“The Messy Work”: Parenting, Social Reproduction, and Neoliberal Restructuring in Jamaica

By

Amalia S. Gentles

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ABSTRACT

Examining the emergence and growing popularity of parenting programmes among states and international development agencies, this thesis explores the effectiveness of parenting interventions as a solution to high levels of social disorder, poverty, and violence that influence how poor families survive and carry out the “messy” work of social reproduction. Drawing on a case study of Jamaican parenting programmes and poor young women and men who participate in them, this thesis seeks to explore the relationship between these programmes and the neoliberal development strategies that the country has pursued for the last thirty years. Focusing specifically on the effects of liberalization on everyday practices of social reproduction among the urban poor, I argue that parenting programmes represent an institutional strategy aimed at shaping the behaviour of the poor, rather than addressing the structural causes that contribute to an ongoing crisis of social reproduction. Furthermore, I argue that parenting interventions reproduce racial and gender discourses and practices that target and pathologize poor, black Jamaicans as deficient and dysfunctional. Drawing on a critical policy approach, I contend that parenting cannot solve the larger anxieties created by the limited support given to spaces of social reproduction, especially when there is a commitment to social protection programmes and austerity measures that are encouraged by international institutions. Research findings demonstrate that parenting interventions contribute to positive parent-child relationships and confidence building. However, the daily experiences of parents are still complicated by socioeconomic stressors and structural barriers such as unemployment and poverty. In this context, community organizations also face uncertainty and fatigue in delivering support to parents. The broader
significance of this study speaks to the necessity for social reproduction to be given as much priority as economic production in any socially sustainable strategy of development. The study also exemplifies how developing countries are largely controlled through mechanisms of debt servicing and donor funding especially when implementing and allocating collective resources to support families. Thus, a system where parenting intervention is rejected as a sufficient structural solution to collective issues in Jamaica is required in both local and international institutions.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION &amp; CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON NEOLIBERAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESTRUCTURING SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND PARENTING</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. NEOLIBERALISM AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. NEOLIBERALISM &amp; PARENTING</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE EMERGENCE OF PARENTING POLICIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2: GENEALOGIES OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN JAMAICA</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND THE JAMAICAN FAMILY</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. NEOLIBERALIZATION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN JAMAICA</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FEMINIST METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. DATA COLLECTION METHODS</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. JAMAICAN PATOIS AND ACADEMIC WRITING</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 4: PARENTING INTERVENTION AND DISCOURSE IN JAMAICA</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. JAMAICA AND THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. POLICY METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE PARENTING CHARTER</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF S-CORNER CLINIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALTHAM PARK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. S-CORNER’S PARENTING PROGRAMMES</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PROGRESS AND PARENTING PROGRAMMES</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. COPING WITH CHALLENGES TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTING PROGRAMMES</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 6: “MAKING DO”: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES AND COPING MECHANISMS OF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTS IN WALTHAM PARK</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INCOME GENERATION AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. WORRIES, STRESS, HOPES AND FEARS</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. S-CORNER AND PARENTING WORKSHOPS</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 7: NEW DIRECTIONS AND HEROIC EFFORTS</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIBLIOGRAPHY</strong></td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDICES</strong></td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NGOs/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS/GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Parenting Support Programmes Jamaica........................................65

Table 2: The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH)........................................................................................................68
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Jamaica........................................................................94

Figure 2: Map of Kingston, Jamaica.........................................................95
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Coalition for Better Parenting (CBP)
Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes (CCTs)
Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)
Government of Jamaica (GOJ)
Jamaican Self-Help (JSH)
Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF)
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
Ministry of Education (MOE)
Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS)
National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC)
National Parenting Support Policy (NPSP)
Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)
Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)
Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH)
S-Corner Community Development and Clinic (SCCD)
Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United State Agency for International Development (USAID)
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In the midst of a Jamaican Parliamentary debate in 2012, the Minister with the Responsibility for Information, Senator the Hon. Sandrea Falconer spoke of the need for a national parenting support mechanism in Jamaica. Senator Falconer indicated that the Bill to pass Jamaica’s National Parenting Support Commission Act was a piece of legislation that: “represents an acknowledgement and our will to address the findings of national studies that reveal high levels of parental stress, the limitations associated with single parenting, a deficit in understanding the requirements of child development and the negative parenting practices [that] are in essence under-developing our children and presiding over a deterioration of child well-being” (cited in JIS, 2012). In her contribution to the debate the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller called on parents to become more responsible because “the health, mental development, and motivation of children are all impacted by positive parenting” while noting that parents who failed in their responsibilities placed “an added burden on Government and all institutions, such as the Church and the school” (cited in JIS, 2012). Although discussions around parenting and the family had occurred in Jamaica many times before, it was in this debate that Jamaica’s prominent political leaders presented parenting support as a targeted intervention that was not only intended to address challenges faced by parents, but also, to promote “good parenting” as a way to alleviate the levels of social disorder that currently plague the Jamaican society (OPM, 2012). Jamaica’s Governor-General, His Excellency Sir Patrick Allen pointedly expressed that good parenting must become a national priority as “there is a general agreement that many of the problems we face in
our nation have their roots in weak parenting” (cited in Reynolds-Baker, 2014). One of the problems that the Governor-General was implicitly referring to was Jamaica’s spiraling levels of violent crime as the nation continues to have one of the highest per capita homicide rates in the world. The Jamaica Observer, a leading national news source indicated that 2013 was “bloodier” than 2012, while The Ministry of National Security stated that murders increased by a rate of nine percent as homicides went from 1099 in 2012 to 1197 in 2013 within a population of 2.7 million (Walker, 2014; MNS, 2014).

In the midst of such reporting on violent crime, growing concerns for social disorder and its connection to “weak parenting” have in part led the Government of Jamaica to revitalize its focus on interventions at the family and household level. However, violence is not the only concern because the National Parenting Support Policy (NPSP) (2011:18) indicates that Jamaica’s “socially disadvantaged” families are “increasingly vulnerable to the pressures of economic insecurity and deprivation”. As a result, poor and socially excluded families face difficulties when children exhibit high levels of “educational under-achievement, experience unemployment, develop anti-social behaviours, and become involved in crime, drug-abuse, and irresponsible sexual behavior” (NPSP 2011:18). In light of these issues, Dr. Barry Davidson pointed out in an interview with the Jamaica Information Service, a government news source that it is necessary to teach parenting as a skill that should be learned like any other job as opposed to an “instinct”. Dr. Davidson indicated that “as a result of not being properly prepared for the parenting job, we find a number of poor parenting styles, poor parenting behavior, and our children have suffered tremendously as a result of this” (cited in Reynolds-Baker, 2014). Within this context, parenting programmes in Jamaica have
emerged to support, educate, and train parents within areas that encompass what it normatively means to be a “good” parent. These programmes are often supported by organizations such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), an international body that supports child and family oriented initiatives on a global scale. Through financial and technical support, state and non-government organizations are able to provide parents with instructions on childcare and protection, offer positive discipline practices, as well as offer guidance on ways to create a safe home environment for children to live and grow.

Although these programmes are framed as a form of support for parents, they should be understood as a developmental intervention into the process of “social reproduction”, a concept that does not typically appear in policy documents and discourse because they focus on the social and economic behaviours of parents and households. This is significant because programmes encourage parents to become more flexible and responsible for themselves and their households while limited state resources and socioeconomic pressures impact the ability of families to survive and fulfill the most basic household needs. Authors such as Cindi Katz (2001:711) refer to social reproduction as the “fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life”, that is necessary for the daily and long-term reproduction of labour. In order for households to survive and reproduce skilled labour for the market economy, parents almost invariably engage in some aspect of social reproduction be it providing basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, or specific forms of nurture required for the socialization of children. While some of the work of social reproduction is carried out by the state in the form of social welfare and public investments such as the provision of
collective goods and services that are designed to support households, particularly those that are surviving on low wages (Katz 2001:713), for the most part the work of social reproduction generally takes place in the private spaces of the household, is performed by women, and is largely unpaid.

The destabilizing impacts of an oil and economic crisis in the 1980s gave rise to a reduction in collective welfare provisions and social expenditures in the areas of education, health care, employment, and other basic services as national governments in both the Global North and South, including Jamaica, employed austerity measures to balance budgets and decrease public debt. Scholars today argue that declines in welfare spending were components of a more comprehensive neoliberal strategy of development that was largely encouraged by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank because of their perceived ability to achieve growth and stability (Harvey 2005; Katz 2001). With the support of international financial institutions, states implemented ‘neoliberal’ policies and strategies that emphasized the efficiency of a liberalized and deregulated market system where there was minimal interference from the state (Steger and Roy 2010:12). Furthermore, neoliberalism as an economic philosophy equated market freedom to individual freedom as consumers, entrepreneurs, and non-state actors fulfilling their self interests were considered to be the best facilitators of voluntary exchange and cooperation within globalized economies (Steger and Roy 2010:11-12; Friedman 1979:13 and 32-33). Neoliberal philosophies often generated economic strategies that aimed to liberalize and deregulate economies in order to make them more competitive in international markets. This meant that states were encouraged to decrease market regulations; to eliminate trade
and industrial barriers; and privatize state owned enterprises (Steger and Roy 2010:14). For indebted countries, structural adjustment policies in the 1980s were aimed at achieving debt reduction and decreasing balance of payment deficits by reducing state expenditures in areas that did not generate significant profits such as social services and welfare programmes (Steger and Roy 2010:14). Particularly in the 1990s, national governments began to favour non-state actors such as the private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as the best stakeholders and methods of allocating social and economic resources. In the midst of declining social expenditures and liberalized economies, states began to take a minimal approach to supporting individuals, families, and the work of social reproduction (Benzanson 2006:23). As a result, personal responsibility, entrepreneurial values, and competitiveness was encouraged as the efficient way to promote productivity and individual market freedom while allowing the state to become a more decentralized, market-oriented set of institutions (Steger and Roy 2010:14-15).

For parents and families, neoliberal restructuring has had a privatizing effect on social reproduction because households have increasingly borne the costs of the deregulation and liberalization of economies. In essence, these policies have tended to rely heavily on the unpaid work of families even though the volatile economic conditions that they generate have systematically reduced the earning capacities of men and women (Benzanson 2006:33; Peterson 2010:275). Benzanson (2006:23) indicates that shifts towards neoliberal economic policies and strategies created tension and “crisis tendencies” in spaces of social reproduction, especially for low-income families.

In light of the negative impacts that neoliberal development strategies themselves
created, highly indebted nations such as Jamaica shifted toward the implementation of policies that encouraged individuals to conduct themselves in ways that did not impede the smooth functioning of markets as individuals were expected to take greater responsibility for their choices regarding employment and the provision of basic needs. This particular approach became more apparent in the 1990s as Jamaica’s government began to deal with the impacts and aftermath of a structural adjustment period that took place in the 1980s. In the midst of these tensions, specifically poor and working class families came under greater pressure as they engaged in an intensive struggle to survive and carry out the daily, “messy work” of social reproduction with limited collective resources. Furthermore, the World Bank (2007:i-v) indicated that poor households and communities faced a higher risk of being victimized or implicated in violence and crime while these problems were framed as “development issues” because of the negative long term effects they had on human welfare and socioeconomic development. However, Mullings (2009:174) argued that the World Bank viewed social erosion and disorder as the outcome of poverty and behavioural choice rather than the “economic violence” that was created by neoliberal economic development policies (Mullings 2009:174).

Considering the crisis that stems from neoliberal restructuring and its tense relationship with social reproduction, the main objective of this thesis is to explore the effectiveness of parenting policies and programmes as a structural solution and approach to addressing issues such as social disorder, poverty, and violence. More specifically, I want to examine how responsible parenting has come to be framed as a product of self-reliance and entrepreneurialism, as well as how individualized conceptions of parenting have been integral to this process. In order to examine how the parenting practices of
poor men and women have been pathologized, it is important to also explore how and why discourses around good parenting have become central to discussions on poverty, social cohesion, citizenship, and crime.

*Layout of Jamaican Case Study*

In order to problematize the idea of parenting as a tool of policy and development intervention I ask the following question: to what extent can a focus on parenting alleviate the impacts of social breakdown that are manifested in Jamaica’s structural issues such as high rates of violent crime, unemployment, and poverty? I argue that these programmes should be seen as part of an institutional strategy that is focused on shaping the behaviour of the poor, rather than addressing the root causes of the ongoing crisis of social reproduction in Jamaica. I further argue that, parenting policies reproduce racial and gender discourses and practices that target and pathologize poor, black Jamaicans as deficient and dysfunctional. These pathologizing discourses about the Jamaican family are not new, but rather represent a revitalization of earlier colonial concerns that regarded the black family unit as the source of broader societal problems.

Focusing on the every day experiences of young men and women involved in classes helps me to assess the success of parenting programmes, as it opens avenues to explore the impact of these interventions on behaviours and the ability of families to cope with socioeconomic stress. Framing parenting interventions in the context of neoliberalism and social reproduction is also an important way of assessing the effectiveness and possibilities such micro level interventions on broader societal issues such as poverty, unemployment, and violence.
Drawing upon a critical policy approach, I argue that parenting programmes cannot solve the larger anxieties that are created by the lack support that states give to spaces of social reproduction. Considering how neoliberal restructuring has depleted the capacity of the Jamaican state to provide collective resources, I also contend that as long as the national government is obliged to implement the austerity measures of international donor institutions, Jamaica will continue to experience high levels of social erosion and yield stagnant socioeconomic development outcomes.

In chapter one of this study, I will explore critical perspectives and debates on the impacts that neoliberal restructuring had in spaces of social reproduction and on households. I will also examine how aspects of parenting and personal responsibility are present in contemporary discourses on social cohesion, violence, and welfare dependence. Additionally, I will observe the rise of parenting programmes as a policy response to rising levels of poverty and social instability. In order to investigate how pathologizing discourses on gender and race might have influenced earlier parenting interventions that evolved in the global North, I will draw on examples from the United Kingdom to explore how these programmes have functioned as disciplining strategies that target poor, female-headed, and racialized families. I will also examine the extent to which multinational parenting efforts employed by UNICEF and demonstrated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) are imbedded within a narrative of personal responsibility and a neoliberal framework that relies on families and community organizations as the sites of collective provisioning. Chapter two will observe the genealogies that shape processes of social reproduction in Jamaica and how neoliberal restructuring affects their sustainability. The methodological approach and methods of
the case study will be delineated in Chapter three where I outline the feminist and mixed method approaches that guided the research. Chapter four will explore how parenting programmes and policies emerged in Jamaica as a response to the impacts of structural adjustment and alignment with the UN protocols on child rights and family protection. I will also seek to demonstrate how Jamaica’s parenting programs share similarities with the narratives about parenting, violence, and black working class families that currently circulate in the United Kingdom.

Drawing on a case study of Waltham Park, an inner-city community in Kingston, Jamaica, in Chapter five I seek to illuminate how community-based organizations are being incorporated into parenting workshops by examining their efforts to help parents cope with the ongoing crisis of social reproduction, as well as the obstacles and constraints that exist in this domain. I will focus my attention on the activities of one community organization- S-Corner Clinic and Community Development (SCCD) in order to illustrate the challenges faced and opportunities offered by parenting programmes. Chapter six will observe the survival strategies and coping mechanisms of parents who respond to a crisis of social reproduction and socioeconomic stressors in flexible ways. I will also examine parents’ perceptions of parenting programmes and the extent to which they believe that a focus on parenting can alleviate social erosion that is evident in high community violence levels. Finally, I will conclude this study by signaling the need for new direction and the importance of the efforts of organizations like S-Corner in sustaining families in Waltham Park using limited and uncertain resources.
Critical Perspectives on Neoliberal Restructuring Social Reproduction and Parenting

In this chapter I aim to highlight the effects of neoliberal restructuring that took place in the 1980s and 1990s in addition to examining how women and children were disproportionately affected by the retreat of the state from collective and social welfare provisioning. Within this context, critical structural explanations put forth by feminist and radical development scholars linked issues of social reproduction to the strategies that states and international institutions have pursued. I will also observe the rise of parenting programs in the global North and South as a policy response to rising levels of poverty, social instability, and unemployment. By drawing on examples from the United Kingdom, I will demonstrate the extent to which these programs represent a disciplining strategy and a very gendered form of social intervention that pathologizes poor and racialized families. I will also examine the extent to which multinational parenting efforts employed by UNICEF also encouraged poor households with children to become more responsible for themselves.

I. Neoliberalism and Social Reproduction

Harvey (2005:64-65) indicates that neoliberalizing states favour policies that emphasize individualism and the efficiency of functioning markets in order to increase productivity, garner higher living standards, improve human welfare, and alleviate poverty. Within such economies individuals are encouraged to assume greater responsibility for themselves and be accountable for their choices regarding the provision of basic needs, education, and health care. Neoliberal approaches to development differ significantly from earlier post-WWII policies that sought to address market failure and
minimize instability through fiscal and monetary policies that supported citizens and their families through collective provisioning and social planning (Larner 2000; Brodie 2010).

As neoliberalism has evolved as a development strategy, so too has the scope and reach of these programs. While early programs concentrated on rolling back the state and market fundamentals, the later programs have focused more on embedding the logic of the market in key societal and economic institutions, of which the family has been one. Thus, the locus of social governance and inclusion moved from “society” as the basis of collective well being to the “community” and the “family” (Larner 2000:244). Neoliberalizing governments today increasingly seek to create conditions where active citizens are obliged to make autonomous choices and exercise responsibility for the material interests of themselves and their families (Larner 2000:244-245 and 251). Thus, by linking freedom of choice to notions of responsible citizenship, neoliberalizing states have increasingly shifted the last vestiges of responsibility for collective welfare towards to individuals, households, and communities.

During the 1980s and 1990s, governments in both the Global North and South, argued that families and voluntary organizations, rather than states needed to become more active in the provision of welfare for citizens. Government spending cuts were seen as an efficient means of providing incentives to move away from welfare and state dependency towards work and labour market productivity (Larner 2000:248). Entrepreneurialism and self-maximization during this time became a central feature of what it meant to be an ideal citizen (Ong 2006b: 501-502). In addition to this, pro-family

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1 When using the terms citizen and citizenship I am referring to more than liberal notions marked by political rights such as voting. I rely on the definition outlined by Ong (2006b: 500-501), which includes a broader sense of inclusion and influence that is based upon flexibility, individual market performance, and self-enterprising values, as well as the ability of citizens to independently navigate market structures.
neoliberal discourse then moved to define the family unit as a self-supporting, powerful, and autonomous entity that supported free market and traditional values as they produced and reproduced socioeconomic welfare (Dingo 2004:175). Subsequently, encouraging poor families to become independent, self-reliant entities has been the focus of growing interests and interventions at the household level within the last 10 years. However, these interventions largely exclude how systemic and economic barriers impact the ability of families to survive (Harvey 2005:65-66).

A number of scholars have argued that many of the neoliberal reforms carried out in the 1980s and 1990s impoverished vulnerable populations particularly in the realm of welfare and social reproduction (Harvey 2005). The global embrace of neoliberal ideologies was intended to increase the productivity that was supposed to deliver higher living standards and lower poverty through liberalized markets and free trade (Harvey 2005:64-65). However, the impacts of negative economic growth in the 1990s were apparent in the Caribbean, Latin American, and African regions as volatile fiscal crisis and debt austerity measures served to decrease living standards while increasing poverty, unemployment, and the public debt of national governments (Chang and Grabel 2004:17-18). While many scholars have documented the impacts of neoliberalism on economic production, only a handful of scholars (Katz 2001; Bakker 2003; Bakker and Silvey 2008; Peterson 2010; Benzanson 2006) have specifically focused on the consequences of neoliberal discourses, policies, and practices on spaces of social reproduction.

Social reproduction encompasses biological reproduction, as well as the daily and long-term work of households to provide necessities such as food, health care, shelter, and clothing, making it the primary means of continuously reproducing labour. Cindi
Katz (2001:711) also explains that social reproduction entails the sharing of knowledge, values, and practices that help to create and construct the social identities of children and young people. Thus, social reproduction plays a role in producing societal members that are capable of functioning as family and community members, as well as workers and citizens (Peterson 2010:273). Benzanson (2006:27) indicates that social reproduction is a dynamic part of the process of capital accumulation because it produces and reproduces the labour that is necessary for the functioning of the capitalist economy. However, in the process of accumulation little investment is actually placed in spaces of social reproduction because of the desire to maximize profit as opposed to living standards. Thus, the conflict between capital accumulation and social reproduction requires mediation and regulation, a function that should be attributed to the role of institutional sites such as the state (Benzanson 2006:27).

Feminist scholars have highlighted the tension and crisis that arose in the domain of social reproduction as a result of neoliberal restructuring (Bakker and Silvey 2008:4-5). Benzanson (2006:26) argued that in capitalist systems and particularly in neoliberal regimes, the survival of families and human development was compromised, while the uncompensated work of social reproduction was separated and rendered invisible. Katz (2001:710) indicated that social reproduction has largely been missing from globalization debates, while the withdrawal of collective provisioning under neoliberalism severely affected children and families in the realms of social welfare, housing, and health care. Moreover, neoliberal restructuring shifted the burden of social reproduction onto families and households who were increasingly expected to compensate for the increasing costs of items like food and housing that accompanied the deregulation and liberalization of
economies. Focusing on the changing nature of social reproduction in Canada, for example, Benzanson (2006:33) demonstrated how the Canadian state came to increasingly rely on the uncompensated work of families during the 1990s even as deteriorating economic conditions brought declines to the earning capacities of women within them. As the need for social services increased, neoliberal policies promoted deregulation, flexible labour, and regressive tax measures that negatively reduced the availability of resources devoted to welfare (Peterson 2010:275). In societies and economies where there was once a well developed welfare state, the effect of state withdrawal had a privatizing effect on social reproduction, as the necessary functions of survival were offloaded to households and women’s unpaid work, meanwhile social wages were eroded and pushed into the informal sector. Additionally, social reproduction was returned to the household, and to women who assumed primary responsibility for unpaid activities such as caring for children, obtaining and preparing meals, and nursing the sick regardless of the way state resources were reallocated (Moser 1993, Bakker 2003).

