite the declining levels of growth recorded, levels of poverty in Jamaica steadily declined between the mid 1990s and the new millennium. Estimates provided by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ/STATIN, 2007), indicate that between 1995 and 2007 the incidence of poverty[5] in Jamaica fell from 27.5 per cent to 14.3 per cent, which is partially attributed to the flow of remittances from abroad by Handa and King (1997), and to the expansion of the underground economy, declining levels of inflation and falling costs of food by the World Bank (2004). To understand why poverty rates fell during a period of economic decline and dwindling state social investment, it is necessary to examine the role played by households and communities in securing a means of survival. Hence I examine how two distinct spatial practices – the transnationalization of the household and gang welfare – provided a spatial fix to the crisis of social reproduction that followed the withdrawal of the state from social reproduction during the 1980s and 1990s.

Spatial fixes to the crisis of social reproduction and their limits

Transnationalization of the household

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s increasing numbers of Jamaicans forged complex transnational networks that extended the space, scale and constitution of the household itself. Built upon the transnational household arrangements of the 1950s and 1960s that facilitated the entry of Jamaican women into labour markets in the global north, the migrant networks of the 1980s functioned primarily to maintain and improve investments in the social reproduction of children that were formerly provided by the state. In exchange for grandmothers, siblings and other close family members taking responsibility for the care and socialization of children left behind, Jamaicans abroad sent regular remittances of money and material goods. Although many women who migrated later resumed responsibility for the care and socialization of their children, they often retained a long-term obligation to provide financial care for relatives and friends who had participated in the network. Throughout this era the transnationalization of social reproduction both widened and deepened as increasing number of women in both Jamaica and the wider Caribbean migrated in search of employment and as technological improvements made it easier to transfer money and other remittances across international borders (Levitt, 1998; Crawford-Brown, 2002). Thus between 1973 and 2004 the proportion of women in Jamaican migration streams rose from 50 per cent to 54 per cent.

By stretching the spaces of social reproduction across international borders, Jamaican migrants filled the void created by the retreat of the state and private sector from social reproduction. For example, between 1981 and 2003, the value of official worker remittances to Jamaica in real terms increased eightfold from USD 89 million to USD 698 million (IMF, 2003). These remittances went largely towards the provision of education, health, housing, food and goods that were important to maintaining social reproduction (Conway & Connell, 2000). In 2006 the World Bank (2008) estimated that remittances were approximately USD 1.78 billion or approximately 17 per cent of GDP in Jamaica. The importance of remittances to everyday social reproduction can be seen in the findings of the 1999 Survey of Living Conditions (CGCED, 2002) that about a third of the Jamaican population depended on regular remittances from abroad for their survival. A study of remittance practices in Canada shows that of the 288 Haitian and Jamaicans respondents, 75 per cent sent money for the purchase of food, 60 per cent to support housing or other shelter needs, and just over 50 per cent sent money to assist family members and friends to secure health care and education (Simmons *et al.*, 2005).

Gang welfare

Another spatial fix that flourished in the wake of the retreat of the state from social reproduction was gang welfare. Unlike household transnationalization, however, this fix was achieved through the narrowing of the meaning of community and its spatial boundaries. Linked to the development of politically aligned areas of public housing and squatter settlement popularly described as 'garrison communities', gang welfare evolved in the 1980s as a practice that offered affiliated community members with access to investments in health, education and housing in exchange for their support and allegiance to gang leaders.

The emergence of gangs and powerful leaders dubbed as 'dons' can be traced to the 1940s when the country's two rival political parties, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP), sought votes among the urban poor through promises of much needed social investments in the communities once they assumed power. The construction of public housing schemes became a popular way for politicians to reward local constituents for their loyalty. As economic growth declined during the 1970s and 1980s, the intensity of the rivalries and conflicts between supporters in these politically aligned housing estates increased. Such garrison communities became the spatial expression of Jamaica's clientelistic political culture, as self-appointed area leaders increasingly assumed control over the flows of labour and capital that crossed the community's boundaries. As intermediaries between local politicians and communities, dons derived significant power from their ability to determine who in the local community would benefit from the distribution of scarce government contracts – and from their virtual immunity from prosecution given their close ties to high ranking politicians (Figueroa, 1996; National Committee on Political Tribalism, 1997; Johnson, 2005; Rapley, 2006). By 1980, the political violence that had been created by these unofficial financial (or pork barrel) favours, gave way to a sustained programme of economic violence as the first phase of neoliberal restructuring began. As the state declined as a lucrative source of income, dons also began to develop new sources of economic enrichment, turning away from declining government contracts and towards the transhipment of illicit drugs, primarily crack cocaine to North American markets and later the extortion of money from local commercial businesses (World Bank, 2007). In this context everyday forms of violence became entrenched as a technology of power and social control among groups that actively challenged the authority of the state.