In both the global North and South, households were severely impacted by the rolling back of state commitments to social reproduction as neoliberal policies eroded the capacity of states to invest in this domain. Trends toward privatization and decreases in state expenditure created sharp distinctions between rich and poor households in terms how the daily work of social reproduction was accomplished and by whom (Katz 2001:710 and 713). The gender division of labour in household spaces and the responsibility for most of the work of social reproduction has historically been considered the primary responsibility of women. During the period of neoliberal restructuring in the
1980s and 1990s, the unpaid work of women continued to lack recognition, a reflection of recognition given to the economic cost of reproductive work (Moser 1993:30). Consequently, domestic burdens were disproportionately placed on women especially when family units experienced a decline in wages or diminished public support. Feminists often referred to this as the “crisis of social reproduction” as women struggled to fill the gap between growing household needs and a decrease in wages and social services (Peterson 2010:275). Furthermore, neoliberal restructuring produced conflicts in the work-life balance of women who were expected to be responsible for social reproduction in the midst of insecure and unsustainable market conditions (Benzanson 2006:35). Neoliberal restructuring increased women’s participation in the labour force\(^2\), but decreased their earning power, a factor that Peterson argues contributed to a “feminization of survival” where women were still expected to sustain the family and household in the face of declining wages (Peterson 2010:277). Neoliberal economic policies necessitated that women’s labour stretch elastically in response to decreasing social support and declining social wages. Within this context, low-income households were also forced to diversify their survival strategies, which ranged from doing without basic goods, relying on food banks, going into debt, bartering, and sharing close quarters with other families or family members (Benzanson 2006:133-134). These strategies highlighted the many ways that households attempted to absorb the negative effects of unstable state-market-household relationships and insufficient welfare. Thus I contend that the privatization of survival and risk should be interrogated as it entailed negative

\(^2\) Lim (2001:203) indicates that the labour force participation rates of women between the ages of 25 to 54 increased from an average of 60 percent in 1980 to 85 percent in the late 1990s within industrialized countries. Nations such as Jamaica saw an increase from 60.5 percent in 1980 to 84.8 percent in 1990 (Lim 2001:220).
implications for human security that only increased impoverishment and reproduced gender inequalities in public and private spheres (Bakker 2003:80-81).

II. Neoliberalism & Parenting

During the 1990s the family unit became a substitute for welfare and public services, meanwhile parents were encouraged to become active consumers and “capacity machines”. Writing about parenting in the United Kingdom, McRobbie (2012) argues that even as the welfare state absolved itself from responsibility for households, it tended to recast women as rational economic actors with the capacity to gain access to the educational opportunities, labour markets, and consumer freedom the liberalization facilitated, if they desired (McRobbie, 2012). This tendency also extended its influence to the realms of parenthood and family structure as these domains were scrutinized and judged based on criteria related to the ideal middle class household. Self-contained families that could manage themselves without state intervention were most desirable, while married couples were perceived as equal partnerships that reproduced middle class, respectable values. Thus, middle class family units were considered to be most effective in contributing to social cohesion and reproducing social and human capital because of their assumed ability to independently develop the market capacities of their children (McRobbie, 2012).

Ong (2006a:9) indicates that discourses of liberal market rationality, that promote individualism and entrepreneurialism generate debates on the norms of citizenship and the value of human life. Critiques of self-management and self-enterprise have various implications for individual citizenship as certain disenfranchised groups get problematized for their underperformance as “second class citizens” in the process of
restructuring (Ong 2005: 698-699). Rights and entitlements entrenched in political norms that were once associated with all citizens are now linked to neoliberal criteria and global market forces that undermine and make certain rights and benefits contingent on individual market performance. Thus, the security and moral worth of citizens and the family unit is dependent upon their autonomous capacities to mitigate and confront globalized insecurities by making calculated investments and choices (Ong 2006b: 499-501). Those who cannot “scale the ladder” or measure up to the norms of self-governance are increasingly marginalized as deviant or as individuals who contribute to global and national insecurity, placing them in a space of endangerment and neglect (Ong 2006b: 502-503). “Less worthy subjects” and low skilled citizens lacking in education and potential become exceptions in spheres of citizenship connected to moralized systems of distributive justice that are displaced and detached from legal citizenship status (Ong 2006a: 16). Jenson and Phillips (2006:113) indicate that who qualifies as a model citizen and what constitutes the ideal family are impacted by volatile changes in economic and political spheres, which consequently affect the division of labour between the state and the market, as well as the public and the private. The relationships that governments once had with families through social programmes were significantly restructured and limited. The state increasingly individualized economic and social responsibilities by withdrawing support from services and programmes that once provided for citizens as states took a “single window” approach to streamlining resources and costs (Jenson and Phillips 1996:119-122).
Examining the emergence of ‘workfare’ policies in Europe during the 1990s, Jamie Peck (2001:3-4) similarly argued that social policies aimed at creating “flexible, self-reliant, and self-disciplining” workers, provided a “regulatory fix” to the emerging crisis of social reproduction that simultaneously emerged during that period (Peck 2001:6). The enforcement of work and workfare differed significantly from earlier welfare state policies that relied upon “passive income support” in the form of income transfers and entitlements insofar as these policies emphasized employment as the criteria for social inclusion (Peck 2001:12-13). Workfare often increased labour market participation as parents (especially mothers) entered into flexible jobs within the part time and service sectors of the market (Peck 2001:22). The emphasis placed on employment was a major aspect of the family unit’s ability to sustain and socially reproduce itself within communities and markets, which can be seen in more contemporary discourses on social cohesion, violence, and family intervention.

Workfare represents a policy intervention that is popular in the global North, and in places where there were once strong welfare state institutions. They are evidence of the punitive ways in which social reproduction has increasingly become the responsibility of individuals and households rather than of society as a whole. Citing the UK Coalition Government’s 2010 campaign for “a new morality to fix broken Britain”, Jensen (2013:62) argued that these programs re-energized the category of “the troubled family” by introducing explicitly punitive measures to manage those considered to be workless, deprived “failed citizen parents” (Jenson 2013:62). In the UK the renewed focus on the

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3 Workfare is an alternative model to traditional social welfare systems that enforces employment as a requirement of welfare benefits. The encouragement of work experience, training, and rehabilitation amongst jobseekers are designed to minimize welfare dependency and maximize labour-market participation (Peck 2001:10-13).
family also revived longstanding, pathologizing discourses that characterized black parenting cultures as particularly violent and authoritarian (Myers et al. 1992; Brody and Flor 1998).

While Husain and Phoenix (2004:17) argued that these claims were based upon unwarranted assumptions rather than concrete evidence, they confirmed for an anxious white British public that the real crisis of social reproduction lay not in the neoliberal policies, but rather in the delinquent behaviours of its racialized poor, and in particular, within “father-absent” families (Paschall et al. 2003). Policy instruments like Parent Orders (POs) – mandatory parenting classes for up to 12 months for parents with children considered to be anti-social and possible legal fines and sanctions for those who failed to comply, represent an approach to dealing with “problem families”, that has tended to single-out and hold accountable, single mothers for problem behaviour in their family (Lucas 2011:189).

III. The Emergence of Parenting Policies in the Global South

Like the shift to workfare in the global North described by Jamie Peck, poor households have also been encouraged in the global South to become more entrepreneurial and self-reliant. The 2013 World Bank Development Report entitled Jobs, for example, emphasizes the importance of employment and access to opportunities for households as a fundamental source of social cohesion, self-respect, social status, and poverty alleviation (World Bank 2013:126 and 131). Recognizing that unemployment and low incomes place a strain on families that can “break economic and social ties, breed mistrust, and damage people’s sense of community and hope for the future” they nevertheless, see solutions to declining levels of social cohesion lying in enhancements to
the levels of education, skills, and employment acquired by parents (World Bank 2013:137-138).

Youth crime and violence is also viewed as an impediment to development that can be correlated to parental involvement and children’s relationships in society (World Bank 2011:25-26). Dysfunctional families and conditions of poverty and abuse in the household are considered as obstacles to social cohesion, which are attributed to limited socioeconomic opportunities that increase the prevalence of children and youth engaging in anti-social behavior (UNDP 2012:51 and 59). Thus, the family unit is a site of intervention and influence that can negatively or positively contribute to violence prevention, risk reduction, and resilience building, as well as the decision-making of young people. For example, donor programmes in the Caribbean region have increasingly begun to target communities at risk of violent outbreaks and criminal behavior through parental education and support programmes that seek to address risk factors such as low education levels and the absence of positive role models in the home (UNDP 2012:59 and 129). There is also a general tendency to emphasize stable home environments and “pro-social” behavior in programmes designed to support families in reducing delinquency, providing transferable job skills, and education opportunities (UNDP 2012:178).

The development of parenting programs and early childhood policies by UNICEF in the 1990s were inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which outlined a universal rights framework for children (UNICEF, 2013). However, I contend that the UNICEF programmes reflected similar anxieties about a growing crisis of social reproduction, insofar as they too identified the family as a key source of the problem of poverty and social discord, rather than the wider economic system.
Concerns and policy developments in the realm of parenting and social reproduction were not limited to the UK as they foreground understandings of interventions that also emerged at the multinational level. In the following section I will explore how ideas about family and parenting intervention became popular with UN agencies such as UNICEF as this institution was and continues to be a part of efforts to implement parenting programmes in developing countries.

IV. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1990) is imbedded within UNICEF’s mission to advance the protection, rights, and basic needs of children. Through the CRC, national governments are strongly encouraged to create a child rights framework for their policies and programmes that includes family protection and support. This approach to intervention parallels that of the UK, which reflects a neoliberal approach to social reproduction and parenting that emphasizes the responsibilities of families and communities, while the state takes on a regulatory role in providing support. This explains why UNICEF places emphasis on parenting programmes designed to train and educate parents on child rights and poverty-related issues as opposed to focusing more on the structural and collective problems that contribute to the vulnerability of children and families living in impoverished conditions within the global South.

The CRC is regarded as the first legally binding international instrument that incorporates the civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights of children. In 1989, world leaders came to the conclusion that children needed a “special convention” as those under 18 needed “special care and protection that adults do not” (UNICEF, 2013).
It is largely unclear which world leaders were the first to advocate for such an effort; however, the convention utilizes a human rights framework that includes the child’s right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse, and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural, and social life (UNICEF, 2013). The principles of the CRC represent “universal” non-negotiable standards and obligations that delineate minimum entitlements and freedoms for children that should be respected by governments irrespective of race, gender, language, religion, wealth, birth status, or ability (UNICEF, 2013). It is a widely accepted convention, as 193 states in the UN General Assembly ratified or acceded it with the exception of the United States and Somalia (UN 2010:1).

The language in the CRC expresses a conception of family that is consistent with how social reproduction is typically accomplished within nuclear family units. For example, Article 18 of the convention highlights that “both parents” should have “common responsibilities” in child upbringing, care, and development as this offers the best environment for the realization of child rights and well being (UNICEF, 1990). With respect to the structural issues impacting spaces of social reproduction, the CRC acknowledges that the resilience of vulnerable children and families is affected by economic shocks and social adversities that determine the resources available to parents, extended family members, and community-based caregivers. Households with few “protective buffers” and little social, educational, and material capital are impacted by reductions in expenditures on health and education services, while high living costs directly increase the chances of exclusion (UNICEF 2010:15). Long-term risks to children are encompassed in the short-term coping strategies adopted by families because
they play a role in lowering the capacities of family members to benefit from and contribute to economic recovery (UNICEF 2010:15). Through these realizations UNICEF seemingly acknowledges how families are impacted by divestment in spaces of social reproduction and economic volatility, especially those with little support from the state and those living in impoverished conditions.

Nevertheless, UNICEF (2013) views responsible parenting as a way to provide a safe physical environment; adequate nutrition and health care; closely monitoring child activities; fostering socio-emotional and cognitive competencies; as well as, providing parental direction and guidance in daily life. Parents are implored to be positive role models by avoiding harsh verbal and physical punishment while providing opportunities for socialization, as well as giving their children chances to make responsible choices.

The importance of ongoing parental care and support through parenting is emphasized as being essential; however, it is indicated that parents often do not have the “skills, knowledge, or resources” to raise children to their full potential (UNICEF, 2012). This implicitly suggests that parenting can be professionalized through teaching and training especially for those who are lacking the skills necessary for responsible parenting. Ultimately, parenting becomes a way to impart knowledge that shapes the practices and behaviours of parents who are expected to be individually responsible both for themselves and their children. Therefore, in order to give families the skills and knowledge to provide care and protection, UNICEF focuses on supporting parenting programmes that are tailored to the needs of children, caregivers, and parents. There is also a gendered aspect to these programmes as training for mothers in particular is
emphasized as a means of understanding children’s development and a way of encouraging fathers to become more active in the lives of their children (UNICEF, 2012).

With respect to service delivery, UNICEF works in collaboration with national governments by training professionals to visit homes and provide guidance to parents and caregivers in group settings where parents are encouraged to share experiences with each other (UNICEF, 2012). UNICEF also relies on partnerships with communities and local organizations to engage in dialogue and reach parents and young children in greater numbers, which is part of an approach that is intended to “empower families and communities” (UNICEF, 2013). However, I contend that relying on communities and local organizations is a feature of pragmatic and neoliberal approaches to empowerment and parenting programmes in light of limited resources and conditions of austerity that exist in countries of the Global South. This gives insight into the reasons why UNICEF indicated within Articles 26 and 27 of the CRC that the role of national governments is to support poor families and parents through material assistance and support programmes in accordance with “national conditions and within their means” in order to promote social security and sufficient standards of living (UN, 1990).

Although detailed information on parenting policy and programmes is limited, in 2007 UNICEF indicated that over 30 governments had specific policies for early childhood development and parenting (UNICEF 2007). Additionally, over 70 countries have developed national committees for early childhood development in order to coordinate the work of ministries, as well as non-government and faith-based organizations in the areas of health, education, and social welfare. UNICEF (2007) also emphasized the importance of “local solutions” as “families, parents, teachers,
community leaders, or concerned citizens” could impact policy formation in the best interest of children (UNICEF, 2007). UNICEF relies on national and community organizations to deliver parenting education courses that are primarily provided by health, education, social workers, and community members (Incorvaia et al. 2010:3).

UNICEF lauded parenting initiatives such as the Better Parenting Programme in Jordan that was designed to educate and support parents of young children specifically in the areas of child rearing, health, and nutrition (Brown 2000:7). UNICEF (2010:9) viewed this programme as an “inspiring model” because it provided creative learning opportunities and utilized cost-effective early childhood care and education services that were tailored and accessible to vulnerable families and communities. However, an evaluation of the Better Parenting Programme in Jordan conducted by Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011:1) questioned the efficacy of the “modest benefits” that were apparent within the small improvements that appeared in the areas of parenting knowledge, the amount of time parents spent playing and reading with their children, and changes to certain discipline practices. This suggests that the societal issues related to child rights were potentially a part of larger issues than just parenting; nevertheless, this programme was commended for maintaining low costs and its relatively successful coordination efforts (Al-Hassan and Lansford 2011:3).

The rise of parenting programmes not only emerged out of countries such as the UK but also got taken up by multinational organizations such as UNICEF employing efforts to implement measures that were oriented toward shaping the behaviours and conduct of parents. The history of parenting programmes within the UK in particular can be traced to its racial anxieties about its immigrant population and a refusal to recognize the
challenges facing families as linked to broader structural forces. This approach continues
to represent institutional racism as the UK largely relied on punitive measures to target
certain bodies that were situated in gendered, classed, and racialized positions in British
society. Thus, one should also be wary of the proliferation of parenting programmes at
the UN level because as presently structured they perpetuate a misplaced focus on
individual behaviours rather than on the causal factors, which reproduces anxieties and
disciplinary mechanisms for governing vulnerable populations.

V. Conclusion

This chapter examines the reasons why neoliberalizing states and multinational
institutions such as UNICEF have turned toward policies and programmes designed to
make parents and families more independent and self-reliant. It questions the gendered
and racialized factors that motivate current approaches to social reproduction and the
desire to locate responsibility in individuals rather than structures. Ultimately, shifting
the responsibility for social reproduction to households serves the interests of indebted
states with limited resources as they support families and encourage them to flexibly
navigate market structures without sacrificing profit or impeding the smooth functioning
of their market economies. However, I also believe that it serves the interests of
international institutions such as the World Bank, as the organization seeks to further
integrate households and national economies into globalized markets without challenging
the structural issues that neoliberal strategies of development have themselves created. In
the following chapter I will examine the genealogy of social reproduction in Jamaica, as
well as the impacts that neoliberalization and structural adjustment policies had on
national economies, women, and children in the Caribbean region since the 1980s.
CHAPTER 2: Genealogies of Social Reproduction in Jamaica

This chapter explores patterns of social reproduction among Jamaican families through a perspective that examines the challenges that poor households have faced during the last 30 years; a period marked by the increasing liberalization and deregulation of the economy, and a reduction in the state provision of collective welfare provisioning. I use the term genealogy to problematize, as did Michel Foucault, the way that the elements of everyday life, as well as the development of people and societies are interpreted as being without history. Foucault’s conception of a genealogy also problematizes the ways that history and its documentation are shaped by positions and relations of power. I utilize the term genealogy to investigate and perhaps deconstruct the way that current parenting policies are a part of a much longer history that is linked to the disciplining and subordination of the Jamaican family. By documenting the history and struggles that Jamaicans have undertaken to sustain familial networks and ties, I aim to highlight the many and contradictory ways that households have negotiated structural barriers and socioeconomic constraints. In this chapter I specifically examine how circulating discourses of family dysfunction and disorganization, continue to obscure the structural nature of obstacles to overcoming poverty that poor Jamaicans face. I also argue that these discourses are rooted in longstanding racial and gender ideologies that devalue the contributions of poor black households to the Jamaican economy and society and that justify behavioural rather than redistributive interventions.
I. Social Reproduction and the Jamaican Family

The Jamaican family is often described as “matrifocal” because of the extent to which family life revolves largely around women and their children, a model that differs significantly from the dominant household formations that are found amongst white and middle class families in Europe and North America (Smith 1996:40-43; Smith 1966:377). Matrifocal families were considered to be inferior family formations because they were not nuclear in form and did not have a male breadwinner. As early as the 1930s, the matrifocality of Jamaican households came under close scrutiny when the British Royal Commission surveyed social and economic conditions within the Caribbean region in the Moyne Report. The year 1938 marked a new phase of social and political development in Jamaica because policy makers for the first time, began to intervene in familial and conjugal relationships in order to address other issues of public interest such as unemployment, poverty, and parental irresponsibility, as the family was believed to be the root of most of Jamaica’s social problems (Clarke 1999:1-2). Understandings of popular family formations among poor, black people in Jamaica relied on perceptions that characterized families as being dysfunctional and disorganized. A perception influenced by the high rates of birth outside of legal marriage that characterized Jamaican families. While the patterns of birth reflected the long history of slavery and the forced separation of families, in 1938 they were viewed as evidence of a cultural predisposition

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4 This is not to be confused with “matriarchal” as black working class family structures remained patriarchal in the sense that men still exercised a certain degree of authoritarian power and discipline in the household (Smith 1996:42).
6 Currently the 2010 Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions conducted by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica indicates that 41.7 percent of Jamaica’s households are female headed with no man resident, 55.3 percent of which have children (cited in Jamaica Gleaner, 2012).
of the poor to be economically unproductive, lacking in motivation, and lacking in the abilities necessary to be politically engaged (Thomas 2010:62).

Thomas Simey (1946), a British social welfare advisor for Jamaica, supported the Moyne Report findings by indicating that the “material and moral impoverishment of the family led to the impoverishment of social life, and of the community as a whole” (cited in Thomas 2010:63). Simey (1946) drew connections between economic status, race, and family type and the ability of the poor to contribute to economic progress. Thus in Simey’s survey of social conditions in Jamaica (Welfare and Planning in the West Indies), when he examined patterns of fostering children he did not view the practice\(^7\) as one that helped to create familial networks, he instead regarded such children as lacking in discipline without a single set of authoritative parents to socialize them for socio-economic success (cited in Morrissey 1998:80). Simey viewed lower class family formations as a threat to development, and assumed that the stable, marital relationships found amongst the Jamaican middle and upper classes made greater contributions to economic development. Furthermore, he believed that a nuclear family unit was more effective for the daily and long-term work of social reproduction, and the disciplining of children because of the presence of a nurturing mother and a patriarchal father (cited in Morrissey 1998:80)

Anthropologists and ethnographers who began to write in the 1950s and 1960s such as R.T Smith (1956, 1957), Edith Clarke (1957,1999), and later, M.G Smith (1966),

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7 This practice is also known as “child shifting” where children move from one residence to another when one or both parents are temporarily or permanently separated from their children for reasons such as death, migration, or economic difficulty. Most children are left in the care of an extended family member, a female relative, or an unrelated guardian (Samms-Vaughn 2006:27-29).
provided accounts of the main features of West Indian family life that revealed their connections to the legacies of plantation society and socioeconomic circumstances. Their observations contextualized the factors that led to matrifocal family forms in Jamaican society by explaining how the social and economic conditions under slavery destabilized black family units (Clarke 1957:337; Smith 1957:357 and 362).

Although these authors acknowledged how material difficulties during the slavery period played a role in the organization of households in Jamaica, their narratives still reproduced colonial discourses on the dysfunction and instability of the black family unit. Furthermore, when authors explained how the social environment and economic conditions in plantation society disrupted family structures, their interpretations reproduced Eurocentric beliefs regarding the superiority of nuclear family forms.

For example, Edith Clarke’s ethnographic study of Jamaican social and family life entitled My Mother Who Fathered Me highlighted how economic conditions played a role in the stability and types of family formations found in three Jamaican communities (cited in Smith 1966:370-371). However, Clarke (1957:337) emphasized the “weakness” of the fatherhood role in family relationships and social reproduction, as households were largely organized around mothers who carried out the daily duties of ensuring household survival and reproducing labour. Her study also indicated that economic conditions amongst lower class households made it “impossible” for men to perform their roles as fathers and husbands, which contributed to the “unstable” features of family life in Jamaica (Clarke 1957:340). Although economic circumstances made it difficult for men to support their households, the instability of matrifocal families in Jamaica can only be partially explained by the absence men and their earnings as a focus on structural issues
and the alternative strategies that men adopted to support their families were seemingly missing from these historical perceptions. The physical absence of men in households was also oversimplified, as contributions to the work of social reproduction were limited to how men could financially provide for their households by being the main breadwinner.

Nevertheless, R.T Smith’s explanations of Jamaican family formations shared similarities to Clarke (1957) insofar as he identified the matrifocality of black family units as a contributing factor to the marginal role of fathers (cited in Smith 1999:xxxiv; Smith 1957:356). Additionally, Smith (1957:360) indicated that specifically lower class males did not have the adequate economic resources or social mobility to support their roles as “husband-fathers”, as economic insecurity undermined their authority and position whether or not they were present in the household.

In his account, M.G Smith (1966:365-366) also found that common law and visiting unions were most common among lower class Jamaicans, especially during adult years as he suggested that they were the most “brittle” and “unstable” unions given the fact that most families were female-headed, while partners were dispersed and vulnerable to “disruptive influences of all sorts”. Thus, he argued that the instabilities of Jamaican family formations proliferated the material difficulties that characterized West Indian socioeconomic development, as matrifocal families were particularly deficient in socializing the young and motivating adults to participate in social and economic life. Smith (1966:372) therefore concluded that the structure of the Jamaican family and the condition of matrifocal families played a determining role in labour productivity, economic aspirations, as well as attitudes toward programmes of individual and
community self-help found in the country. However, issues related to the instability of households were more closely related to the lack of economic opportunities for men that would have allowed them to support their children and households as opposed to the fact that family life revolved around women in Jamaica.

During the post-independence period of the 1960s discourses around the stability of the Jamaican family remained relatively unchanged in the associations that they made between the perceived breakdown of family structures among the working classes and high levels of violence and poverty (Thomas 2009:90) even as attention shifted away from the high incidence of single motherhood to the large number of absent fathers (Barrow 2001:197). Throughout the 1980s, matrifocal families continued to be viewed as unstable and dysfunctional and the strategies that poor households adopted to mitigate the threats to their survival were increasingly subject to scrutiny by political leaders. Yet, these perceptions did not account for the material disadvantages and structural barriers that made it difficult for poor men and women to sustain their households.

In order to problematize such perceptions, I aim to assess how Jamaican families increasingly came under socioeconomic pressure during the structural adjustment period. In the following section I will examine the impacts that structural adjustment programs of the 1980s and 90s and today’s poverty reduction approaches continue to have on women and children in Jamaica and the broader Caribbean region. In doing so, I will contextualize how neoliberal restructuring negatively impacted spaces of social reproduction and further exacerbated societal issues such as poverty, unemployment, and violent crime.
II. Economic Impacts of Structural Adjustment in the Caribbean Region

Within the Caribbean region, the worldwide economic crisis of the 1980s led to a reduction in global competitiveness of the region’s popular products such as sugar, coffee, bananas, and bauxite, which caused the Caribbean to descend into economic recession amidst rising levels of public debt (Antrobus 1989:18). For example, in 1983, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica experienced a 17 percent decline in real Gross Domestic Product, with Jamaica suffering the most at 27.3 percent (Conway 1998:43). Governments throughout the region implemented structural adjustment policies in order to obtain credit and access to loans from the IMF, the World Bank, and USAID funding, meet the terms of debt repayment, and cushion the effects of rising oil prices (Deere et.al 1990:11 and 34). However, neoliberal strategies of development required Caribbean nations such as Jamaica to employ a range of economic measures that significantly decreased government spending on social services, eliminated consumption subsidies, and increased taxes (Deere et.al 1990:40-41). Thus, lower government expenditures in the areas of health, education, and minimum wage sectors had further negative impacts on spaces of social reproduction as families came under increased pressure in the midst of declining collective support (McAffe 1991:6-7).

The assumptions behind the neoliberal development strategies pursued in the Caribbean region during the 1980s and 1990s were that enhanced integration into the world economy would result in long term economic growth and debt repayment, while market mechanisms would efficiently set prices and allocate resources as the private sector was the preferred method of service delivery. The IMF expected that growth from new export sectors based on the Caribbean’s comparative advantage of cheap labour
would generate benefits that “trickled down” to benefit the majority of the region’s population (Deere et.al. 1990:45). However, critics argued that the IMF was blatantly hostile toward the Caribbean region, as their policies were in fact anti-growth and anti-development with the sole purpose of further integrating small fragile economies into the world economy (Deere et.al 1990:41). The impacts of structural adjustment permeated the region, as they were felt right down to the household level. As Josephine Dublin of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) rightfully expressed, “the devastation wrecked upon the Caribbean peoples through [neoliberal] economic policies […] is increasing poverty, especially among women, breaking up families, and deepening the cries and pain of our children” (cited in McAffee 1991:67).

Structural adjustment policies failed to take women into account as they were grounded in a gender ideology that deeply exploited women’s time and labour. Government expenditures were systematically shifted away from social services deemed to be “non-productive” in favour of stimulating export-oriented economic production (Antrobus 1993:13). Women were not only key actors in agricultural food production, manufacturing, and services in the formal and informal sectors of the market; they were also the primary providers of health and education. Nevertheless, they represented the majority of the unemployed and the poor as they suffered from government expenditure cuts made on the consumption side (social services) and the production side (exploitation of cheap and flexible female labour) (Antrobus 1993:14-15).

Poor women especially those with families bore the brunt of economic crisis and the impact of structural adjustment policies in the Caribbean. The “economic crunch” hit women harder than men because of their limited access to resources and employment, as
well as their primary role in ensuring household survival (Deere et al 1990:51). The majority of Caribbean women engaged in the work of social reproduction and production in and out of the household. Thus, the poorer the woman, the less access she had to services such as water, transportation, health services, and schools (Antrobus 1993:14). Shifts in macroeconomic conditions made Caribbean women more vulnerable to chronic poverty due to their triple burden\(^8\) that monopolized their time and stretched their already scarce resources thin (Webster 2006:107). Sharp declines in wages and rising levels of female unemployment and underemployment increased the overall cost of living for women and their families amidst reductions in public spending on services that women were reliant upon (Deere et al. 1990:53). Lower incomes amongst females particularly exacerbated inequality and disadvantaged families with the recognition that 40 percent Caribbean households in the 1990s were headed by women (Antrobus 1993:17).

Neoliberal restructuring garnered tactical responses from women and families who diversified their survival strategies by changing their living and consumption patterns depending on their access to resources and ability to pursue life options. Women joined international migration streams, engaged in informal market activities, and entered the labour force as the preferred employees for precarious jobs in export processing industries (Deere et al. 1990:61). However, jobs within the informal sector paid 60 percent less than those in the formal sector, in addition to having little or no labour protection. Thus, women came to rely on sources and people that extended beyond their immediate families and households, as they increasingly accessed local and transnational networks of support (Deere 1990:69-70).

\(^8\) This term refers to how women simultaneously balance responsibilities related to their domestic, wage labour, and community managing roles that are necessary for reproductive, productive, and consumption activities (Moser 1993: 70 and 95).
Caribbean women responded to macroeconomic crisis and the disproportionate burden of social reproduction by extending their household and child care network in order to support their households. For example, the sharing of a common “yard” was a part of survival strategies during the slavery period and a distinctive feature of survivability of Caribbean women as they combined productive and reproductive roles by sharing child care and domestic duties amongst the inhabitants of the yard (Momsen 1993:8). Reliance on international migration was also a spatial extension of household survival, as women migrated in search of employment opportunities. As a result of migration, remittances from those who found work abroad served as additional household income and support in the form of money and consumer goods such as clothing and food (Deere et. al. 1990:72-78). However, it is still important to highlight that government and international agencies took advantage of women’s traditional responsibility, survival strategies, and support networks by placing downward pressure on flexible spaces of social reproduction while shifting more responsibilities away from the state and onto households, the effects of which were also reflected in the Jamaican context.

III. Neoliberalization and Social Reproduction in Jamaica

When Jamaica began to heavily borrow from IMF in the late 1970’s, neoliberal programmes came with unfair conditions that increased the price of staple goods and decreased government expenditure on social welfare, which intensified poverty and inequality in the nation (Bernal 1984:53). As one of the most highly indebted countries of the world, poverty in Jamaica was largely exacerbated by structural adjustment loans although IMF programmes sought to achieve a balance of payments designed to offset fiscal deficit, encourage foreign direct investment, and integrate Jamaica into the world
capitalist economy (Bernal 1984:54). Liberalization did not result in economic recovery, rather it further increased inequality in Jamaica, especially due to imposed cuts in government spending that significantly decreased social services for the poor (Bernal 1984:76).

The plans that the IMF had for the struggling Jamaican economy were in direct opposition to the plans and policies that the People’s National Party (PNP) and the Michael Manley administration (1972-1976) had for its country. Manley had a democratic socialist vision for Jamaica and sought to construct a mixed economy in which the state would play a leading role, in addition to reducing the openness of the economy. This contrast in economic development strategies ultimately had long-term detrimental impacts on the structure of the Jamaican economy (Bernal 1984:55-62). PNP social programmes were family oriented and increased the standard of living for the poor in the 1970s as they included universal education, literacy classes, youth training, special employment programs, and the implementation of a national minimum wage (Bernal 1984:63). In addition to this, Manley seemingly viewed gender equality as being an element of human resource development as he addressed inequality as a social problem in which the labour movement would play a critical role (Bolles 2002:45-46). However, devaluation, deregulation, and divestment in social programmes immediately increased the cost of living and the prices of basic food items, while family wages significantly decreased amongst men and women (Bernal 1984:76). In the 1980’s even though Jamaica faced a crisis of declining of living standards, social needs were lower on the list of priorities, which subsequently brought negative impacts especially for the nation’s women and children (Bolles 1991:34).
Women in Jamaica played a major role as economic providers and mothers that assumed a great deal of familial responsibility; therefore, their economic contributions had a fundamental bearing on the well-being and quality of life within Jamaican society. However, the poor and working class woman’s ability to fulfill economic obligations to themselves and their families was detrimentally impacted by structural adjustment policies (Bolles 1991:20). Specifically in single parent households, economic crisis made it difficult for family units to survive on a single wage. Limited mobility denied families the opportunity to increase consumption in the spheres housing, health, education, and transportation because they prioritized basic needs due the impacts of shifts in macroeconomic policy and unpredictable sources of support outside the household (Holland 1994:650). Although women in Jamaica were encouraged to enter the labour force, they were greatly disadvantaged as they experienced frequent wage declines, had difficulty gaining employment, and were more vulnerable to job loss both within formal and precarious informal job markets due to the gendered nature of discrimination in the Jamaican labour market (Deere et al 1990:52 and 67). Furthermore, the gender division of labour also remained stratified, as women were mostly concentrated within the service, temporary, and informal sectors of the economy (Holland 1995:482).

A study conducted by Boyd (1988) for UNICEF documented the impacts of declining public expenditures in the Caribbean as it indicated that a dramatic reduction in the food consumption and nutritional status of women and families had occurred during in 1980s (cited in Deere et al 1990:60 and 82). The cost of a basic basket of consumption goods in Jamaica often exceeded the weekly minimum wage of many households, which demonstrated the macroeconomic deterioration that accompanied the microeconomic
decline at the family level (Boyd 1988b:141 and 156). Structural adjustment policies that removed food subsidies and price controls on consumer goods yielded “draconian effects for Jamaican impoverished children” as they disproportionately suffered under the inadequacies of the minimum wage, which manifested itself in high rates of malnutrition (Bolles 1991:26; Antrobus 1989:20). UNICEF (2009:3) indicated that rising food prices in Jamaica dramatically increased levels of poverty among Jamaican households because 41.7 percent of Jamaica’s poor were children.

Social Reproduction and Household Survival Methods

As a result of how structural adjustments policies disadvantaged families by limiting social expenditures, increasing food prices, and levels of poverty, a variety of survival methods emerged to sustain the work of social reproduction in Jamaican households. For example, the transnationalization of labour and household support greatly contributed to the survival of children and families that faced socioeconomic difficulties during the period of neoliberal restructuring. In the 1980s the corrugated cardboard barrel became symbolic of the transnational household arrangements that materialized as Jamaicans parents entered international labour markets in order to support their children through remittances of money and consumer goods such as clothing, toys, and other provisions (Crawford 2003:108). Consequently, the dependents of Jamaican women who were left behind and supported by this strategy were commonly referred to as “barrel children”\(^9\) as this household survival method was a viable option for parents who became increasingly reliant on international migration and family welfare networks to support their households. As a result of migration, remittances greatly contributed to

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the Jamaican economy. As of 2012, remittances made up 13.8 percent of Jamaica’s Gross Domestic Product, which amounts to approximately US$2.04 billion (BOJ 2013:10 and 12).

In response to the macroeconomic volatility experienced during the 1980s and 1990s, other household survival methods emerged as relationships of reciprocity also contributed to the functioning of female-headed family units. Within the relationships that existed in these households, there were expectations for boyfriends and common law partners to help sustain the entire household even though they did not necessarily father children or live in the home. Historically, men and fathers who were not members of their partner’s household participated in “visiting unions”\(^\text{10}\), where they tried to monetarily and emotionally provide for their children and the mothers of their children (Bolles 1991:21). By the 1990s, high rates of male unemployment particularly within urban areas prevented men from fulfilling traditional male support roles. Faced with financial obligations to support children and partners that could not be met, some men severed ties with their partners consequently limiting or ending all contact with their children (Deere et al 1990:71-72; Bolles 1991:21). Observations of this practice contributed to growing concerns and discourse about the perceived delinquency and irresponsibility of absent fathers. Furthermore, discussions of lower class households were centered on scrutinizing the household survival methods of “sub-nuclear” families, as policy makers believed that migration created more separation and disorganization in female-headed households that did not have “functioning fathers” (Barrow 2001:197). However, these discussions did not fully account for the impact of neoliberal economic policies that increasingly played a

\(^{10}\) Visiting unions are defined as relationships in which male or female partners visit each other as opposed to cohabitating (Bolles 1991:21).
role in the so-called crisis of the Jamaican family. Furthermore, it is problematic to view
the migration of parents as the source of neglect and separation because this ignores the
broader economic context in which the transnationalization of households emerged
(Mullings 2009:182). Bolles (1991:35) also indicated that a lack of alternatives in
employment and access to social services and housing amongst other things acted as a
force that pushed men, women, and children “until their backs are against a wall with no
way out”.

Faced with the economic pressures of neoliberal restructuring, single parent and
poor households in the 1980s and 1990s continuously exhausted sources outside of the
state in order to guarantee their survival. Within some marginalized urban communities, a
growing number of parents also came to rely on “dons” (area leaders within inner city
communities marked by political and gang violence) and the “gang welfare” that they
offered. Dons became patriarchs and active agents of social reproduction, as they were
known to give welfare assistance to community members (for their own political benefit)
by providing school fees, lunch money, and employment opportunities (Mullings
2009:179-180). Mullings argues that the emergence of transnational households and gang
welfare during the 1990s provided an important “spatial fix” to the crisis of social
reproduction as they compensated for the loss of investment in the basic elements of
social reproduction (2009:180). Although ‘gang welfare’ represented an alternative social
reproduction strategy it was ultimately at odds with Jamaican state authorities that tried to
restore government legitimacy and social cohesion through repressive and militarized
approaches to controlling high levels of violence and crime (Mullings 2009:185).
IV. Conclusion

There are many studies on the effects of neoliberal structural adjustment programs on women, poverty, and youth, but the unique connections between parenting, social reproduction, and social breakdown is largely understudied in the Caribbean region. However, to a large extent international and Jamaican theoretical debates and critiques on issues related to parenting and the conception of the family unit reflect one another as themes such as self-reliance and responsibility are utilized in neoliberal discourse on social welfare and the efficiency of individualism. In opposition to neoliberal perspectives and restructuring, critics highlighted the drastic impacts that structural adjustment and regressive policies had on the state’s capacity to engage with and provide for its citizens. The implications of changing state relationships with citizens certainly impacted spaces of social reproduction and the efficacy of family units to mitigate and respond to the volatile shifts that occurred within the political economy. In this context, the Caribbean region and more specifically Jamaica were not exceptions to the destabilizing effects of neoliberalism as interactions with institutions such as the IMF significantly affected the capacity of states to socially and economically intervene within their respective societies in order to alleviate social breakdown and provide for households. Neoliberal policies that resulted in the loss of state welfare provision impacted women and children in particular as spaces of social reproduction were put under more strain because of a reliance on the uncompensated work of families. Nevertheless, discourses on the internal divisions between the racialized poor and the rich exemplified a long history of viewing the strategies that people adopt to get around threats to the sustainability of life as evidence their degeneracy and lack of worth. Thus, I
content that the current focus on parenting is part of an ongoing set of neoliberal strategies aimed at encouraging the poor to take greater responsibility for their conduct and that of their families. Further critical analysis will explore whether a focus on parenting can truly solve the root problems of the economic path that Jamaica and other high indebted countries of the Global South are travelling.
CHAPTER 3-Methodology

I. Introduction

In this chapter I will reflect on the mixed method approach that I adopted in order to integrate aspects of feminist methodology and critical policy analysis into my study of the rise of parenting programmes in Jamaica. Incorporating feminist methodology suited my study because of my approach to reflecting on the research process in terms of how experiences shaped my interests and interpretations as a researcher. In the past I knew that personal beliefs, values, and life experiences impacted how I viewed aspects of Jamaican society, but I was always unsure about how to articulate these ideas as it was difficult for me to reconcile my biases with the validity of my research findings. Thus, the self-reflexive nature of feminist methodology is helpful in allowing me to be comfortable with the fact that my research is not value-free as it is situated within certain experiences of race, class, gender, and power relations. A more detailed discussion of this will be in a subsequent section on positionality.

Considering the impacts of neoliberal restructuring, I was inclined to reflect on power relations that exist between international, national, and local spheres and how that might play a role in the disciplining strategies utilized to govern the conduct of marginalized populations and working class families living in inner city communities. The work of Chandra Mohanty (1991) helped me to reflect on the fact that there are nuanced differences in the daily lives and interests of parents in Waltham Park and the work of Patricia Hill Collins (2002) was informative for the purposes of exploring the unique experiences of women in the Caribbean region.
II. Feminist Methodology

Feminist approaches to methodology can be distinguished by their attentiveness to everyday lived experiences and their sensitivity to the inequalities and relations of power that shape the process of researching them. Diane Wolf (1996) emphasizes that power is evident in the research process in three ways; the power between the researcher and the researched in terms of race, class, gender, and nationality; the power to define relationships and the potential to exploit subjects of research; as well as, the power to construct written accounts that shape how research subjects are represented in final texts (cited in Naples 2007:552). Feminist approaches to research therefore seek to create non-hierarchal or non-exploitive relationships based upon consent, collaboration, and continual reflection on the research process (Hill 2003:118). The researcher’s positionality and identity in the field is also an important aspect of how relationships are formed, how the researcher perceives themselves in relation to those they encounter, and the ways that might impact how they are interpreting, being interpreted, and the types of data they access.

My positionality as a researcher reflects an “insider, yet, outsider” perspective by virtue of my Jamaican and Canadian heritage, ability to understand and speak patois, and familiarity with Jamaican cultural norms. Perhaps these reasons predisposed me to an interest in all things Jamaican because my first trip to the island nation at the age of seven marked my first cultural experience outside of Canada. My experiences were juxtaposed to mainstream perceptions of Jamaica being an exotic utopia made for travellers to enjoy the Caribbean sun, sand, and beaches as I witnessed some of the harsh realities that existed alongside the paradise of all-inclusive resorts that Jamaica has become globally
known for. The experiences that I had staying with my grandparents in the western
countryside of Jamaica meant that I temporarily glimpsed what it would be like if I were
a Jamaican child. I did everything from feeding animals, to being chased by the mongrel
dogs in the yard, to bathing and washing outside. As I grew older I continued to frequent
Jamaica and I began to draw connections to what I saw and heard as a child to some of
the pervasive social issues that are pertinent to Jamaica.