Few studies examine the role that garrison communities play in social reproduction (cf. Johnson, 2005). Yet, dons and their gangs can be considered active agents in social reproduction given their role in the provision of welfare assistance to community members, albeit for their own political ends. Within their local communities dons are respected for providing community members with the school fees, lunch money, and employment opportunities required for everyday survival (Moser & Holland, 1997). Levy (2001: 13–14) notes that:

> Whatever the acts of terror against the rival community, or the illegal acts against outside businesses or individuals, the rule was not to terrorise the people of your own community. When this rule was broken, Dons . . . enforced a discipline which included beating or execution, as considered warranted by the crime. This made for a perceived and appreciated intra-community safety and order, even in the midst of the war between communities . . . Dons of former days were remembered as helpful to women and children, feeding and guiding youth . . . There are Dons today who are respected by some in the community for helping school-children, for example, with needed shoes or books.

The transnationalization of the household and gang welfare provided important spatial fixes to aspects of the crisis of social reproduction in the 1990s because they compensated for the loss of investment in basic elements of social reproduction. These economic investments and the forms of care that they supported, however, represented only part of the work of social reproduction. Other aspects of social reproduction such as the provision of the skills and habits necessary for individuals to learn the norms, attitudes, values and social roles that govern Jamaican culture and society were not as easily supplanted by these monetary investments. These historically and geographically rooted aspects of social reproduction have ultimately had the greatest influence on the long-term ability of spatial fixes to resolve Jamaica's crisis of social reproduction. By analyzing the changing nature of discourses on violence and social reproduction in the mass media, I examine the contradictory effects that the transnationalized household and gang welfare have had on patterns of social reproduction and economic production in Jamaica.

Exhausting the spatial fix: violence, social disorder and the limits to labour

Examining public discourse on violence and social disorder represents one way of gauging the limits to labour. Drawing on news reports, editorials and commentaries printed between 1980–2004 in *The* (*Daily* and *Sunday*) *Gleaner*, Jamaica's oldest and largest circulation newspaper, I examine popular perceptions of social relations and underlying causes of violence and social disorder in Jamaica.

Articles were identified using the search engines of the online archives of *The Gleaner* (http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/). The frequency with which keywords associated with a crisis of social reproduction appeared was noted and the results were grouped in five-year intervals. Articles where keywords such as 'family crisis', 'social breakdown', 'education crisis' appeared were examined to determine whether associations were made between these crises and the rising levels of violence and social disorder. Articles exploring themes related to social reproduction such as 'education, violence and

Table 1. Frequency of keywords used in relation to the crisis in social reproduction as found in the reporting of the (*Jamaica Daily* and *Sunday*) *Gleaner* between 1980 and 2004.

Keywords	1980–84	1985–89	1990–94	1995–99	2000–04
Violence	2803	3519	3868	4751	10 928
Political violence	490	369	227	170	331
Drug violence	2	2	14	0	7
Domestic violence	1	103	73	334	362
Social breakdown	2	2	5	9	22
Social crisis	10	12	10	18	32
Family crisis	3	3	4	7	18
Family breakdown	–	–	1	2	7
Education crisis	3	22	7	0	14
Health crisis	1	17	10	12	48
Housing crisis	9	9	11	4	8

Source: Online Gleaner Archives (http://gleaner.newspaperarchive.com/).

children', and 'social cohesion' and 'the Jamaican family' were evaluated to determine the reasons that contributors attributed to crises in these domains.

As Table 1 shows, the appearance of the word 'violence' in newspaper articles increased almost fourfold from 2803 to 10 928 between 1980 and 2004, with the greatest spike occurring during the period 2000 to 2004. In keeping with popular analyses of the underlying causes of violence and crime, 'political violence' was the term that most frequently appeared in articles discussing the underlying reason for the crisis engulfing the island, yet its use steadily declined throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Dominated by articles on Jamaica's economic crisis, political patronage and gang violence, very little public discourse during the 1980s addressed the social dimensions of the crisis. Only between 1995 and 1999, and 2000 and 2004 did a growing number of articles and letters begin to attribute rising levels of violence to an emerging crisis within society and the family. During the period 2000–04 the frequency in the use of the phrase 'social crisis' tripled relative to the periods 1980–4, 1985–9 and 1990–4. It is also striking that the use of terms such as 'family breakdown' and 'social breakdown' increased rapidly during the same period – or five years after some of the most significant neoliberal reforms were implemented.