Leslie and Storey (2003:119) indicate that researchers who are going home to
conduct their research may face anxieties related to ones “returning role as a researcher,
member of an extended family, absent friend, and newly crowned expert”. Although I
have lived the majority of my life in Canada, I still have a sense of “going home”
whenever I visit Jamaica so I was comforted by the fact that I was not conducting
research in an unfamiliar place but at the same time I felt a level of pressure to prove that
I was an “expert” to participants, and even friends and family that knew I was a master’s
student. In terms of how I presented myself, Leslie and Storey (2003:128) say that “it is
important not to try to be someone you are not”, so being realistic about my status as a
student relieved some pressure because I situated myself in a learning process. The staff
at S-Corner were very helpful in this regard as they intentionally encouraged me to
venture out into the community to get a greater sense of the everyday lives of parents as I
had opportunities to casually speak with parents while they carried out daily tasks in their
yards such as washing clothes, doing hair and nails, and selling various goods. In the
process of building rapport it was also important for me to be diplomatic insofar as I was
mindful of the need to respect the time and living environment of participants. Guest et
al. (2013:87 and 103) emphasize how presentation can affect the types of data that are
collected, the limitations the researcher might encounter, and building rapport. In order to present myself as a “down to earth” student researcher I tried to make efforts to be approachable and dress in simple clothing in order to be as clandestine as possible in terms of my appearance. Having a “tolerance for ambiguity” in the fieldwork process (Leslie and Storey 2003:127) also allowed me to remain flexible as I dealt with a level of uncertainty when some participants were difficult to read in terms of their interest and commitment to the research project.

Being an “insider, yet outsider” is a peculiar, yet common position that many individuals in the Jamaican diaspora find themselves in. Regardless of whether individuals were born in Jamaica and migrated abroad or if individuals were born abroad and maintain strong connections to their nation of ancestry, there is an unspoken perception that people who emigrate from Jamaica become outsiders, and with that comes certain benefits tied to prosperity and influence. “Insiders, yet outsiders” live and exist outside of the daily experiences that local Jamaicans face, yet they are very familiar with the markers of Jamaican identity and cultural production whether it be food, patois, music, or sports. Both positions carry privileges and disadvantages depending on the context as understanding patois was crucial to understanding and observing what I saw and heard in certain settings, but my outsider privilege tended to give me a certain level of safety and access to amenities that were beyond the reach of working class Jamaicans. I also had the option to leave Waltham Park each day as the amount of time I spent in the community was ultimately my choice and in some sense, it was my luxury.

I often found myself “playing both sides”, which demonstrated that the binary implied in “insider/outsider” debates is more perceived than real as these positions are
not consistent or fixed in place, instead they are dynamic and “highly unstable” in time and space (Mullings 1999:340). For example, while I was listening and taking notes on the dialogue between parents towards the end of the focus group, one of the parents noticed that I was being quiet and said: “Amalia ‘fraid fi talk cause she don’t come from Jamaica, or maybe she don’t want fi comment pon certain tings and get fi herself inna trouble”. At this point my silence was interpreted in a way that made me feel like a “disempowered outsider” to the realities of working class parents in Waltham Park as I was reminded that I was Canadian (Mullings 1999:342). Consequently, I found myself trying to divorce aspects of my “outsiderness” by saying that I agreed with many of their frustrations and criticisms. At other times I noticed that parents and others I met were pleased to know I could understand patois, which in some ways brought me closer to being a temporary “insider”. For example, during an interview a father recounted aspects of his childhood and said: “I am di wash belly” to which my response was “me too”. “Wash belly” is a term in patois to say that you are the last child that your mother had. At this point he realized that I understood what this term meant and we shared in laughter because we had something in common, after which he appeared to become more comfortable with me asking him personal questions. These examples demonstrated that my identities and experiences as an outsider, insider, or both were varied in different times and spaces, which affected how I was interpreting and being interpreted.

With respect to reflexivity and power, I attempted to minimize relations of power with my participants by taking an approach that emphasized that I was there to learn from them. Considering my familiarity with the broad issues that existed within inner-city communities in Kingston, initially I found myself longing for the feeling of excitement
and astonishment of hearing unexpected responses from participants because much of what I heard confirmed many thoughts I already had. It was not until the transcription process that I developed a greater appreciation for the everyday experiences of my informants and in retrospect; I believe that in the process of conducting back-to-back interviews, I inadvertently prevented myself from processing the gravity of what I saw and heard.

My efforts to legitimize myself as a relatable “insider” through my life experiences, position as a student, my upbringing in a Jamaican household, my gender, and how I presented myself may have shortened the social distance between the participants and I. The “process of self-representation” was an important aspect of efforts to find shared positional spaces that would allow participants to share information freely (Mullings 1999:340). Similar to the experiences of Mullings (1999:341 and 344) who also conducted interviews in Jamaica, I tried to emphasize the aspects of my outsider identity that would be considered non-threatening. Presenting myself as an eager student who wanted to learn about the realities faced by parents in Waltham Park allowed me to gain entry to spaces and people that I may not have otherwise accessed. The presence of my mother (who was born and raised in Jamaica) during my time in the field tended to emphasize my identity as a “young girl” who was interested in learning more about her “roots”. This allowed me to create a neutral space where participants would not feel intimidated to speak on their experiences; however, my “outsider neutrality” did not necessarily give me full access to all information as I speculate that there were missing pieces of the narratives that I heard about violence (Mullings 1999:344). My familiarity with literatures on inner-city communities in Kingston led me to suspect this as
participants seemed to intentionally avoid specific references to who the prominent gang leader(s) were in Waltham Park when asked about the impacts of community violence, which I suspect was mainly due to concerns for safety and codes of silence that would discourage participants from sharing these details. Thus, it is vital for me recognize that the information I received was partial which will make my arguments and findings more cautious and reflexive (Mullings 1999:349). Additionally, my partnership with the staff at S-Corner who helped me to gain access to participants may have caused me to lose a degree of control and autonomy over the fieldwork process (Mullings 1999:343). I will say however that the staff were supportive of my project as they initially served as the intermediaries between the participants and I. Considering the relatively positive presence that S-Corner maintains in Waltham Park and the deep sense of trust and respect that community members had for them I suspect that some of the parents who were asked to participate in the project did so because of my perceived affiliation with S-Corner and out of respect for the staff. Ultimately, this was to my advantage in terms of recruiting participants as my affiliation served to lessen the potential degree of suspicion or hesitation that I would have encountered if I did not seek the assistance of S-Corner. However, it was then important to notify participants in my letters of information and consent that their relationship and access to services at S-Corner would not be affected or jeopardized if they did not participate or withdrew from the study. I also had to be mindful of the fact that some participants may have told me what I wanted to hear because of my connections to S-Corner.

Doucet and Mauthner (2006:39) indicate that there are “dangers” in the illusion of equality in research relationships, and the ethical dilemmas involved in conducting
research with disadvantaged or marginalized populations. Although significant efforts were made to create non-hierarchal relationships with participants, realistically I was a “foreigner” pursuing graduate studies at a Canadian University, which invoked certain power relations tied to economic resources and education. Moreover, I had the luxury of distancing myself from the realities that existed in the field on a daily basis while there were meanings conferred to characteristics and stereotypes regarding my gender, class, and race that were “elusive and uncontrollable” regardless of how I represented myself (Mullings 1999:344 and 346). In Jamaica, I am considered to be a “brown skin girl”, which instinctively associates me with being middle class, as well as having more socioeconomic mobility and political influence than those in the working class. These markers of class and race relations contribute to existing hierarchies and unequal relations of power in Jamaica as they are a part of a structure and colonial legacy that I, as a lone student researcher could not change. These issues were inevitably present in my attempts to be in close proximity to participants even though I shared structural and cultural similarities, as being an “insider” was not a “straightforward route to knowing”. In my efforts to make the oppression and experiences of working class parents visible, I view this particular form of knowledge production and construction as a process, as opposed to an outcome. This speaks to the notion of “reflexivity in retrospect” suggested by Doucet and Mauthner (2006:41), which views research as an opened ended process that can potentially change as I revisit and reanalyze my data.
III. Data Collection Methods

In-Depth Case Study

I utilized the qualitative case study method in order to explore and understand a particular social phenomenon or human experience within its “real life context” (Guest et al. 2013:14). I chose this method because it allowed me to elicit and document data that were rich and in depth for the purposes of supporting theoretical and practical conclusions that might contribute to new or existing ideas (Mitchell 2009:169; Yin 2003:1) on the unique relationship between parenting, social reproduction, and neoliberal restructuring. By using this method I was able to closely explore how the daily experiences of parenting in Waltham Park were situated within socioeconomic conditions that were connected to the impacts that public debt, limited access to basic services, and collective provisioning had at the household level. I also sought to explore various social structures, relationships, and perceptions of parenting as a social practice, a daily experience, and a method of achieving social development goals. Inner-city communities like Waltham Park are a microcosm of Jamaica’s current social, economic, and political problems, which presented a distinct case that could contribute to the advancement of knowledge on parenting in precarious and marginalized conditions. Although the primary focus of a case study is to have a close understanding of experiences, structures, and causal relationships in a particular setting, Guest et al. (2013:14) indicates that case studies can be useful and applied to larger populations and circumstances as the knowledge gained from case studies can inform or contribute to recommendations for existing practical, theoretical, and policy-oriented discussions. Many of the issues that are faced by parents in Waltham Park are common to the problems that are found in many
inner city communities in West Kingston and other marginalized regions of Jamaica. I selected Waltham Park as a case study for very practical and pragmatic reasons, as I was already familiar with a community based organization that operates there. S-Corner Community Development and Clinic (SCCD) has been delivering services in Waltham Park since 1992 and incorporates parenting programmes into their work. I heard of S-Corner through Jamaican Self-Help (JSH), a Canadian non-government organization based in Peterborough, Ontario that I began volunteering with in 2009. JSH has been supporting S-Corner through technical and financial assistance since 1993; thus, I thought it would be most beneficial to utilize these connections for purposes of my study.

**Selection Process**

The process of selection for research activities used a purposive snow-ball sampling method that allowed me to utilize my connections with S-Corner to gain access to potential participants (Guest et al. 2013:52). Once I arrived in Kingston, the staff at S-Corner were my key informants that assisted me in contacting participants through phone calls, word of mouth, and in-person. This was the safest and most efficient sampling method because staff were in the best positions to advise me on who would be ideal participants, but I did set guidelines for inclusion in the study. Participants had to be residents of Waltham Park, a parent of one or more children, and there were no gender restrictions. In order to abide by ethical guidelines, only parents over the age of 18 were asked to participate. The age range of the 28 participants was from 18 to 67 while there were 5 men and 23 women. Although significant efforts were made to achieve a gender balanced sample, there were a number of obstacles that made it difficult to achieve this as
work schedules, gendered parenting norms, and a potential fear of violence all played a role in the imbalance of my sample.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

The primary method of collecting data in the field was semi structured, in-depth interviews that sought to elicit detailed responses regarding the experience of being a parent and delivering community development services in Waltham Park (Guest et al. 2013:116). I conducted a total of 22 interviews with parents, S-Corner staff and individuals with expertise on parenting intervention and community development. A total of 17 parents were interviewed, 5 of whom did not regularly attend parenting workshops. Three interviews were conducted with the staff at S-Corner, which included the Program Manager, the Community and Youth Specialist/Parenting Programme Facilitator, and a Community Development Worker. I was also able to interview the former Director of Parenting, Student Support, and Citizenship from the Ministry of Education, as well as the Executive Director of Jamaican Self-Help.

The questions for parents were developed thematically according to various life stages and experiences as they moved from being basic and introductory (i.e. age, education level, number of children) to more in depth questions on their childhood, community relationships, household provision, worries, fears, hopes for the future, access to basic services, as well as their opinions on parenting (see Appendix B). The interview guide for non-government and community activists was designed to elicit their perspectives on parenthood, parenting programmes, basic services, and social breakdown in relation to their organizational positions (see Appendix C). The questions for S-Corner staff were designed to delve into the nature of their community development efforts,
perspectives on the social environment of Waltham Park, as well as their opinions on the effectiveness of parenting and other social programmes (see Appendix D).

**Focus Group**

In order to triangulate my data, I conducted one focus group discussion, this activity came after I completed interviews with parents and towards the end of my time in the field. According to Guest et al. (2013:172-173) discussions within group settings can facilitate the sharing of experiences, opinions, and reactions in a variety of situated environments. Group dynamics are an important aspect these discussion as it enables the researcher to observe how people interact with each other (Guest et al. 2013:174). I sought to explore how group interactions would elicit information on the shared and individual opinions of parents on the barriers and obstacles to “good parenting”, issues pertaining to violence, crime, and social justice in relation to the family, as well as their thoughts on past social development interventions in Waltham Park.

Guest et al. (2013:176) suggest that focus groups should have 6-12 people, while it is common practice to “over recruit” participants to account for no-shows on the day of focus group so in order to have 8-10 participants, researchers should recruit up to 12 individuals to ensure that they have enough people. If all extras show up researchers can either run an extra-large group or “pay and dismiss” extra people (Guest et al. 2013:181). It was my intention to have 10 parents participate in the focus group as I anticipated that I would mainly recruit parents that I already interviewed. In order to ensure that enough parents attended, one of the parents that I interviewed was asked to invite 2-3 additional parents. On the day of the focus group, all except one of the parents that I recruited through interviews attended. In addition to this, more than the 2-3 extra parents that I was
expecting came so I ended up with a total of 16 parents that were all mothers ranging from ages 18 to 57. At this point I felt like I was in a fieldwork dilemma as I was faced with the choice of proceeding with a large focus group, or paying and dismissing parents. To make matters more complicated the focus group was scheduled towards the end of my time at S-Corner because I thought this would have been easier to build enough rapport with parents in order to recruit them for another research activity. Thus, I knew I did not have time to conduct another smaller group discussion so to avoid what I thought would have been an awkward situation, I proceeded with an extra-large group.

I posed four questions that focused on the differential impacts that obstacles and barriers to “good parenting” had on men and women, the impacts of community violence on parenting, and their thoughts on organizations in their community that were best placed to help parents (see Appendix E). I was able to receive a variety of responses to these questions, but I also found that parents collectively expressed their frustrations on a number of other issues pertaining to the unfair treatment of vendors in the downtown markets, community violence, migration, as well as their perceptions of politicians and political participation. The focus group allowed me to explore a wide range of common and differing experiences and opinions amongst this particular group of mothers that had such a large age range. However, having a large group meant that I did not get as many in-depth responses as I would have liked to. Guest at al (2013:176) indicates that quieter participants tend to “hide” in larger groups, while those that wait to speak might forget what they had to say or lose interest. This was something I noticed during the group discussion, as some parents were more dominant than others, which made it difficult to
control the discussion because there were a number of times when parents were either speaking over each other or waiting a long time to speak.

Although I was able to conduct a discussion with a relatively homogenous group of mothers, I regret that I missed the opportunity to have another smaller focus group with all fathers. This would have been beneficial in terms of allowing me to elicit gender-balanced opinions on how certain parenting issues, barriers, and obstacles differentially impact men and women. At the time of the focus group I was only able to recruit one father who at the last minute was unable to attend because he unexpectedly received contract work that particular day. Nevertheless, I believe that with more time in the field, I could have potentially been able to recruit four to five fathers for the purposes of a discussion, which will be kept in mind for any future research endeavors.

*Participant Journals and Secondary Data Analysis*

In an effort to collect data on a more personal level, two parents were asked to complete a journal that documented reflections on their experiences of being a parent in a marginalized community. These journals were given out before interviews were conducted so that parents had two full weeks to record in their books. In reviewing literature on journal writing I discovered that it is not a new technique but is underutilized as a component of qualitative research projects (Janesick 1999:506). Journals were mostly used in the context of academic learning as a pedagogical approach to encouraging students to critically reflect on their experiences in and outside of the classroom. Educators became more aware of the potential that journal writing had as a method of self-expression that included an individual’s views on the world (Lund 1985:255-266). Picca, Starks, and Gunderson (2013:82-83) indicate that journal writing
allows for “multiple points of reflexivity”, which promotes deeper thinking about one’s personal life as it provides the opportunity to reflect and recall of experiences and events that offer insights to a research study. Journal writing gives researchers the opportunity and the safe space to connect with individuals in a way that is less intimidating than face-to-face interactions so participants can disclose their feelings and concerns that arise from daily struggles (Picca, Starks and Gunderson 2013: 89-90). Similar to the challenges associated with in-depth interviews, there is a possibility that participants may have written what they thought I wanted to read, as they could have been concerned about social desirability, causing them to document what they perceived to be the “right thing”. Maintaining anonymity in journals can also be a challenge if participants choose to write about others in their community, family, or friends (Picca, Starks and Gunderson 2013:90).

The two participants that completed the journal exercise were mothers aged 26 and 49. The additional criterion for selection was based upon whom I was able to build the most rapport with so when I considered the period of time that I was able to spend with these parents outside of research activities I decided that they would be suitable for this particular project. I was relatively flexible and open with this research activity but I asked participants to reflect on their childhood memories, relationships with family, friends, and other community members, as well as the good or stressful experiences of raising their children. They were also assured that they could choose to treat this as a daily journal or as an activity where they would reflect and write when they had the time. I found these journals to be particularly useful in providing me with in-depth insights on
their lives prior to having children, relationships with immediate and extended family, as well as their thoughts on the traumatic impacts of community violence.

Finally, I explored secondary policy data in order to examine the policies and programmes that have emerged to improve parenting. This analysis was “content-driven” as the themes and topics were emergent from the data (Guest et al. 2013:256-257). Data analysis included Jamaica’s National Parenting Support Policy (2011), as well as information and discourse on social protection programmes from the Jamaican Information Service and other primary news sources: The Jamaica Observer and the Jamaica Gleaner. Some of the limitations that pertain to this study are the relatively small sample size and the limited locations where the data was collected. This study is not aimed at creating findings that are widely replicable, rather this case study will familiarize the wider audience and I with the daily experiences faced by parents in the Waltham Park community. The experiences examined in this community are likely similar to that of Jamaica’s working class population; however, distinct features of the parenthood experience are highlighted. It is also important to note that the confidentiality and anonymity of parents was respected through the provision of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information. In cases where I interviewed participants in their professional capacities they were given the option to disclose the their name and organizational position.

IV. Jamaican Patois and Academic Writing

During the writing process I made efforts to potentially challenge notions tied to the refinement and respectability of the English language and the perceived inferiority of Jamaican patois that reproduces hierarchal relations within academic discourse.
Patois, the language of popular culture in Jamaica is often tied to a “culture of slackness” (Cooper 1995:11), while written patois is used for performance and entertainment but not for academic reflection and introspection (Cooper 1995:90-91). Authors such as Carolyn Cooper (1995) made efforts to challenge the notion that English is the “exclusive voice of scholarship” by completely writing reflections and theoretical discourse in what I would call authentic “patwah”. Although I deeply admire such a valiant effort, I will not take on such an ambitious challenge, but I will make the commitment to at least attempt writing in patois, particularly in the excerpts taken from interviews in order to preserve the authenticity of expression.

I consider patois be a dialect that is constantly evolving as a form of cultural production. With this realization, it is important to note that Jamaicans speak and express themselves in both English and patois; therefore, certain meanings are given to particular English words that may not be the same elsewhere in the world. Emerson et al. (2011:129) indicates “member’s meanings are not pristine objects that are simply out there waiting to be discovered”, rather meanings are “interpretive constructions assembled and conveyed by the ethnographer”. Therefore, it was important not to impose meanings and to be aware of context and other inside meanings by not taking them at “face value” (Emerson 2011:143). Although my insider/outsider status helped me to understand patois, it was still necessary for me seek clarification for words, meanings, and proverbs in patois that I was not familiar with in order to appreciate “local meanings” (Emerson et al 2011:131 and 133) as it is not my intention to “ignore, marginalize, and obscure indigenous understandings” (Emerson et al 2011:134 and 141).
With respect to interpreting data, Collins (2002:4) challenges certain ideas that are imbedded within assumptions on how “intellectuals” are defined as black feminist thought involves the searching for expression amongst women that are not commonly perceived as intellectuals. Black women intellectuals are neither academics, nor are they primarily found in the black middle class; instead, all black women contribute somehow to black feminist thought as critical social theory. Doing intellectual work requires a process of self-conscious struggle regardless of the actual social location where that work occurs (Collins 2002:14-15). Considering these notions, it is my desire to take the participants of this study seriously by regarding them as intellectuals who graciously spoke and reflected on their life experiences, frustrations, and concerns about parenting and what this meant for the Waltham Park community. I have noticed the way that opinions and frustrations voiced by “ghetto people” are dismissed or not taken seriously because they are communicated in patois using verbal and physical expressions that are deemed to be “unrefined” and “vulgar”. Thus, in the coming chapters I will rely extensively on the expressions, voices, and accounts of participants in order analyze and to shed light upon the nuances of parenting experiences and interventions.
CHAPTER 4: Parenting Intervention and Discourse in Jamaica

The emergence of parenting as a site of political concern is aligned with Jamaica’s contemporary socioeconomic circumstances, as the nation is still dealing with the ongoing impacts and aftermath of a structural adjustment period that exacerbated anxieties related to poverty, violence, inequality, and a crisis of social reproduction. The National Parenting Support Policy (2011:18) indicates that “at this point in time the Jamaican family is increasingly vulnerable to pressures of economic insecurity, deprivation, migration, and the cultural changes derived from increasing global interdependence and penetration”. This is especially true for “socially disadvantaged” families with children who consequently exhibit high levels of “educational under-achievement, experience unemployment, develop anti-social behaviours, and become involved in crime, drug-abuse, and irresponsible sexual behavior” (NPSP 2011:18). Thus, a focus on parenting emerged to deal with the imminent structural problems facing many of Jamaica’s poor families. Particularly since the 1990s, Jamaica has been implementing programmes designed to support parents as part of commitments that coincided with the nation’s efforts to align itself with the protocols of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Evidence of Jamaica’s alignment and relationship with UNICEF is currently manifested in early childhood education policies and programmes, as well as the National Parenting Support Policy (2011).

I contend that what appears in Jamaica’s National Parenting Support Policy (2011) shares similarities with international, Northern perspectives on parenting, especially in terms an underlying discourse of personal responsibility and its approach to governing the conduct of parents. I also argue that there is a contradiction in the policies
and programmes currently being implemented by the Jamaican government, insofar as many of the broad economic strategies currently being pursued actually exacerbate the crisis of social reproduction. With respect to parenting support programmes there are two main types, one that is organized by UNICEF to provide funds for national bodies and community groups who seek to participate in parenting efforts and the second is represented in social protection initiatives such as the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) that is administered by the World Bank as a conditional cash transfer programme. I contend that while both focus erroneously on changing parenting behaviours rather than the conditions that create parenting problems, the programme by the World Bank explicitly utilizes a disciplinary approach to supporting parents. Ultimately, neither of these programmes alleviates the crisis of social reproduction faced by the poor households.

I. Jamaica and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Jamaica signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1990) in 1991 after advocacy efforts employed by non-governmental organizations such as the Jamaica Coalition on the Rights of the Child came together to lobby for the ratification of the CRC and monitor its implementation (UNICEF 2009:2). The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) regarded the CRC as a foundation for the establishment of child rights as it pertains to allocating resources, protecting children from abuse and neglect, and developing children to their fullest capacity. Furthermore, specific attention

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11 Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes are a form of social safety that provides cash payments to poor households that meet certain behavioral requirements, which are generally related to children’s health care and education (World Bank, 2011).
was paid to Article 5 of the Convention, which emphasized the notion that parents have the greatest responsibility and role in the raising of children (NPSP 2011:23).

Early efforts put forth by Jamaica to align itself with the principles of the CRC were seen in government actions and legislation such as the establishment of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) and the *Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA)* (2004). The CCPA was intended to align all legislation pertaining to children with the CRC as the act indicated that families and parents were primarily responsible for the care, upbringing, and protection of children, while the state’s role should support the autonomy of the family unit (cited in NPSP 2011:23). The concepts of parenting and child protection were also found in other Jamaican post-independence laws such as the *Education Act* (1965), *the Status of Children Act* (1976), *the National Policy on Children* (1997), *the Early Childhood Act* (2005), as well as the *National Youth Policy* (2003) (NPSP 2011:24-25). These policies shaped how parenting intervention are imbedded within Jamaica’s overall policy framework.

Contextually, there are a number of efforts and programmes that support parents. For example, UNICEF is involved in supporting government institutions and local non-government organizations to develop policies and programmes intended to advance universal child rights; to engage and motivate parents to become more responsible for their child’s development process; and to prevent anti-social and criminal behavior. UNICEF generally takes on a more “hands-off” approach as the organization provides technical assistance and financial resources, which allows local institutions and organizations to coordinate activities amongst themselves; however, these smaller programmes are limited in duration and funding. Conversely, major social safety net
programs designed to support parents are directly linked to cash benefits coming through financial institutions such as the World Bank, an institution that takes on an explicitly interventionist approach. Thus, initiatives such as the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) are intentionally designed to discipline and reward the behaviours of parents. The following Table 1 illustrates a few examples of these parenting programmes, after which I will go into more critical detail regarding the inner-workings of PATH.

Table 1: Parenting Support Programmes in Jamaica

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Types</th>
<th>Major Funding Source</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional/ National Government</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>-National Parenting Support Policy and Commission is under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and responsible for coordinating parenting efforts and activities nationwide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td><strong>-Main objective(s):</strong> to coordinate groups working with parents and strengthen the efforts of the MOE to imbed parenting within its educational framework (Wint-Smith 2002:5). **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-CBP developed national activities to a) raise awareness about child rights and b) engage and motivate parents through events such as Parent’s Week (now Parent’s Month) designed to develop the skills of parents, strengthen home-school relationships, and encourage fathers to become more involved in their children’s lives (Wint-Smith 2002:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-CBP created a model for Parent Support Advisory Teams to allow parents to share experiences and receive parent training through workshops provided by trained individuals from community based organizations, schools, and churches (UNICEF JA, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Initiatives were regarded as being successful insofar as they raised awareness on child rights, educated individuals on parental responsibilities, and improved parenting practices through direct training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>-Local NGO/ Community based</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>- Support for parents provided by local organizations in various forms such as workshops and community activities focused on developing parenting skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-i.e Roving Cargivers Programme of Jamaica (est. 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Administered by the Rural Family Support Organization (RuFamSo)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in parishes such as St. Catherine, Clarendon, and Manchester (Jules 2002:17).

- **Main objective:** to address the needs of poor children from birth to three years of age from communities without daycare or other early childhood development facilities.

- **Background:** The programme initially started as a project for low-income teenage parents, which involved daycare visitation for mothers who attended classes for personal development. This component utilized household materials to create low-cost learning environments, while backyard nurseries were mainly situated in urban areas (Jules 2002:17).

- This programme was a successful model in the Caribbean region, became a part of poverty eradication efforts within inner-city communities, and has since been replicated in St. Lucia, Grenada, and St. Vincent. However, the longevity of its impacts in Jamaica was severely compromised. UNICEF funding for the programme ended in 2005 (UNICEF JA(b), 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Safety Net</th>
<th>World Bank Inter-American Development Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) (est. 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Administered through the Government of Jamaica and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Conditional cash transfer programme: parents receive benefits based on behavioural conditionalities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:


**The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH)**

PATH is a part of Jamaica’s effort to align itself with poverty reduction strategies that became popular with the World Bank in 1999. These strategies were the preferred way to address the social needs described in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). According to the World Bank (2011c), PRSPs delineate a country’s macroeconomic, structural, and social policies and programmes designed to promote growth, reduce poverty, and support external financing needs. PRSPs also represent a framework to enhance poverty reduction efforts and the coordination of development assistance.
between governments and development partners, as they are a precondition to accessing debt relief for highly indebted countries (World Bank, 2011c). This movement towards more socially inclusive and pragmatic programmes was supposed to alleviate the crisis of social reproduction amongst vulnerable households in ways that were aligned with contemporary neoliberal development frameworks, as it mainly utilized resources from bilateral and multilateral debt relief initiatives (Ruckert 2010:822). Ruckert (2010:834) argued that the stringent conditions of cash transfer programmes added new elements to the control and discipline mechanisms that were influenced by neoliberal philosophies. I contend that evidence of these critiques are present in the Jamaican context as PATH utilizes an approach designed to support parents and families through mechanisms that regulate conduct as opposed to addressing the overarching structural barriers that poor families face.

In 2011, the Government of Jamaica secured US$15 million to assist with social safety nets and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) received US$80,000 for PATH. As of May 2011 there were over 371,000 citizens registered in the programme (McIntosh, 2011). With respect to more recent developments, the budgetary allocation for PATH is set to significantly increase for the coming 2014/2015 fiscal year as J$900 million is being allocated to PATH in order to facilitate a 15 percent increase in cash benefits (Braham, 2014; McIntosh, 2014). The following Table 2 illustrates the details of how PATH works in terms of qualifications, targeted beneficiaries, and payments. The conditionalities associated with PATH specifically require regular school attendance and health clinic visits that vary according to the age of beneficiaries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification/Eligibility Process</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Conditionalities</th>
<th>Payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Level of poverty determined through Proxy Means Test</td>
<td>- Children (0-18)</td>
<td><strong>Education Grant:</strong></td>
<td><em>Received every 2 months</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 85% school attendance/month</td>
<td>-0-6 years: J$750/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Applicants provide personal data (i.e. education, age, income, access to basic services).</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Register at a government-funded school</td>
<td>- Boys (per month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information verified through interview and follow-up home visit</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Health Grant:</strong></td>
<td>Gr.1-6: J$825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maintaining Eligibility: report changes (i.e. birth, death, living arrangements, migration of family members, change of schools/health centres).</td>
<td>- Pregnant and lactating women</td>
<td>- Register at a government-funded clinic</td>
<td>Gr.7-9: J$1075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Payments received after beneficiaries comply with conditionalities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- 0-6 mos.: clinic visit every 2 months</td>
<td>Gr.10-13: J$1265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Failure to comply results in suspension of payments.</td>
<td>- Poor adults (18-59)</td>
<td>- 7 mos.+: clinic visit 2x year</td>
<td>- Girls (per month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Base benefit (est. 2010): “non-compliant” beneficiaries receive minimum benefit: J$400/month</td>
<td>- Disabled Persons</td>
<td><strong>Clinic visit 6 weeks after birth and every 2 months thereafter</strong></td>
<td>Gr.1-6: J$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Elderly (60+) without pension</td>
<td><strong>Clinic visits 2x per year (to receive Health Grant)</strong></td>
<td>Gr. 7-9: J$975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gr. 10-13: J$1100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) 2006

Through PATH beneficiaries also gain access to a “Steps-to-Work” programme that focuses on employment opportunities, educational grants for children and youth, as well as micro-business and entrepreneurship grants. This project specifically provides short-term solutions in the form of employment, training, and educational opportunities intended to increase “self-development”, “self-reliance”, and entrepreneurialism in households benefitting from PATH (Jamaica Observer, 2011). This type of language demonstrates aspects of a discourse on neoliberal personal responsibility, which positions intervention in a way that shapes market behaviours as opposed to challenging the
structures in place, that present discriminatory and economic barriers to vulnerable populations that seek jobs in Jamaica’s competitive formal employment sector. Thus, the ultimate goal is to make household members “active economic contributors to society” by giving individual citizens employment and management skills that will eventually allow their families to become “economically self-sufficient” (Angus, 2011). Although this programme provides opportunities for those who are unemployed, I question its ability to address the larger systemic issues contributing to unemployment in Jamaica, as they are oriented towards short term fixes as opposed to deliberate, long term solutions for those living in ongoing conditions of poverty.

**The National Parenting Support Policy (NPSP) and The National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC)**

Thus far, a selection of developments and programmes in the lead up to the implementation of Jamaica’s National Parenting Support Policy (2011) (NPSP) were briefly observed. In this section, I will examine policy discourse and the NPSP in greater detail with respect to how it evolved, its key visions, objectives, goals, concerns, and the groups that it seeks to target. My goal is to investigate the extent to which the NPSP shares similarities with perspectives on parenting that have circulated in the UN and in the UK with specific attention paid to discourses of individual responsibility that regulate the conduct and behaviours of parents. I will also to seek to advance critiques of the efficacy of policy goals and objectives in relation to other political, economic, and social developments and its ability to address parenting issues in Jamaica.

*Policy Discourse*

The current Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Portia Simpson-Miller of the People’s National Party indicated in a Parliamentary debate that the challenges and disorder that
confronts Jamaican society can be alleviated through “good parenting”, as the capacities of the next generation’s health, well-being, development, and motivations are affected by the functioning of the family unit (OPM, 2012). In reference to the need for a national parenting support mechanism, Prime Minister Simpson-Miller indicated “when parents fail in their responsibilities, it makes life difficult for children and places an even greater burden on government and all institutions such as the church and the school” (OPM, 2012). Within this discussion on individual and parental responsibility, the Prime Minister appealed to “delinquent men to become responsible fathers” (OPM, 2012). The Minister of Education, Ronald Thwaites echoed these concerns as he signified that “laws don’t change human behavior automatically; however, new legislation will help to set standards that will influence parents to become more responsible” (Smith-Edwards, 2012). It is here that some of Jamaica’s prominent political leaders emphasized the notion that changing or regulating the conduct of parents through a set of legislative mechanisms could effectively make parents become more responsible while addressing social breakdown and disorder. Furthermore, Senator Falconer indicated that “good parenting is not first about the children, it is about adults and their ability to understand themselves and to manage themselves” (cited in Smith-Edwards, 2012). These statements are highly indicative of the government’s perception that a focus on parenting and self-management will influence positive national development; however, I contend that this approach is centred on a particular set of bodies that tend to be poor and black as opposed to a set of structures that contribute to the public anxieties that political leaders seek to address.

National studies contribute to these perspectives by revealing that high levels of parental stress, the limitations of single parenting and negative parenting practices are
related to the underdevelopment of children and the deterioration of household well-being (Smith-Edwards, 2012). Thus, parenting should be about moving children toward “pro-social activities” while empowering mothers and fathers to mitigate socioeconomic obstacles to good parenting (Jamaica Gleaner, 2008). According to experts, the “melt down in parenting” is attributed to the fact that many Jamaican citizens go straight from childhood to parenting, which is problematic as adolescents are inadequately prepared to manage and provide for the family unit, let alone themselves, which often results in fractured relationships between parents and children in the household (Jamaica Gleaner, 2008).

Although the previous political statements were oriented toward the individual as opposed to the structural, in the opening remarks of the National Parenting Support Policy the former Minister of Education, Andrew Holness recognized that parenting issues could not be divorced from Jamaica’s socioeconomic environment and conditions of poverty that expose families to crime and violence. However, it was also indicated that parenting issues were related to the nature of Jamaica’s family structure and the limited role of fathers (NPSP 2011:4). Maureen Samms-Vaughn, the former Chair of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) echoed these concerns as she stressed that parenting was a “critical component” of efforts to support parents in the fulfillment of their responsibilities that would impact the next generation (NPSP 2011:6).

II. Policy Methodology

The ECC initiated the policy development process with the Ministry of Education in 2006 and in September 2012 the Parliamentary bill for the NPSP and its implementing body, the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) was passed in
both Houses of Parliament (JIS, 2012). The NPSP seeks to promote positive parenting practices at the national and local levels through coordinating resources and expertise, as well as educating parents about their responsibilities under the law. As it evolved into a comprehensive policy, various national and international studies were reviewed while consultations engaged community leaders from local organizations, government agencies, non-government organizations, UNICEF, and international development partners on the issues faced by parents (NPSP 2011:51). Policy makers also considered the broad participation of civil society; the multi-sectorial participation of stakeholders; and the policy’s aim to be comprehensive. In addition to this, governance issues and the underlying root causes that affect an individual’s ability to be a good parent such as gender roles, inequalities, poverty, and social vulnerability were also considered (NPSP 2011:51-52).

*International Development Partners*

Jamaica’s parenting efforts are largely supported by external sources, which mostly include international donors and multinational institutions that operate within neoliberal development frameworks such as UNICEF, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank (NPSP 2011:44). However, UNICEF is the primary institution that played a role in the development of the NPSP and its implementing body, the NPSC while the organization also gave technical and financial assistance in the process of creating parenting materials and a parenting facilitators course (NPSP 2011:44). Under the UNICEF country programme a total of US$13.85 million was allocated to Jamaica for 2012-2016 in the areas of adolescent health and empowerment,
education, and child protection; however, it was largely unclear exactly how much was specifically allocated to parenting support (UNICEF 2011:6).

The World Bank is also involved in supporting the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development, parenting outreach strategies, and the island wide establishment of Parent Places, which are information centres that provide specialized services and workshops for parents. These efforts are funded through a US$15 million loan over five years (NPSP 2011:44). More recently, the National Commercial Bank (NCB) in Jamaica’s private sector gave support to the NPSC through a financial grant of J$5 million over two years to assist the Commission in its work. This sponsorship will be in the form of cash products and services that will last from August 2013 to August 2015 (Braham, 2013).

Policy Vision, Objectives and Goals

The vision, objectives, and goals of NPSP are a part of Jamaica’s recent efforts to incorporate parenting as a solution to social disorder and a component of advancing the rights of children as outlined by UNICEF. Thus, the NPSP delineates the following national vision in its conceptual framework for parenting efforts:

“All parents in Jamaica—whether by virtue of having given birth, adopting or serving as guardians—recognize, accept, and discharge their duty to ensure that the rights of children are always upheld, the best interest of children are promoted and their children are always loved and provided with opportunities and resources to achieve their full potential and ultimate fulfillment within safe, caring, and nurturing environments” (NPSP 2011:15).

This vision represents the ideal of effective parenting, which is imbedded in the aspirations of Jamaica’s 2030 Development Plan that seeks to make the nation “the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business” (NPSP 2011:16). The main objectives of the NPSP are also part of a national project to “define and communicate” a
framework for parenting that will mobilize and coordinate national stakeholders and resources with specific attention given to families living in poverty. Additionally, a national plan of action is intended to focus on the rights of the child by utilizing legal frameworks and mechanisms to enforce laws in support of child protection and increasing the use of effective parenting strategies (NPSP 2011:16-17).

The five major policy goals of the NPSP are largely oriented toward shaping the choices, conduct, and responsibility of parents. Although the language of these goals indicate that they are for “all Jamaicans”, the supporting evidence for each goal tends to focus on a particular set of parents that are single, teenage, poor, and unskilled, making them ideal individuals for intervention because of their perceived lack of knowledge and practices related to “good parenting”. The secondary aspects of the policy’s goals are focused on the state’s role in communicating its institutional expectations on parenting to the Jamaican public (NPSP 2011:12).

The first goal proposes that “all Jamaicans will make wise choices about becoming parents and make parenting a priority” while related policy commitments indicate that Jamaicans should be educated on the responsibilities of effective parenting in order to make “deliberate and informed choices” prior to entering parenthood and when they become parents (NPSP 2011:29). This goal encompasses state commitments that are centred on changing sexual behaviours as the NPSP pledges to provide safe and affordable family planning options to all Jamaicans so that families can make decisions regarding when and how many children to have.

The supporting evidence for these commitments relies on empirical data from National Reproductive Health Surveys to suggest that Jamaican men and women are
having unwanted and unplanned pregnancies, an issue that is most prevalent amongst teenage parents (NPSP 2011:29). Furthermore, the policy contends that the possible cause for this problem is based upon individual choices as “decisions to have sex are detached from decisions to procreate”, while unplanned and unwanted conception potentially contributes to resentment, neglect, and in some cases child abuse (NPSP 2011:29). With respect to the involvement of fathers, the NPSP draws upon research from Chevannes and Brown (1998) to indicate that a lack of planned conception, unemployment, and poverty contribute to the absence of fathers and results in the loss of financial support for children (cited in NPSP 2011:29). Particularly teenage parents are singled out for making untimely choices to have children as they lack the emotional and economic readiness to raise children, which further contributes to low educational outcomes, social exclusion, and economic hardship. In relation to adolescent parenthood, the policy suggested that minimal communication between parents and children about sex and pregnancy causes youth to acquire information from their peers and “off the streets” instead of from adults (NPSP 2011:30). Thus, the importance of raising awareness on parenting responsibilities in high schools is emphasized as a way to decrease the rate of teenage pregnancies and provide sound knowledge on planned and effective parenting (NPSP 2011:29-30). Although it is beneficial to encourage parents to make informed decisions related to childbearing, this policy goal frames low educational outcomes, social exclusion, and economic hardship in terms of individual and sexual choices. As a result, it focuses on changing sexual behaviours as opposed to challenging the socioeconomic structures and barriers within Jamaica’s social environment and economy that disadvantage the same youth who become the targets of parenting intervention.
The second policy goal advocates that “all Jamaican children are loved, nurtured unconditionally, and protected from harm and danger by their parents” (NPSP 2011:31). Similar to the ideas put forth by UNICEF, this goal suggests that responsible parenting and social reproduction should be promoted as an effective partnership between parents that are provided with opportunities to gain skills and knowledge necessary to support their children. In cases where parents fail or are unable to meet their parental and financial responsibilities the state will intervene with “appropriate assistance” and apply sanctions to parent(s) where necessary (NPSP 2011:31). This suggests that the preferred methods of engaging and supporting parents are to provide collective assistance as a last resort and to use disciplining strategies in order to ensure that individual parents are living up to the state expectations. The supporting evidence for this policy goal cited a UNICEF study on Child Poverty and Disparity in Jamaica, which revealed that 89 percent of children were deprived of family life and had limited interactive and learning activities such as reading, playing games, and storytelling in the home (NPSP 2011:31). Once again, these poverty-related issues were centred on the individual characteristics of parents as the NPSP indicated that the age, education level, geographic location, and the economic and consumption status of parents contributed to limited interaction within families. Thus, the NPSC committed itself to efforts such as establishing Parent Places and partnering with the Ministries of Education and Health to ensure that children are being registered and receiving adequate nutrition, early stimulation, and emotional bonding (NPSP 2011:33).

The third policy goal implores parents to “understand and apply positive practices in effective parenting” because it is a learned skill drawn from cultural traditions,
personal experience, and information available in society (NPSP 2011:11 and 33). The policy commitments that accompany this goal include the establishment of a “Parent Charter”, a set of guidelines that communicate state expectations regarding effective parenting such as supporting school readiness and participating in school-related activities. The need to strengthen access to “appropriate and affordable” family, community, and state services aimed at assisting parents, extended family, and communities is also recognized as an important element of supporting positive child rearing practices (NPSP 2011:33).