Overall, the newspaper coverage suggests that in the past 15 years public perceptions of the crisis facing Jamaica have increasingly incorporated questions of social reproduction, and in particular the changing norms, attitudes and values governing patterns of social interaction. Predictably, most authors viewed poverty as the major factor behind the rising violence and social disorder. Pointing to the inhumane living conditions of many of Jamaica's urban poor, many viewed violence as the inevitable outcome of daily humiliations faced by them. For example, commentator Glenda Simms (*Gleaner*, 2003: G2) describes the living conditions of the extremely poor:

> The Fifth World is set apart by the fact that human beings within this zone have no sanitary facilities and very little clean water. Fifth World people must face their wastes in a very intimate way. They cannot dislocate from their faeces by flushing it into septic tanks . . . They must constantly be involved with their bodily wastes. They must ensure that they have a supply of plastic bags and they no doubt, must learn quick ways of tying the bags and slinging them to the nearest pile of garbage that might not disappear in a short time. What is even more frightening about Fifth World people is the fact that the conditions under which they live are

> so inhumane that they themselves behave in ways that are less than human. Within their forced space of inhumanity there is no space for a deep spiritual core that is needed to direct positive human response to other human beings. Within this space, life is brutal and harsh. Such space is particularly harsh on women and children.

Similar sentiments were expressed by columnist Beverley Anderson-Manley (*Gleaner*, 2006: A8), who stated in an article entitled 'A voice for the voiceless':

> The impact of this environment of poverty is devastating. Fathers often disappear. Mothers 'crack the whip' as they seek to eke out some kind of discipline on a chronic and inevitable disorder that has established itself. Children and teenagers are rebellious. Poverty is one of the critical factors that fuels crime and antisocial behaviour.

Other authors, however, argued that poverty was not the cause of violence and identified the erosion of the social institutions governing the society as the main reason for social disorder. A number recognized the need to look beyond poverty as an explanation for the rising levels of social disorder and sought to explore the reasons why violence had become a defining feature of Jamaica's social order. Many, however, chose to understand these shifts in the organization of social reproduction in individual, rather than, systemic terms. For example, in an article entitled 'Violence does not pay' (*Gleaner*, 1997: A8) a church leader stated that:

> we have focused too much on socioeconomic factors like poverty and unemployment as the cause of this violence and that we should see the breakdown in the family as more of a factor . . . By nature (theologically speaking) we are all inclined to do violence to each other. But most of us don't because we were taught that violence is wrong and that we should love our fellowman and seek to work out our differences amicably . . . What if no one teaches us and nurtures in us the mechanisms of a conscience?

Nearly all of the articles that addressed issues of moral and values identified the household as the institution that had failed to adequately socialize its members. Portrayals of the household as the site of failed social reproduction often fingered women as the main source of the problem; contributors noted that children's lives were becoming more unstable and precarious, with a growing sense of despair and anger among young people that was sometimes attributed to the high levels of migration among women:

> Migration might have brought about increased prosperity for our people, but it has also brought about disruption in our family structures as mothers migrate, leaving their families behind, parents separate and remarry in order to legitimise their status in various countries (*Gleaner*, 2005: C1).

Blaming women for the rising levels of social disorder, however, obscures the complex way in which the Jamaican household has functioned as both a spatial fix to the crisis of social reproduction and a site in contradiction with the spatial fix it has produced. A number of recent studies have argued that high levels of migration within extended households are exposing large numbers of young people to levels of neglect and violence that ultimately result in disillusionment, distrust and aggression (UNICEF, 2000; Government of Jamaica, 2002; World Bank, 2003; Samms-Vaughan, 2006). But to view the migration of mothers as the primary cause of this neglect would be to ignore the broader economic context within which migration has occurred and the liberalization policies that have contributed to these heightened levels.

Articles also highlighted a widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the declining ability of poor young people to participate in the consumption practices and lifestyles of the middle classes as key sources of the hopelessness and anger that fuelled violence. As noted by contributor Delroy Chuck (*Gleaner*, 2001: A4):

> Anyone reflecting carefully on the state of the Jamaican society cannot ignore the dichotomy that Jamaica is developing, perhaps decaying, along different paths. At one level, those who have and are well connected can participate, contribute and share in the values and culture of respectable society. At another level, vast numbers of Jamaicans and in fact whole communities feel disconnected and separated from what most of us would like to feel is good and right for Jamaica.