Supporting evidence for this intervention draws upon the findings of international literature from authors such as Moran et al. (2004) to suggest that early intervention and community-based initiatives are most beneficial for higher risk families (cited in NPSP 2011:34). Local research by Samms-Vaughn (2004), Anderson and Ricketts (2005,2009), and Leo-Rhynie (1993) emphasize the need for efforts to make parents gain a better understanding of the importance of parent-child interactions and early stimulation. Research from these authors also expressed anxieties over the favoured use among Jamaican parents of commands and physical punishment, as opposed to conversation and reason when disciplining their children (NPSP 2011:35 and 37). For example, a study by Samms-Vaughn, Williams and Brown (2005) revealed that 46 percent of parents of six years olds resorted to physical punishment as a method discipline (cited in NPSP 2011:35-36).

The fourth and fifth goals are focused on the role of the Jamaican government as a provider of institutional support aimed at changing behaviours and communicating expectations of effective parenting to the Jamaican public in user-friendly ways. These
efforts are supposed to create a framework for parenting efforts while providing guidelines and mechanisms for parents to notify state authorities of alternative guardianship and care arrangements, particularly in cases of voluntary migration. Furthermore, this framework is intended to foster improved home-school connections through community support teams and school principals specifically when children are exhibiting antisocial behavior and low academic performance. Additionally, the framework seeks to eliminate “systemic biases related to gender, disability, health status, religion, economic status, and geographic area” (NPSP 2011:38).

The supporting evidence for this institutional framework pinpoints inadequate parental knowledge, resources, and skills as the contributing factors to issues such as neglect, unemployment, early introduction to sexual activity, and poverty that can “confound parents’ best intentions” (NPSP 2011:39). The NPSP is particularly anxious that “parents are having too many children and are unprepared to meet the socio-economic consequences” of their parenting responsibility (NPSP 2011:39). Instead of challenging the structural roots of poverty and unemployment, these concerns are centred on criticisms of individuals who migrate to support their families as the NPSP (2011:39) scrutinizes parents for establishing “insufficient” care arrangements and neglecting their duty to notify the state of these changes.

As part of efforts to target gendered spaces of social reproduction, the NPSP (2011:41) indicates that intervention is required to improve the socioeconomic status of women and to provide specific support for mothers in order to advance positive parenting skills. It is here that the policy seemingly acknowledges that the greatest burdens for daily domestic work and child rearing are largely borne on the shoulders of women who
are often single household heads. However, programmes are intended to enable parents to balance their family and work responsibilities as interventions gesture towards encouraging parents (and mainly mothers) to employ flexible strategies instead of attending to the structural barriers that contribute to practices of making alternative care arrangements and emigration. Responses from national consultations during the policy development process attested to the fact that there was a general lack of supportive networks and community based services to empower parents, while the steady migration of parents was largely a coping strategy and a response to socioeconomic conditions as opposed to an intentional practice of abandoning children (NPSP 2011:40).

Nevertheless, the fifth policy goal is focused on communicating state expectations on the personal responsibility and conduct of parents as it seeks to ensure that the principles and implications of effective parenting are communicated to the public in user friendly ways (NPSP 2011:42). Policy commitments include the promotion of meaningful dialogue and partnership building between home, school, civil society, the private sector, and the media to facilitate greater awareness of responsibilities outlined in the Parent Charter, Parents Month activities, and the locations of Parent Places. The closest that this goal comes to acknowledging structural factors is demonstrated in the commitment to promote “education, economic, social protection, and labour market policies”, which support family life and effective parenting practices, while ensuring that safe public spaces are created for play and parent-child interactions (NPSP 2011:42).

III. **The Parent Charter**

The Parent Charter is a unique feature of the NPSP and I have singled it out for critical analysis because I contend that it represents the further institutionalization of
parenting expectations and discipline strategies that are centered on shaping and guiding the individual behaviours of parents so that they become more responsible for themselves and their households. The Charter provides the government with a mechanism to equate deficiency with the extent to which parents fulfill the obligations outlined in its guidelines. Thus, the main purposes of the Charter are intended to: a) educate parents about what the government means by “effective parenting”; b) to communicate institutional expectations of parental responsibilities; and c) to provide a template for parents to “debate and assess” their own performance in childrearing and supporting their child’s development (NPSP 2011:42-43). In doing so, parents are to realize the “consequences” both for themselves and their children when these expectations are “not taken seriously” (NPSP 2011:43). This essentially encourages parents to scrutinize their own deficiencies as opposed to the structural barriers that might contribute to their difficulties in raising and providing for their children. The Charter focuses on individual choices and spaces of social reproduction as it outlines thirteen affirmations that parents are entreated to make. These declarations include planning for parenthood; making parenting a priority; striving to achieve a positive partnership with the mother or father of their children; giving consistent love, affection, praise, and encouragement; providing a safe and nurturing home environment; dealing constructively with child behavior; and, seeking help if needed (NPSP 2011:43). Parents are also charged to be positive role models by maintaining healthy lifestyles; spending quality time with children; encouraging child participation in family decision making, activities, and community life; preparing children to begin formal schooling; and ensuring that they inform their children’s school of changing care arrangements. Ultimately, parents are encouraged to
become “active partners” as they are responsible for supporting opportunities for their children to become productive citizens (NPSP 2011:43).

Targets Groups and Challenges

In order to achieve the vision, objectives, and goals of the NPSP, the NPSC and the Ministry of Education give specific attention to a particular set of parents who experience high stress levels and the greatest number of socioeconomic obstacles in order to provide “equitable support” to vulnerable families (NPSP 2011:48). Although policy interventions are intended for all Jamaicans, the NPSP focuses on “priority target groups” such as teenage parents; single parents; parents of children with disabilities; fathers who are minimally involved in their children’s lives; parents of children in conflict with the law; as well as families living in extreme conditions of poverty (NPSP 2011:48). It is important to note that these groups share similarities with interventions in the UK as poor, marginalized, and female-headed households are targeted.

The NPSP also delineates a number challenges to its implementation that represent both obstacles and opportunities to impact national development and growth. The primary challenges are framed in terms of poverty and individual choices as the NPSP (2011:46) indicates that poverty impacts the resources available to parents, while the high rates of “mistimed or unwanted” pregnancies of mainly teenage mothers present challenges to effective parenting. The NPSP (2011:47) also recognizes that poor parenting practices are often associated with lower class families, while indicating that such perceptions are a challenge to “fulsome parenting programmes” because it is assumed that upper and middle class parents do not require any training. This prevents
some parents from actively seeking help due to the stigmas attached to poor parenting practices (NPSP 2011:47).

The policy also identifies the “matrifocality of child birth” as an issue because fathers are not “sufficiently considered” in the birthing of their children in public health policies (NPSP 2011: 47). In addition to this, there are still instances where fathers are unnamed on birth certificates and do not assume the full economic and social responsibilities for their children (NPSP 2011:47). Matrifocality is largely due to the perception that fathers are absent in the planning, preparation, and birth of their children. Thus, the tendency for the majority of poor households to be headed by single parents is ultimately perceived as a challenge.

The NPSP (2011:47) indicates that the state struggles to address the use of “harsh and inappropriate” methods of discipline that are close to being instances of emotional and physical child abuse because of “significant gaps” in efforts to hold parents accountable under existing laws (NPSP 2011:47). This is indicative of the government’s desire to further strengthen the power of state authorities to discipline parents for employing parenting practices that are considered to be negative. The NPSP (2011:47) also indicates that service delivery lacks affordable accessibility, trained personnel that are prepared to meet the needs of parental support, and more focused parenting education programmes that are consistent in terms of content.

*Critiques of Parenting Intervention and Austerity Measures*

The development process and the implementation of the NPSP is part of a broader effort to make parenting a central policy concern for the Government of Jamaica. As previously examined, the policy includes an extensive number of objectives and goals
aimed at promoting good parenting practices as part of a national development strategy intended to enhance the socioeconomic well-being of families and all those in Jamaican society. Considering the fact that the National Parenting Support Commission has only been in operation since early 2013, critical evaluations of progress might be considered premature at this point in time. However, I believe that the goals and expectations outlined in the NPSP represent a set of societal ideals that are significant in terms of governing the conduct and individual behaviours of parents, as well as efforts to support early childhood development and families. I also contend that it is important to acknowledge and analyze how the socioeconomic realities of Jamaica’s commitment to neoliberal development strategies complicate the realization of policy goals and impact the ability of parents to fulfill the expectations of parenting programmes. Furthermore, the power relations within Jamaica’s funding regime influence and even determine service delivery, as well as the allocation of resources at the national and local levels. These power relations largely speak to the nature of Jamaica’s current relationship with international development partners and financial institutions such as the IMF, as debt servicing, austerity measures, and fulfilling the obligations of aid agreements are at odds with Jamaica’s desire and ability to fulfill obligations to its population.

The expectations and perceptions of “good” and “responsible” parenting must be situated within a context that critically examines the root causes of daily stressors and experiences that severely impact parents. Although the NPSP recognizes that parenting issues cannot be divorced from the prevalence of poverty and socioeconomic conditions it does little to explore or critique the structural obstacles that are largely beyond the control individual parents, but that nevertheless challenge the ability of parents to be
‘responsible’ parents. There is concrete and fairly recent empirical evidence to suggest that structural issues such as unemployment, poverty, and the cost of living greatly contribute to the vulnerability and marginalization of poor households (STATIN, 2014; Wright 2012; UNICEF 2009). For example, Jamaica’s national unemployment rate increased from 14 percent in October 2012 to 15.4 percent in July 2013, while the differentiated rates for men and women were 11.7 percent and 19.9 respectively (STATIN, 2014). For those who are employed, the national minimum wage is currently J$5,600 [US$51] per 40 hour work week, which is relatively small compared to the rising costs of living (Jamaica Observer, 2013). With respect to food prices, regressive tax measures implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MFP) brought increases to the costs of basic food items for most Jamaicans. As of June 1, 2012 a General Consumption Tax (GCT) of 16.5 percent was placed on several items that were removed from the GCT exempt/zero rated list as outlined in the GCT Tax Act (1991), meaning that they now attract the GCT if they are not being sold in outdoor markets. According to the MFP these measures were intended to meet a J$19 billion [US$173 million] revenue target (Wright, 2012). Meanwhile the opposition leader Andrew Holness indicated that it was “unconscionable” for the government to increase revenues by taxing basic food items without putting in an adequate system to cushion the effect on the poor (Wright, 2012).

The efficacy of social safety nets such as PATH are also questionable as Jamaicans have already expressed concerns regarding its pragmatic nature and its ability to adequately

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12 Taxed food items include: all fresh fruits and vegetables; all ground provisions (e.g. yam, dasheen, potatoes, etc.); all legumes (peas, beans, etc.); onions; garlic; all meats (except chicken); and all fish, crustacean or mollusk; flavoured milk, milk based products; condensed milk; corn beef (canned); pickled Mackerel, herring, shad, dried salted fish; bun, crackers (except water crackers); biscuits (salted and unsalted); as well as eggs, all Patties, and rolled oats (TAJ, 2012; MFP, 2012).
meet the needs and numbers of beneficiaries (NPSP 2011:39). To make matters more complex, previous to the implementation of these tax measures the cost of the average food basket\textsuperscript{13} not including meat, fruits, and vegetables had already increased by 15.5 percent during the period of January 2009 to January 2010 due to inflation (Hunter and Reid, 2010). These measures were not limited to basic food items either, as the tax rate for residential electricity increased from 10 percent to the standard rate of 16.5 percent (TAJ, 2012). According to the Consumer Affairs Commission of Jamaica (2011:11) there has been much “public outcry” concerning frequent rate increases, excessive bills, and poor customer service provided by Jamaica’s energy provider, the Jamaica Public Service (JPS) as utility complaints increased by 81 percent. Nevertheless, such tax reforms are part of efforts to comply with a medium-term IMF programme, which requires the government to run a primary surplus that equals 7.5 percent of the GDP\textsuperscript{14} (Jamaica Observer, 2014).

With respect to impoverishment, the World Bank (2014) estimated in 2010 that 17.6 percent of the Jamaican population, or approximately 475,000 persons lived at or below the poverty line.\textsuperscript{15} According to UNICEF (2009:3), marginalized groups such as children and youth are disproportionately affected by economic hardship, high food prices, and unemployment, causing them to experience higher relative rates of poverty (UNICEF 2009:3). Female-headed households are also implicated in the mounting pressures placed on poor families as they too experience higher levels of poverty, which are compounded by the fact that women who are primary caregivers currently have a

\begin{itemize}
  \item The average food basket in Jamaica includes items such as: cooking oil, tinned mackerel, sardines, rice, flour, cornmeal, bread, and sugar (Hunter and Reid 2010).
  \item Jamaica’s current Gross Domestic Product is US$14.76 billion (World Bank, 2014).
  \item Jamaica’s current population is 2.708 million (World Bank, 2014).
\end{itemize}
much higher rate of unemployment that is well above the national and male averages in Jamaica (UNICEF 2009:3).

Neoliberal restructuring has indeed contributed to crisis on multiple fronts within the spheres of social reproduction and violence in particular. Mullings (2009:174) contends that while Jamaican policy makers and lending institutions view crime and violence as development issues with negative social costs, studies rarely link high levels of violence to the economic violence that is created by the neoliberal economic development strategies that financial institutions have continued to support over the past 25 years. The same can be said of the perceived breakdown of parenting and Jamaican families as responses to economic stressors are largely represented in scrutinized survival strategies such as high levels of migration, reliance on remittances, and informal labour activity. Although the nature of the previously examined socioeconomic indicators are not exhaustive, they illustrate evidence of some of the key pressures that are placed on most Jamaican families with respect to unemployment, minimum wage, basic food items, and residential energy costs. Considering this empirical evidence, I argue that working class households carry the heaviest socioeconomic burdens as they are increasingly being held hostage to the actions and measures being implemented by the state, which begs the following question: how much more can Jamaica’s poor, working class families take?

Authors such as Gershoff et al. (2007) drew connections between low incomes, material hardship, levels of parental stress, and its subsequent impacts on child development. Parents experiencing material hardship and poverty are subject to high levels of stress as a result of being unable to make ends meet and being more likely to experience negative life events. Although this study was conducted in the U.S, the
findings are significant to the Jamaican context as it was found that indicators of material hardship such as food insecurity, residential instability, and a lack of medical insurance did not decline until the earnings of families were double poverty threshold incomes (Gershoff et al. 2007:71-72). The study also established connections between parental stress, family income, and the amount of time and money that was invested in children, as well as other aspects of parent behaviour such as harsh discipline and warmth (Gershoff et al. 2007:70-72). Restrictions placed on the ability of parents to provide for their households, spend time with their children, while exuding positive parenting behaviour resulted in fewer “enriching materials and experiences”, which consequently impacted the cognitive skills and social-emotional competence of children (Gershoff et al. 2007:89). Although there are potential benefits to pursuing the implementation of parenting programmes as a form of social protection, the fact that working class parents are “doing more with less” in relation to social reproduction is still a pervasive reality in Jamaican society. However, it should be acknowledged that the actions put forth by the state do not exist in a vacuum as they are highly indicative of the international relations of power that characterize Jamaica’s political and economic relationship with multi-lateral institutions and the terms of debt servicing agreements.

Given Jamaica’s current funding regime the supply of resources to achieve parenting support objectives and goals may be subject to a number of uncertainties and constraints as it is difficult to gauge what the level of donor support will be like in the coming years, which can potentially impact the work of the NPSC. From the perspective of an individual who has encountered the influence of international institutions and donors, Margaret Bolt, a former Director of Parenting, Citizenship, and Student Support
at the Ministry of Education, indicated that international donors are often disconnected or unfamiliar with the realities that are faced by communities in Jamaica. This is particularly apparent in cases where their objectives developed outside of Jamaica clash with priorities and needs at the national and community levels. Ms. Bolt lamented the fact that the IMF specifically takes such an intrusive approach to disciplining and influencing Jamaica’s commitment to economic policies and programmes that do not necessarily attend to the needs of its population. She also reflected on how the initial implementation of neoliberal policies in the 1980s severely decreased social expenditure and derailed programmes that could have further contributed to social cohesion as she stated:

It has impacted us and that’s why it pains my heart now that we [have] gone back again to the IMF, it pains my heart when I see the control that these multinationals have on us, and they have an agenda you know. In order for people to get funding now they twist the need...you forget your goal, you forget what’s important to you and you go in order to get the funding [...] Another thing too is the pressure that it puts on you and I see it again with the IMF. Yes Jamaica is in problems, yes, but then again you are telling us what we need to do and, everybody is flipping over to do what you tell us to do while the country is hurting. All our social programmes, when we took from the IMF in the beginning, all the social programs were cut, all our uniform groups died, scouting and guides, and all of those things that help to form you, all of those things just died in the 80’s.

These types of responses illustrate how Jamaica’s relationships with international organizations affect the state’s ability to be responsive while fulfilling policy goals and objectives as they struggle to meet the requirements of those who provide funding. The NPSP did not appear to engage in the types of critical analysis that would reveal how the influence of external forces could impact the direction and resources available for parenting support. However, it was indicated that the NPSC will develop a “comprehensive and inclusive” plan to address issues related to allocating resources and partnerships with organizations, in addition to creating mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation (NPSP 2011:48). The details of these plans are still forthcoming, as the
Commission has seemingly chosen to focus its efforts on Parents Month activities and the roll out of Parent Places across Jamaica. So far, the NPSC established Parent Places within the six regions of the Ministry of Education, 30 of which were to be in place by November 2013, while another 30 were scheduled to be in operation by the end of the year. Dr. Charles-Freeman, the Executive Director indicated that Parent Places are “one-stop-shops” placed in or near every major community so that parents can obtain information, courses, resources, workshops, and mutual support from other parents. They are also intended to be spaces where social and recreational family activities, counseling, as well as income support and training activities take place (cited in Braham 2013). The additional roles that the NPSC is supposed to fulfill will be to foster coordination between stakeholders and the implementation of parenting programmes island wide, in addition to developing approaches for monitoring and evaluation (NPSP 2011:48). This will be particularly important as Ms. Bolt expressed the need for parenting programmes to become more focused in terms of service delivery while their progress should be consistently evaluated across Jamaica especially considering the levels of external funding that are allocated to parenting efforts as she indicated:

*I think everybody is just trying a ting and I’m not sure if the programmes are focused enough [...] What I find happening is you have one group doing parenting there, every church is doing parenting, every likkle basic school doing parenting, every school doing parenting. What kind of parenting are we doing? If our parenting situation does not change in a year or two or three years it means that we are doing it wrong and right now I don’t see any data collection, I don’t see any feedback, I don’t see the reorganization of what we are doing but I know UNICEF, I know USAID, I know World Bank, I know everybody is putting money into parenting but I still do not see how that parenting program is coming on.*

The NPSC is tasked with standardizing parenting programmes that are happening across Jamaica in various forms and spaces. Therefore, it appears that coordination will be the
major issue that the Commission will have to address considering the fact that this is Jamaica’s “first attempt” at implementing parenting programmes and services on a national scale (NPSP 2011:49). The NPSC has yet to develop specific indicators or benchmarks to evaluate progress where coordination, progress, and meaningful engagement are concerned. However, it was indicated that as the NPSC “learns and grows” and as the nature of parenting and services change, its objectives would be “evaluated and adapted” to strengthen the nation’s response to arising parenting issues (NPSP 2011:49).

With respect to policy considerations, efforts to educate the Jamaican population on child rights and positive parenting practices is a useful initiative that can have progressive benefits, the examples of which will be further explored in the coming chapter on parenting programmes in the community of Waltham Park in Kingston, Jamaica. However, I reiterate that given the nature of Jamaica’s political economy, I question whether a focus on parenting can truly alleviate the existence of social breakdown, which is connected to larger structural issues that contribute to the hardship of working class families and the perceived existence of negative parenting behaviours. With respect to power relations that are imbedded within funding regimes there are very clear contradictions that exist between the efforts of Jamaica’s largest donors and financial institutions. On one hand, donors such as UNICEF are making strides to actively promote and support measures intended to improve the well-being and social protection within a universal human rights framework that focuses on women and children. Meanwhile, financial institutions such as the IMF continue to encourage (and perhaps coerce) Jamaica to implement regressive austerity measures, which have
draconian effects on families that work to erode progress where social development is concerned. I contend that Jamaica has tried to satisfy the requirements of international development partners and financial institutions simultaneously, which has yielded contradictory, stagnated socioeconomic results. This aspect of Jamaica’s neoliberal funding regime further complicates the possibility for the nation to realistically achieve policy goals especially if the root causes of social exclusion and parental stress are not given adequate attention.
CHAPTER 5: The Role of S-Corner Clinic and Community Development in Waltham Park

The objective of this chapter is to examine the role of S-Corner Clinic and Community Development (SCCD), a community based organization (CBO) that operates in Waltham Park, Kingston, Jamaica. More specifically, I want to observe how S-Corner is supporting parents and families through programmes and activities that are designed to help community members survive and mitigate the impacts of socioeconomic crisis.

Considering the precarious nature of S-Corner’s work it is also my goal to illuminate how the organization is coping with limited resources. Based on the testimonies of community development workers at S-Corner, I argue that there is a level of fatigue and frustration that local CBOs face as they tirelessly work to hold together the fragments of what neoliberal strategies of development created within critical spaces of social reproduction.

In the current moment, CBOs increasingly shoulder the burden of providing collective social welfare in light of limited government resources. As a result, local organizations rely on relationships with international and external sources of funding that are characterized by uncertainty. This complicates the efforts of both international non-government organizations such as Jamaican Self-Help (JSH) and S-Corner when they both have to take on pragmatic, short-term approaches to supporting the community by scaling back or streamlining their programmes and activities in response to changing priorities and levels of funding. In the midst of this, the need for their support remains constant, especially for poor families who rely on the collective resources that S-Corner provides as a means of survival.
S-Corner was established in 1992 as a response to the damaging aftermath that Hurricane Gilbert had on the Waltham Park community in 1991. The original focus of the organization was primarily on health, sanitation, and preventative care. Organizations such as Oxfam UK were ongoing supporters of S-Corner for many years. With the financial and technical support of organizations such as JSH and Christian Aid, S-Corner expanded its programmes to include parenting workshops and family planning sessions; community outreach and counseling; remedial literacy and computer training; as well as, elderly support. The community services that S-Corner offers also addressed peace-building needs, as there were high levels of youth crime and community violence. It is important to note that even in times of volatility, S-Corner has remained a well-respected pillar in its surrounding community while staff members have not been the victims of targeted violence.

In this chapter I will rely extensively on the accounts of three out of five full time staff members at S-Corner. Angela Stultz is the Program Manager and Valin (Barry) Sinclair is a community development worker who has done everything from maintenance and cooking, to coordinating S-Corner’s elderly support programme, both were at S-Corner since 1992. Claudette Wilmot joined S-Corner in 2000 and serves as a Community Youth Specialist and the Parenting Programme Facilitator. These staff members graciously shared accounts of their opinions and experiences of working in Waltham Park over the past 22 years. I was able to conduct interviews with them in the community during the month of June 2013 and I also elicited the participation of Marisa Kaczmarczyk, the Executive Director of JSH in order to gain her perspectives on the organization’s partnership with S-Corner. I believe that the testimonies of these
participants will be sufficient in illuminating the nature of community development and parenting programmes in Waltham Park as their perceptions are largely shaped by the long-term relationships that they developed with parents and community members through more than two decades of commitment to community based efforts.

I. The Socioeconomic Environment

In order to contextualize the work of S-Corner, I will first use the accounts of staff members to describe the socioeconomic environment that exists in Waltham Park and how S-Corner seeks to achieve transformative community development in a geographical space that is labeled and stigmatized as a “garrison” or “inner-city” community. Inner-city communities are located in larger Jamaican cities such as Montego Bay and Kingston. Waltham Park is located in the capital city of Kingston, which is situated in the South Eastern region of Jamaica (see Figure 1).

![Map of Jamaica](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jamaica_Regions_map.png)

*Figure 1: Map of Jamaica*
*Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jamaica_Regions_map.png*
Urban spaces like Waltham Park (the area above Spanish Town Road. and below Waltham Park Road) (see Figure 2) are mostly located in the South Western area that is also known as Downtown/West Kingston. These communities mostly contain urban poor and working class populations and are areas where certain political parties and their supporters have sustained control. Figueroa and Sives (2002:83 and 85) indicate that garrisons are “political strongholds” where any type of social, economic, or political development must be sanctioned by the dominant political actor or “don”, causing the activities of its citizens to be under tight control. The physical locations of garrisons developed as a result of government housing developments that were constructed by the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People’s National Party (PNP) throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s in an attempt to garner political support. The building of housing units sparked the migration of impoverished citizens to densely populated regions in the

Figure 2: Map of Kingston, Jamaica
Source: http://www.openstreetmap.org/search?query=Kingston%2C%20Jamaica#map=13/18.0060/-76.7814
vicinity of Jamaica’s urban capital city (Gray 2003:13).

Figueroa and Sives (2002:98) went as far as describing garrison communities as “totalitarian social spaces” with elements of extraterritoriality and high levels of violence, making them “states within a state”. Since the 1980s, the Jamaican state was perceived to have little or no power and authority in these areas with the exception of police and periodical military raids. Thus, dons who are typically supported by international organized criminal networks that give them access to weapons, illegal substances, and economic resources emerged as strong leaders in these areas. As a result, dons are able to distribute patronage in the form of school fees and basic necessities while controlling criminal organizations within their community (Johnston 2005:30). Dons have tended to clash with police who employ aggressive and extrajudicial tactics to control violence and criminal activity in garrison communities. This affects community relationships between politicians, police, and community members, as there is a lack of trust and accountability. Stigmas and stereotypes attached to living in a garrison disadvantage community members who are not involved in criminal activity as they are often marginalized and excluded from opportunities and even employment because of their address (Moncrieffe 2008:47).

A community survey conducted in 1996 in partnership with S-Corner and the National Housing Trust indicated that the population was approximately 4,464, while unemployment stood at 40 percent, which was deemed to be “unacceptably high” (Miller 1996:10). Additionally, 75 percent of employed individuals were earning less than J$3000 (US$30) per week, which coincided with the fact that many of them were concentrated into low income occupations such as factory workers, household helpers,
vendors, and gardeners (Miller 1996:11). The household heads in the community were relatively young as 67 percent of them were under 40 years of age, while 57 percent were single, 41 percent of which were female (Miller 1996:3).

Within the current social environment in Waltham Park incidents of violence between community members erodes social cohesion and contributes to a cycle of tension and calm that is a part of the daily realities faced by staff at S-Corner. Barry described Waltham Park to be a social environment where cycles of violence created “good” and “bad” times as he stated:

Well, it’s a good environment, yeah. We have some good times and we have some bad times but we use the good times and cover the bad times. When it's bad it's the time when we have the gang wars, roads fighting against roads, lanes fighting against lanes, so that’s the bad time.

Additionally, high rates of unemployment continue to be a main feature of Waltham Park as Barry expressed concerns regarding the lack of employment opportunities for youth in the community who find it difficult to obtain jobs after they graduate from high school. Furthermore, the geographical location of Waltham Park is such that it is distant and perhaps disconnected from other neighbourhoods or communities in Northern areas known as “Uptown” and New Kingston (see Figure 2), which are home to most of Kingston’s upper and middle class populations. Angela Stultz believes that this contributes to the challenges faced by S-Corner when trying to advance positive development efforts as community members have minimal interactions and limited mobility outside of their area. Therefore, the seclusion of Waltham Park means that community members are a part of “sub culture” that encompasses its own norms and behaviours. As a result, working class families have little exposure to the behaviours and
standards of other classes that are closely associated with respectability in Jamaica. Ms. Stultz emphasized that this was a challenge to community development as she indicated:

*The lack of exposure, the sub-culture that is attached to the inner city challenges development and challenges people from moving forward [...] S-corner is an inner-city community that the adjoining community is an inner city and if you look at the stretch coming down Waltham, Three Miles, Denham Town, Trench town, Tivoli, its all ghettos so they have no exposure to other classes, to copy or mimic anything that is good and that is the challenge of inner-city development.*

In addition to cycles of violence, high unemployment, and geographical location, Ms. Wilmot indicated that the political history associated with communities like Waltham Park is also a marker of its socioeconomic environment because homogenous voting for the People’s National Party still takes place. With respect to the efforts of S-Corner, Ms Wilmot delineated the overall mission that the organization strived to achieve in Waltham Park, which mainly focused upon empowering and responding to the needs of community members as she stated:

*Our goal is to empower the residents to work with us to make their community one of which they can be proud, that’s the broad aim. Our programmes are actually driven by community needs, which are expressed to us through different forums. For example maybe through community development council or youth might just walk in off the streets where we are having a summer programme like a parenting workshop and needs are expressed there.*

As a small organization, S-Corner’s programmes are designed to address the emergent needs of community members and families that are coping with impacts of crisis in spaces of social reproduction and economic spheres. Ms. Wilmot described some of the key ways that S-Corner has tried to address socioeconomic issues in Waltham Park, which were apparent in their efforts to alleviate problems related to health, sanitation, environmental hazards, poverty, and education. These efforts were collectively part of the organization’s preventative and holistic approach to community development.
and the advancement of social cohesion. Beginning in 1992 S-Corner responded to health and sanitation issues by implementing a program that installed 109 pit latrines and bathrooms and 103 water pipes throughout the community in yards that had large families. Ms. Wilmot also signified that the clinic was instrumental in further advancing sexual and reproductive health by encouraging the use of protection, contraceptives, safe sexual practices, immunization, and the detection of nutritional deficiencies amongst children. As a result of these efforts, Waltham Park has seen a reduction in sexually transmitted diseases, nutritional diseases such as malnutrition and scabies amongst children, as well as an overall decrease in the amount of environmental hazards that once existed in the community. Unfortunately, donor support for the clinic has declined over the past seven years to the point that it was forced to close in 2013. This was much to the frustration and disappointment of staff and community members, as the clinic was a central source of collective support for Waltham Park.

With respect to education programmes, S-Corner made efforts to advance the academic outcomes of community members and families through remedial education for those who were marginalized in Jamaica’s education system. This programme also faced difficulties because S-Corner’s access to financial resources impacted the consistency and longevity of these activities, but they did provide viable alternatives to those seeking “mainstream” education and employment opportunities. Ms. Wilmot reflected on the progress of their community education programme that assisted individuals who were at various reading levels to access other learning opportunities that helped them to get away from informal employment and having to “hustle” as she stated:
When the S-Corner community school was open it gave people who have dropped out of school an opportunity to get back into mainstream. It offered remedial education to people who cannot read. At any level you are at we’ll take you with the intent that we are trying to raise you at least one or two grade levels beyond where you entered. So we have had people who have come in to learn to read people who have come in and they had dropped out and they just need help to go back and do Math or English subjects so they can get their CXC to do training programs and colleges [...] You know it has helped people and families to get back, to get away from gangs and get back into mainstream and away from what you would call the alternative employment because when you have poverty people will do what they have to do to hustle.

S-Corner’s current focus is now streamlined to include a Summer education camp and a homework assistance program for children aged eight to twelve who receive extra and remedial classroom assistance. Although these activities are geared toward a specific age group, S-Corner is overwhelmed with the high demand for such assistance in the community, as there are a number of high school students who are over the age of twelve who seek tutoring and extra help. S-Corner utilizes a sports programme that is supported by external organizations such as *Fields of Growth*\(^{16}\) to introduce sports as tool of violence prevention and attracting unattached youth aged 14-20 to other information technology programmes used to teach literacy and numeracy skills.

The activities highlighted in this section are certainly not exhaustive; however, they demonstrate how S-Corner tries to address the needs of community members who are coping within a socioeconomic environment that is characterized by structural issues associated with health risks, poverty, high rates of unemployment, limited access to opportunities, and violence. In the following section, I will further explore the concerns that parenting programmes emerged to address.

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\(^{16}\) *Fields of Growth* is an international non-profit organization that uses the game of lacrosse to create positive social impacts while promoting global leadership and development. It was founded in 2009 and has lacrosse programmes in Jamaica and Uganda (FOG, 2014).
II. S-Corner’s Parenting Programmes

S-Corner’s parenting programme came to the forefront of the organization’s work during the same time that UNICEF further increased its commitments to assist the Jamaican government in the advancement of child rights and the well being of families. Particularly within the last ten years parenting programmes were imbedded into the efforts of S-Corner to support parents and families. Some aspects of S-Corner’s concerns were motivated by similar anxious discourses around pathologized black families, which were apparent in the UK context and certainly in the concerns of Jamaica’s National Parenting Support Policy (2011) that included worries about educational outcomes, child development, teenage pregnancy, discipline practices, and violence.

Angela Stultz indicated that the emergence of parenting programmes was originally concerned with the educational outcomes of children in Waltham Park as connections were drawn between parental involvement and the academic achievement of children at the primary level. With respect to the challenges and barriers facing “good” parenting, Ms. Stultz indicated that the limited educational skills of parents and their lack of exposure to middle class parenting ideals caused them to rely on discipline practices that were associated with authoritarian parenting styles marked by physical punishment. These concerns were similar to the anxieties expressed in the UK and in Jamaican policy discourse around parenting issues as Ms. Stultz indicated:

*The level of literacy and numeracy skills that parents have has been a barrier to how they parent their children. One, two is the exposure to other cultures and other classes, to copy some of the things that are good practices and yeah their whole literacy level and the lack of exposure have been barriers. So they adhere to what they believe is traditional parenting practices and use it to really hold on the negatives of some of those traditions. Some of the negative would be how they discipline. So they enforce punishment in the physical beating without communication to the child as to why am I even spanking you.*
Similar to national policy concerns regarding early pregnancy and sexual activity, Ms. Wilmot also expressed her concern regarding the rates of teenage pregnancy in Waltham Park. Ms. Wilmot referred to this problem as the “dolly baby syndrome” – a perceived tendency for young girls to have children because of peer pressure and the novelty of having a child without being fully aware of the social and economic responsibilities that come with being a parent as she stated:

*I am kind of surprised though at the amount of teenage mothers because there was a time where the figure was going down and I have heard about the “dolly baby syndrome”. I don’t now who coined the phrase but I mean a lot of girls were saying that their friends had encouraged them to get pregnant it wasn’t like a mistake, they wanted to get pregnant, even though they were not thinking of the consequences of the responsibility and those things it was like having your own doll.*

Additionally, pervasive constructions of masculinity and femininity in Jamaican society were also cited as challenges to the parenting programmes because this contributed to the number of parents that were having children in order to affirm their heterosexuality and maturity. Ms. Wilmot indicated that men and women did not want to be labeled or suspected as individuals who were either “gay” or unable to have children as she stated:

*There is the whole thing with the men who want to have babies so they are not seen as gelding or off the gelding truck that is like a male animal that can’t impregnate so, females call them gelding and no one wants to be a gelding. No man wants to get the label of ok he might be gay so you want to have a baby to show that you are a man. The girl wants to have a baby to say hey I am a mother and so we now have to try to confront those when we see those things.*

S-Corner also shared anxieties concerning the impacts of violence on parents and how it eroded social cohesion amongst community members. However, efforts to address these impacts were not perceived as ways to pathologize poor families, rather Ms. Wilmot indicated that S-Corner made efforts to help parents cope with the mental strain and unresolved grief stemming from traumatic experiences as she indicated:
Community violence, interpersonal relationships, how people deal with conflict is pretty challenging you can be sitting here and next thing you see people and families are chasing each other with stones and sticks and things and a next time they are all friendly. So as I say how they deal with conflict and then there is a lot of stress you know people are in need of mental health counseling and so on and when we brought in the mental health department into the community we found that a lot of people were very thankful for that, there is a lot of grief. S-corner has done a lot of grief counseling just to help them because so much has happened over the years with violence.

With respect to interventionist approaches, I contend that parenting programmes in nations such as the UK were explicitly punitive as they were mobilized through discourses that pathologized “troubled” and minority families, as well as female-headed households. However, local organizations like S-Corner seem to view parenting intervention in a different light as they see their programmes as a way of helping parents to survive and cope, as opposed to explicitly disciplining their behaviours and choices. Ms. Wilmot did not appear to perceive parenting intervention as a punitive approach to making parents individually responsible as she indicated that S-Corner’s programmes were designed using a “life cycle” approach that would to match the needs of parents in various stages of life. Ms. Wilmot believed that it was necessary to address the needs of parents from the time they become pregnant to the time they are grandparents as she stated:

At each level you know we give the appropriate assistance because we are looking at a life cycle. We are looking at when you reach old age what grandparents can do because grandparents are a part of parenting. When we look again at the community and we try to match services that are available for each stage we see that we used to be able to cover from the mother is pregnant up until 3 years old with the clinic and welfare and those things and we interject some parenting programmes when they come for child welfare things, we would go on and give them some talks on different topics.

Ms. Wilmot further indicated that parenting programmes also included income generating activities designed to improve the socioeconomic well being of families by helping
parents and youth to move away from informal and illegal activities that were potentially
dangerous to themselves and the community as she stated:

In terms of parenting, livelihood is also a part of it too you know because we seek funding
to engage the youth in livelihood projects. Just recently we got a donation of clothes from
abroad and we were able to, well we gave some away to people that needed clothes, but
we also gave a stock to one young man so he could sell it and that would help to give him
some kind of business to put him away from the gangs that he was in by just not having
anything to do.

S-Corner’s parenting programmes were also centered as a means of bringing the
community together through partnerships with other local organizations such as Sistren
Theatre and Children First to engage in what Ms. Wilmot called “edutainment”, an
activity that utilizes entertaining methods such as a stage plays and drama presentations
that are designed to promote messages on gender equality and positive parenting
practices. Community expeditions held in partnership with churches were also used as
sites where parents could receive mental health counseling. In the following section I will
explore some of the benefits of S-Corner’s parenting programmes as staff members
described the progress that they have seen in both parents and the community since the
programme began.

III. Progress and Parenting Programmes

The staff at S-Corner were specifically asked to share some of the changes that
they saw in parents and the Waltham Park community since the workshops started and
whether a focus on parenting could alleviate or decrease the prevalence of social
breakdown. The majority of the noticeable benefits were behavioural rather than
structural in nature (i.e self esteem, confidence building, improved parent-child
relationships), which fits within the broader objectives of parenting interventions in
Jamaica that are oriented toward shaping the behaviours and choices of parents. For
example Barry indicated that parents “manage themselves” and treat their children differently as a result of attending parenting workshops, while he believed this had a positive impact on the broader community. Furthermore, Ms. Wilmot referred to parenting intervention as a “shaping process” that was intent on changing parental behaviours. However, she measured progress in terms of the interest that parents had in participating and sharing the information they obtained in parenting programmes. Benefits were also framed in terms of the workshop’s ability to help parents to cope with stress as Ms. Wilmot indicated:

*Well you know they learn it doesn’t mean that the behavior change is going to be bam! and all of a sudden. It’s a shaping process [...] They come back and say that they shared information that they have learned with people at their homes, they want brochures, they want stuff. They turn up for parenting workshops and they participate so I know attitudes are changing we can see that.*

With respect to educational outcomes, S-Corner saw how parenting workshops increased parental involvement in the academic lives of children, which yielded positive results in terms of achievement at the primary level. The progress and benefits of the programme were also framed in terms of its ability to target spaces of gendered social reproduction; however, it appeared that S-Corner took this approach for reasons that differed from that of the UK and UNICEF. Programmes were not necessarily aimed at regulating the conduct and unpaid work of mothers as Angela communicated that S-Corner also sought to encourage gender equity in households by using confidence building techniques that targeted men and fathers. Ms. Stultz hoped that these efforts would challenge deeply imbedded gender norms that existed in Jamaican society as she indicated:

*The parenting programmes look also at confidence building, self-confidence. Especially with males, with gender, my purpose, my mission, who am I, fatherhood, and gender equality in the home. The responsibilities of boys vs. girls, to break down those traditions, to say that boys can wash dishes as well as girls and that has been hard. I know those*
things take generations to change because it is almost embedded to have different roles for boys and different roles for girls but we have been trying to change the gender balance in the home and gender responsibilities.

Ms. Wilmot also related the progress of S-Corner’s parenting programme to how it contributed to the success of broader community efforts such as violence prevention, alleviating poverty amongst families, and improving the health outcomes of community members. More specifically, she believed that building capacity, changing behaviours, and attending to at least some of the structural issues faced by families were effective methods of helping households to “break the cycle of poverty”. In the following section I will examine how S-Corner and its community development partner, Jamaican Self-Help are employing efforts to cope with the challenges of changing priorities and levels of funding and how this presents obstacles to the longevity of community and parenting programmes.

IV. Coping with Challenges to Community Development and Parenting Programmes

There are various challenges to implementing, sustaining, and expanding community development programmes in Waltham Park, as I asked the staff at S-Corner to share their concerns regarding the obstacles and constraints that exist in this domain. Their responses mainly highlighted feelings of uncertainty and the impacts of declining levels of funding coming from non-government partners such as Jamaican Self Help and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), an entity that filters resources into community based projects using support from the Government of Jamaica, the World Bank, and other external donors (JIS, 2013). With respect to the role of JSH, Marisa Kaczmarczyk shared her thoughts and concerns about the changes and process of
restructuring that the organization went through as a result of losing support from the former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

*The Role of Jamaican Self Help (JSH)*

S-Corner has been an official partner of JSH for the last twenty years as this partnership was initiated through a personal connection, which was how the majority JSH’s partners came to be. At the time that the partnership began, Angela Stultz was engaged in community development work in Waltham Park through the clinic. Marisa indicated that JSH provides financial and technical support to S-Corner in addition to being a source of moral support for staff members especially in times when they express frustrations related to the difficulty of their work in Waltham Park.

Since 1980, JSH was supported by CIDA through matching funds; however, in 2012 the partnership and programme was not renewed. The reasons for this change were seemingly related to larger bureaucratic changes and amendments to the request for proposal process, as well as the Government of Canada’s shifting international development priorities in the Caribbean region. Marisa explained that these changes created immediate and drastic impacts for JSH as their budget for partners in Jamaica was reduced in half. As a result, Marisa indicated that the organization underwent major restructuring as they were forced to downsize the number of partners and programmes in the field as she stated:

*We had seven partners for the last 10 or 12 years and we have reduced it to 3 this year. We did reduce it to 5 last year and now this year we have reduced it to 3 partners. So the impact is a reduction in the reach of our programs, we are not able to reach as many communities or as many partners."