Similarly, the frustrations created by this disparity are also reflected in the reported views of a caller to a popular radio programme (*Gleaner*, 2002: G1):

> Right now, the youth dem inna the ghetto have cable TV and dem see a certain standard and dem no want fi drop less than dat standard. You can't come give the youth dem less than dat now. Dem a si how other people live and want live dem way deh, you see mi?

Many viewed this gap as the product of the state's historic failure to provide the educational and employment opportunities required for social mobility – a failure that created the conditions for gang leaders/dons to emerge as the role models to which young people in poor communities aspired. As Gray (2003) notes, during the 1990s, as gangs became more involved in the global trade in illicit drugs, guns and money, their reliance on political patronage and protection waned significantly. No longer reliant upon the patronage of political parties, dons were able to consolidate their power, and within certain inner city communities, displace the Jamaican state as the legitimate institution of rule. For many of Jamaica's urban poor, dons remain powerful and respected figures because they command levels of wealth and influence that give them access to spaces of influence normally reserved for Jamaica's middle and upper class elites. Though many poor communities have respect for 'don rule' and the forms of 'gang welfare' they generate, this governance model is ultimately a destructive one because the fear and violence upon which it is based engenders forms of social reproduction that are ultimately at odds with Jamaica's stated model of liberal democracy: within garrison communities few are able to make choices that diverge from or run counter to the interests of dons. Infractions are swiftly punished with forms of violence that range from severe beatings to death. The spatial fix provided by dons and 'gang welfare' has not only failed in the long run, to alleviate the crisis of social reproduction facing poor inner city communities, it also has reduced the geographic scale of long-standing social norms and practices such as reciprocity and civic engagement, once considered a dominant feature of the national culture, to the boundaries of the garrison community itself. In the 1997 Kerr report on political tribalism, members of the investigating committee argued part that garrison communities such as Tivoli Gardens,[6] Wilton Gardens, popularly known as 'Rema', and 'Jungle' in Arnett Gardens[7] were politically homogenous enclaves because dominant party activists over time forced nonaffiliated families out of the area (National Committee on Political Tribalism, 1997). Over time, they argued, this created urban communities that were socially cohesive and antagonistic towards rival communities and uninvited outsiders. High levels of unemployment exacerbated by the flight of commercial businesses have only served to heighten the levels of poverty and social isolation that members within garrison communities experience. As Harriott (2003: 92) notes:

> community life tends to take on a near-communal character, with party affiliation rather than kinship bonds (although these may be extensive, given the relative isolation of these communities) serving as the primary organizing principle of internal social life and determinant of their relationships with others.

Given the antagonistic rivalries that define social relations among garrison communities, gang welfare ultimately offers few opportunities for building social consensus and cohesion. As Hume Johnson (*Gleaner*, 2004: G11) in an article entitled 'Rogue leadership in a civil society' observes:

> By retreating from the values, norms and authority systems of the wider state structure and trading them for those of lesser authorities, a large contingent of garrison dwellers have shelved their political rights and misused their civic power. The result has been a widespread normalising and acceptance of a range of negative attitudes, values and behaviour norms, including the gamut of extra-legal activities, cruelty, aggression and a belief in the right to live free of official surveillance and modern social control.

This view, however, fails to problematize the ethnoracial, class and gender inequalities that have historically shaped social control in Jamaica, and the extent to which the 'negative attitudes' described may be a form of resistance to the hegemony of Jamaica's brown and white middle and upper class definitions of what the island's cultural norms should be (Thomas, 2004). It does, however, capture popular concerns over the extent to which extreme violence has become a part of the everyday governance structure not only of poor urban communities, but also the wider Jamaican society and economy as a whole. While part of the violence that is rendering much of the urban landscape ungovernable, can be viewed as a rejection by urban youth of Jamaica's postcolonial social order and its ethnoracial and class inequalities, it cannot be viewed as the product of an organized politically conscious movement. Indeed, much social disorder appears to be driven by the competition to secure more commodity-based symbols of wealth.

Conclusion

The relationship between violence and the limits to labour is an indirect one. As Katz (2001) argues, although most contemporary crises of social reproduction have their origins in the systematic withdrawal of states from key areas such as education, health and social security, the effects of these crises are most directly seen in the spaces where the work of social reproduction takes place. Unlike popular accounts that view violence and social disorder in Jamaica as the direct outcome of political conflict, the drug trade or even poverty, I argue that the current social disruptions must also be linked to the primacy given to the seemingly abstract workings of the market in the creation of wealth.

Poverty is a significant contributor to Jamaica's crisis of social reproduction and, ultimately, its declining social order, but poverty alone is not a sufficient explanation for the increasing levels of violence and social disorder in Jamaica. If poverty was the driving cause of social disorder, then levels of crime and violence should have declined alongside poverty levels during the mid 1990s. Similarly, levels of social disorder would be highest in rural areas where levels of poverty are highest, instead of in the slums of Kingston, the largest city. As I have argued in this paper, poverty is one symptom, rather than the cause, of the long-term erosion of the ability of households and communities to carry out the work of social reproduction.

Chronic violence, whether in the form of murder, aggression or absolute neglect, ultimately threatens the stability and reproducibility of capitalist systems. Harvey (1982) recognized this and argued that major disjunctions between social reproduction and economic production would create crises, often marked by serious civil strife, but that neither process could easily predominate because of their mutual interdependence. He argued that during periods of crisis a means of coordination would be found and mechanisms of social restraint would be instituted in order to keep society in sufficient equilibrium to avoid total social collapse. Yet, as media commentaries suggest Jamaica is teetering towards social collapse because the fear and cost of violence is slowly grinding its system of economic production to a halt.

Even though neoliberal policies over the last 20 years have become more pragmatic and geared towards more socially interventionist and participatory poverty reduction strategies (Peck & Adam, 2002; Craig & Porter, 2006), their ability to halt the collapse of economic and social reproduction in Jamaica seems unlikely. This is because the neoliberal commitment to trade liberalization and the accompanying disciplining mechanisms of credit and debt has remained essentially unchanged. Thus, although spatial fixes are said to displace and defer the contradictions resulting from temporal fixes, their ability to do so is shaped and conditioned by the degree to which they complement other approaches to crisis in the global economy.

Contrary to much of the literature that celebrates the economic developmental power of transnational flows, particularly among migrant communities, these spatial fixes often mask the scale of the social costs that these activities simultaneously generate. Although remittances are essential to the daily survival of many poor households across Jamaica, the social repercussions of the increasing number of children being left behind without adequate supervision and care, and the replacement of state welfare with gang-based ones have significant implications. When exceptional, sustained levels of disorder and violence disable existing practices of social and economic reproduction, the reproduction of capitalist systems in those spaces is no longer possible. The current approach by states and the international community to regain control through the deployment of more powerful forms of state and military violence represents only a temporary fix to the crisis. Recognizing the limits to labour produced by neoliberal development strategies is an important step towards challenging the assumption that the capacity of households and communities to do the work of social reproduction is infinitely elastic. Such a recognition also highlights the importance of finding new ways to bridge the analytical separation that currently exists between economic production and social reproduction

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Endnotes

1 I draw on Mbembe's (2001) definition of the postcolony as a geographical space with a history prior, or even external to the experience of colonization to highlight the enduring significance of many of the social formations (such as collective child rearing), that preceded colonization.

2 I use the term 'third world' to draw attention to the ongoing external economic and ideological relationships of dependency and control that affect countries with shared histories of colonial

domination. Though an imagined community, the term captures the continuity between the colonial past and the neocolonial present (see Mullings, 2006).

3 Slavery was formally abolished in Jamaica in 1834, but full emancipation from the obligations of the apprenticeship system that followed abolition happened in 1838.

4 As Brown-Glaude (2006) summarizes Jamaica's racial or colour hierarchy: 'This hierarchy correlates with social class resulting in a three tier racialized class system where a small white elite rests at the apex, a large poor black mass is located at the bottom and a brown segment, consisting primarily of those of mixed races rests at the middle'. I use the term 'brown' similarly, in order to draw attention to the relative social prestige and power that this group enjoys by virtue of their perceived proximity to whiteness.

5 The PIOJ and STATIN set the poverty line for a family of five in 2004 at JMD 221 131 (USD 3852) annually and for individuals JMD 58 508 (USD 1019).

6 A highrise housing estate built in the mid 1960s and affiliated with the Jamaica Labour Party.

7 Like Tivoli Gardens, a community that has developed around a highrise housing estate built in the 1970s and aligned to the People's National Party.

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