The loss of Canadian government support for JSH also means that partners receive less direct assistance because the priorities of the organization are now on fundraising and
searching for new donors. Consequently, the support given to S-Corner is more uncertain as JSH currently does not have the desired capacity to provide the same time and resources for projects that used to be funded over the long-term. In addition to this, a reduced budget means that JSH has taken on a more distant role in relation to their presence in the field as Marisa indicated:

_We have also reduced it to one-year projects. Short term projects, we have not able to fund over the longer term, say three or five years because we are not sure about our funding situation. We have kind of pulled everything in for now as we sort out our transition then hopefully we will be able to build back out again [...] We normally would have done two monitoring trips each year so that we keep up our personal relationships and we are cutting back one of those as well. So our relationship in some ways it’s a little more distant with the reduction in funding so we don’t have as many resources to do that personal approach._

Changing priorities and objectives in neoliberal funding regimes have impacted international non-government organizations beyond JSH. Although S-Corner is still a JSH partner, the organization’s overall reliance on external sources of funding complicates their ability to sustain their community development activities primarily because of uncertain resources that constrain the consistency and longevity of their programmes. Consequently, JSH’s restructuring has created more obstacles for S-Corner as Marisa indicated that both JSH and S-Corner had to review and streamline their activities because of limited funding and uncertainty. Marisa felt that these realities presented the opportunity for both organizations to honestly share their mutual frustrations because they were both dealing with similar financial circumstances as she stated:

_In some ways its brought us closer together because you know we have been able to talk honestly about what its like to not have the money, so we have had some honest exchanges. On the other hand I’m not sure how they feel, you know we have always been a reliable, committed support and now we are saying we can’t be quite as reliable because we are not sure [...] When your funding shrinks everything kind of gets shrunk_
back even if its not from one source and its from another. So they are having to review a lot of what they do because we are not the only ones. All these other organizations are either reducing their funding or leaving so it’s having an impact on everybody.

When international development organizations face uncertainties it creates a ‘domino effect’ especially in cases where new limitations cause organizations to employ pragmatic measures and approaches that significantly reduce the resources available to their local partners. These issues are apparent in the work of S-Corner as the organization is trying to cope with an ongoing crisis of social reproduction that is impacting community members while continuously finding ways to survive as an organization.

Thus, when I inquired about concerns related to the sustainability and expansion of their current programmes Ms. Wilmot indicated that limited financial resources have derailed some of S-Corner’s most effective programmes (especially the clinic) because of the way the organization has been forced to restructure itself. In addition to this, limited funds is currently their greatest obstacle as Ms. Wilmot indicated:

_Money does everything because if we had more money our nurse would still be here it doesn’t matter that the clinic opened around the corner because the people would still need us cause you see there are still some people who are not going to that government clinic. There are some people who felt that they had a good relationship with the nurse and they have built that over the years and they want to maintain that so we would easily have been doing more family things, home visiting, and so on but it’s the funding. So because of funding we have looked at what we are doing and we have cut down to like mean and lean, focusing on the youth but really and truly had we the funding we would have been able to continue and to expand some of the programs._

The decrease in resources has also caused S-Corner to employ survival strategies in order to keep their doors open and cope with the constraints of having to help the Waltham Park community with significantly less funding. S-Corner has not only downsized the scope of their programme but also cut the number and hours of staff members.
In relation to the retreat of donor funding, Barry believed that organizations began to withdraw their support for community-based health and education programmes when the Jamaican government removed tuition fees for schools and health care user fees in 2007/2008. This essentially encouraged funders to “pull out” because it was perceived that the same services were offered by the government for free even though poor populations still struggled to access basic services. Ms. Wilmot also reflected on the potential reasons as to why the overall level of international support has decreased as she indicated that Jamaica’s reliance on remittances contributed to misconceived perceptions about the level of poverty in Jamaica. Remittances currently make up 13.8 percent of Jamaica’s Gross Domestic Product (BOJ 2013:16); while Ms. Wilmot believes that these figures give the false impression that the nation is a middle-income country, even though the vast majority of Jamaicans are still very poor.

With respect to local support, Jamaica’s ongoing commitment to neoliberal strategies of development impose budget constraints both for the state and community organizations, as the government is limited in its ability fund to local initiatives. Thus, Ms. Wilmot lamented the fact that small NGOs like S-Corner are experiencing difficulties and fatigue because they are increasingly filling the gaps that exist in collective provisioning, but are not receiving adequate resources from the government to fulfill their objectives at the community level. Barry also expressed a great deal of frustration over the fact that S-Corner was confident in its ability to address the needs of Waltham Park but minimal support placed downward pressure on their programmes. He perceived this as an issue related to the government’s accountability in the management of financial resources at the community level as he indicated:
They [the government] should look for the small NGOs; pump some money in their thing so that they can really carry on those programmes because they cannot do it. Like these small NGOs like S-Corner, we know the needs of the people, we know what the people want, we know the people’s day-to-day cry. We have people out in the field every single day, from Monday to Friday, we know the needs of the people, yeah, so we can really help them. [...] To be frank mi ah tell yuh I don’t say dem not doing anything but some ah di stuff weh dem ah do, some ah di resources what they using can be better managed.

In addition to these pervasive realities, Ms. Stultz signified that the resources allocated to local constituencies are not actually attending to the needs of local organizations that are engaged in collective provisioning, which causes funds to be ineffectively utilized. As a potential solution to this problem, Ms. Stultz advocated for more balance, accountability, and transparency in the distribution of local resources, which could potentially strengthen S-Corner’s poverty alleviation efforts in Waltham Park as she signified:

The money that each constituency gets for social and economic community development, SESP money, I don’t see it going into the programmes that would alleviate poverty. I don’t see them helping the community organizations on the ground with computers, equipping them, helping to pay a teachers salary and so on so I personally don’t see it as being very effective. For example, S-Corner should benefit because we are addressing crime and violence so some of the money should be sent to us to create a balance with the money because every single Member of Parliament gets a constituency fund for social service development. My thing is that it should be used to strengthen the non government and community based organizations within their constituency so its not reducing money from the larger fund that has to go towards government service because they are already strapped for money, I’m just saying to be more accountable and transparent.

Conclusion

The testimonies of staff from S-Corner and Jamaican Self Help illustrate the challenges, which face international and local NGOs that take on the work of collective provisioning and parenting as their mission in light of limited state welfare provision. Jamaica’s engagement with neoliberal development strategies impedes its ability to meet the needs of communities, placing the greater burden of sustaining and supporting the work of social reproduction onto organizations such as S-Corner. The nature of these
precarious circumstances and the necessity to cushion the negative impacts of social erosion and economic crisis compels local institutions to rely on external sources of funding that are largely determined by the priorities of donor agencies and impacted by the uncertainties faced by international partners such as Jamaican Self-Help. The complications that arise for S-Corner entail a level of frustration and fatigue as they continuously employ pragmatic survival strategies in order to keep their doors open to community members in great need of their assistance. Parenting programmes as an intervention focused on individuals then becomes a way to help parents cope even though it does not necessarily challenge the greater structural issues that exist in a socioeconomic environment marked by high levels of unemployment, violence, and poverty. However, S-Corner’s limited access to resources necessitates the organization’s focus on delivering parenting programmes as a way to help parents to survive on a daily basis, as opposed to making more direct demands for the government to abandon the austerity measures that have eroded its ability to contribute to social reproduction too. I suspect that this might not be the case if more consistent support was given to some of S-Corner’s most effective programmes such as the community clinic and adult education activities.

This chapter explores and illuminates the everyday experiences of parents who live in Waltham Park. I argue that the need to sustain social reproduction (Katz 2010:710) is causing parents and more specifically black working class mothers, to adopt flexible and innovative coping mechanisms and strategies to ensure the daily survival of their households. In this chapter I draw extensively on the testimonies of seventeen parents who shared personal stories in semi-structured interviews, written journals, and a focus group discussion. For the purposes of privacy and confidentiality, each parent was ascribed a pseudonym in the quotations that will appear. Twelve of the parents were mothers and five were fathers, and all ranged between nineteen and sixty-seven years of age. The people that I interviewed parented approximately four children and most had lived in Waltham Park for over twenty years of their lives. A large number of the people that I interviewed never matriculated from high school, with the majority progressing to the equivalent of grade nine. The testimonies of the parents I interviewed gives insight into the worries, stress, hopes, and fears associated with being a parent in a working class community experiencing issues such as high unemployment, poverty, and violence. I also report the reflections that parents shared with me about the impact of the parenting programmes that they participated in and the effect of S-Corner’s work on their lives.

I. Income Generation and Survival Strategies

Many parents in Waltham Park are faced with major challenges related to income generation and survival, one of which is their limited access to employment, and two is their reliance on the informal sector where wages are low and working conditions are
precarious. As I mentioned in chapter five, unemployment in Waltham Park was 40 percent in 1996 and remains extremely high. The struggle to make ends meet on a daily basis is further complicated when parents are forced to rely on unstable income generating activities to carry out the most basic social reproductive activities such as paying for food, clothing, and shelter. At the time that I conducted interviews, five out of seventeen parents were formally employed in positions such as youth and sports coaching, maintenance work, plumbing, and waitressing. The vast majority of parents were concentrated into informal employment positions as many parents specifically engaged in some form of selling or vending whether it was in Waltham Park or in Kingston’s downtown market. The goods they sold ranged from seasonal fruits and vegetables, crabs, fruit juices, and porridge, to clothing, hair products, CDs, and DVDs. Other parents also earned incomes by obtaining casual work at certain times of the year.

Although men traditionally dominate the Jamaican urban labour market, working class women are also involved in flexible labour market activities, as they are concentrated into precarious informal activities such as “higglering” and vending (Holland 1995:477). A “higgler” typically refers to women who purchase goods for resale and trade. This type of activity is seen in many of Jamaica’s internal exchange areas such as the Downtown Kingston’s Coronation Market, roadsides, and urban communities (Katzin 1960:297). Since the 1970’s this form of income generation became specialized especially in the Kingston Metropolitan Area, which led to an increase in “town higglers” who specifically sold goods within urban areas and markets (Ulysse 2007:73).
To survive in the informal sector as a “higgler” or a vendor means that parents have to exhibit high levels of entrepreneurialism and creativity in order to generate income. This entails a level of risk when it comes to relying on activities that are highly unreliable and illicit, as well as dealing with challenges related to informal competition and sustaining profitability. For example, Taylor, a 26 year old mother of a one year old boy explained that she purchased hair products in bulk from a wholesale store to resell them in smaller portions because she noticed that “everybody did their hair” in the community, which presented her with the opportunity to generate income. Taylor also indicated that if she wanted to make a consistent profit from selling hair products, she would have to “buy from herself” whenever she wanted to style her own hair as she stated:

Mi jus go downtown go buy some hair products, hair creme, shampoo an’ condition, styling gel. If mi sell di hair creme nuff, mi tink mi ago mek nuff money cause mi pay fi one, one bucket ah creme fi $1,600 [US$16] an’ $1,750 [US$17.50]dolla mi pay fi ah bucket ah hair creme an’ di styling gel ah fi 580 [US$5.80] dolla [...] Everybody do dem hair, right now mi hair waan do but mi nuh put my products inna my hair cause mi fi put money. Mi buy from mi self, yuh know? Like if mi ago tek out some mi affi drop some money inna di pan so mi can see di profit, yeah.

Even though the informal sector helps families to avoid complete destitution, these forms of work are notoriously unstable and sometimes fail to keep families from going hungry. For Ashley, a 48 year old mother of four who works as a dressmaker, the instability of income and work often forces her to make tough choices about who can eat and who will not. Most times she forsakes a meal in order to let her children eat. She believes that her children are learning from her situation how to be resilient and states:

At times it is very hard but I still try to show my children that its not everyday I’m going to have to give you everything. Love sometime an’ sometime yuh tek a likkle small an’ be satisfied. If we have one banana, we share. Nobody affi know what we ah eat an’ sometimes dem eat an’ mi nuh eat because it nuh nuff fi stretch yuh understan’?
Ray, a 37 year old father of 4 children ranging from ages 10 to 19 shared similar concerns to Ashley insofar as his occupation was unreliable and unstable because of the fact that his informal trade skills were only in demand during certain times of the year. This made generating consistent income very difficult for Ray as he stated:

*I do tiling, I do mason work at times somebody will come call me an’ say hey measure up there fi mi, how much to do there an’ I give dem a price an’ then they go an’ buy di material an’ get back to me an’ I earn a income [...] Its not very often, it come more often going down to December cause most people doing fixing up an’ changing out, yeah but otherwise when it touch January coming down into these [months], from January coming down to June, it tough , nothing , now an’ then, now an’ then.*

Parents also relied on social networks that included friends and clergy from churches in Waltham Park because they provided employment opportunities and support that allowed parents to generate income. Although these opportunities were flexible, part time, and somewhat inconsistent, it demonstrated the broader importance of community institutions such as the church, which are instrumental in helping poor people to access forms of collective provision and income generation. Positive relationships with the clergy allowed Brittany, a 27 year old mother of a four year old boy to move away from selling in the Downtown market towards a safer and slightly more reliable opportunity that was provided by her Pastor as she stated:

*Well I used to sell downtown, I used to do a likkle vending. Now I sweep di road in the morning and that’s it [...] My Pastor went about it for me...it’s a program I think he’s the head of the road stuff, yeah. I think he is in charge of it now cause he’s the one that commissions the majority of us an’ he writes the cheques.*

It is important to note that working class mothers also carried out the work of social reproduction for others as they engaged in caring and domestic labour in the households of other working class women who were friends and community members as a means of generating income. In relation to the way parenting is perceived amongst the poor, this
exemplifies the fact that mothers had no less love for their children as they were willing to share the very resources they needed to survive in order to help others cope even if what they could offer was limited. Sharing the burdens of social reproduction helped Shannon, a 19 year old mother of a one year old girl to survive as she depended on her friends and Pastor for opportunities to work in their homes and churches for “2 bills”, which was the equivalent of approximately US$2. Shannon explained that this was her main source of income as she stated:

*I will depend on my friends, I depend on friends an’ Pastor, yeah. Like I would help dem wash up plate an’ sweep up their house, help tidy, and they will give me like 2 bills [US$2] per day and tidying the church three days at least.*

In the following section I will examine how migration and remittances were also constituted as survival strategies for parents seeking transnational sources of income as they engaged in the work of social reproduction with limited collective resources.

*Migration and the “Spatial Fix” to Social Reproduction*

As previously discussed in chapter two, neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s garnered tactical responses from women and families who diversified their survival strategies by changing their living and consumption patterns depending on their access resources and ability to pursue life options. Thus, a “spatial fix” refers to the ways that Jamaican women compensated for the loss of collective resources and investment in the basic elements of social reproduction. For example, emigrating from Jamaica provided women with the opportunity to create and access transnational household arrangements that would support their efforts to continue in the forms of care and provision that their families needed to survive (see Mullings 2009:180). Even though they faced structural disadvantages women joined the international migration stream and labour force in order
to create a spatial extension of household survival and income as women left Jamaica in search of employment opportunities (Deere et al 1990:61). Those who found work abroad would supply additional household income and support in the form of money and consumer goods such as clothing and food (Deere et. al. 1990:72-78). This particular survival strategy was significant in the experiences of parents in Waltham Park as there were a number of them who received support from family members who emigrated from Jamaica. In the following section on remittances, I will examine how transnational household arrangements helped parents and families to survive on a daily basis.

Remittances

The ongoing reliance that parents in Waltham Park have on the financial support of family members abroad represents a significant survival strategy, which also exemplifies the fact that basic investments in social reproduction are still limited in Jamaica. Remittances are often tied to altruistic family ties; however, they are also complicated by familial relationships that are not always consistent or stable over the long term. Although the Jamaican government encourages the diaspora to send remittances, DeHaas (2010:236) argues that remittances do not significantly alleviate inequality within communities and between households because of their limited ability to evenly redistribute wealth. Of the 17 parents that I interviewed, only seven received remittances from family members abroad in countries such as Canada and the United States. The other parents did not receive support because they had little or no contact with family abroad. Among the respondents who did receive remittances, some enjoyed regular monthly support, while others received remittances once or twice a year. When asked if she had other sources of income support outside of Jamaica, Taylor, a 26 year
old mother of a one year old boy responded that her uncle who resided in the U.S supported her regularly with the equivalent of US$45 per month. However, she was concerned about how much longer he would continue to support her as she speculated whether or not his partner was discouraging him from sending money so often. This speaks to the tensions that can arise in such relationships of dependence as they have the potential to create discord within diasporic households, which can make long-term reliance on remittances unsustainable. Taylor’s uncle’s support demonstrates how the burden of social reproduction and alleviating poverty is shared and borne transnationally. It also exemplifies the fact that social reproduction is supported by the very men who are characterized as delinquent and irresponsible in the countries that they live. Although Taylor felt wary about the influences that could have persuaded her uncle not to send remittances they provided a viable source of income as she stated:

Mi have mi uncle, mi uncle deh ah foreign him send money fi mi during di week an’ give mi. If mi say mi baby nuh have nuttin, him call mi an’ send a money fi mi or mi Madda collect it an’ bring it come give mi [...] Him deh ah Texas, mi get 4,500 [US$45] from him once a month, mi nah go tell nuh lie, once a month. If him sen’ dah money yah [...] Him have a woman ova deh yuh know, mi nuh really know di lady, mi nuh know if she ah tell him tings an’ yuh know yuh have some people if yuh have family ah foreign dem meet some people weh all try fi tell dem tings an’ dis an’ dat, but mi nah go tell nuh lie, it haad pon wi sometime.

Kelly, a 38 year old mother of six children expressed similar concerns regarding the sustainability of remittances as she explained that her limited contact with family members created more uncertainty for her when it came to receiving financial support. She expressed that sometimes her family complained more than she did about tough financial circumstances, which demonstrated how economic difficulties that were borne transnationally affected the her relatives ability to support her. Knowing that her family was struggling too, Kelly found it difficult to ask her family members for help even
though she needed money for the cost of her son’s high school graduation. Although she received support in that particular case, Kelly expressed that her pride was hurt because her family was not “nice” about giving her money given their financial circumstances. Nevertheless, Kelly laid aside her pride in order to seek help for her son’s graduation, even though her relationship with her family abroad was a distant one. This, speaks to the relative importance that she attached to education as a way to break cycles of poverty for her children as she stated:

Mi have one aunty but yuh know sometime dem bawl more than me. Dem nuh really come in often, like mi beg dem like fi di 17 year old graduation an’ dem sen’ a likkle 10 000 [US$100] fi help him graduate...ah di first time mi eva call. A true mi have likkle, mi just mek mi mind an’ bend mi mind and say mi ago ask, yeah cause dem nuh so nice cause true they have fi dem problem and suh mi nuh really badda people. Mi jus suffer it an’ bear on my own an’ do mi ting sometime yuh ask dem an’ it come like it turn back pon yuh, mi nuh badda dem.

Aside from cash remittances, support from transnational households has seemingly shifted away from the practice of sending barrels because easier and faster ways of sending support have become prominent (i.e. Western Union, bank transfers). This form of support was more prevalent during the 1980s, as Jamaican children left behind were literally raised by the contents of barrels sent by their parents or extended family who emigrated during economic crisis (Crawford 2003:104). However, there was still one parent who received a corrugated barrel packed with consumer goods and food from her family abroad. Tina, a 33 year old mother of two children who were 11 and 16 maintained a closer relationship with her family abroad, which added more stability to her dependence on relatives as a source of income support. This exemplified the significant role that extended family played in parenting and social reproduction, as the
remittances and the barrels of clothing and food that Tina received helped her to cope with the difficulties of providing basic necessities for her children as she stated:

Mi aunty an’ cousin sometimes dem send one likkle US$50 or US$100 or so. But yuh have some ah dem [relatives] weh just send di food an’ the clothes. Like summa now ah come an’ December an’ January like two, three time fi di year [...] Different from money like dem have dem barrel an’ bring five and say mi fi come fi one, dem say dem pack one fi mi alone.

In the following section I will examine the significance of visiting and stable unions as a survival strategy employed by mothers who relied on relationships with male partners that were characterized by trust and reciprocity to garner support for rearing and providing basic necessities for their children. I will also argue that this practice was complicated by structural factors such as unemployment, which impacted and even prevented men from providing for the children in their partner’s household.

*Parenting and Relationships of Reciprocity*

The practice of relying on partners to help sustain households is common amongst those in visiting or common-law unions where mainly men provide monetary support for mothers as part of efforts to fulfill fatherhood roles (Bolles 1991:21). Holland (1994:481) indicates that many female-headed households are supported by absent partners, ex-partners, and male relatives in the raising of their children. Contrary to popular discourse, mothers depend on relationships characterized by trust and reciprocity to obtain support for their livelihoods as their male partners and relatives help them to “make do” (Senior 1991:133). However, these relationships are complicated by high rates of male unemployment in urban poor areas that disrupt this practice as men are prevented from completely fulfilling traditional male support roles and financial obligations because of
difficulties in obtaining stable employment, which often results in a severing of ties between partners and limited or no contact with children (Deere et al 1990:71-72).

Contrary to circulating discourses regarding the irresponsibility of fathers, many of the women I interviewed lived in stable relationships with the fathers of their children. While such stability was less likely for single parents dependent on the financial support of ex partners, those living with an employed partner experienced greater levels of stability in terms consistent support. For example, when asked if she had contact with the father(s) of her children and if she received support, Kim, a 23 year old mother of four explained that she lived with the father of one of her children who was employed. Kim expressed that he was a “good father” because he ensured that the household bills were paid and that basic necessities were provided for all of her children as she stated:

Mi an’ him live together, yeah he’s a good father, right now ah him mek my daughter go school. From the time me find out mi conceive with her he has been a father to her from di time mi find out seh mi pregnant wid she right until now. He works in Mo-Bay [Montego Bay], comes home at 2-week time, makes sure that the bills are paid, food in the house, and children have school fee an’ shoes.

Jamaica was one of the first nations in the Caribbean region to establish a Family Court designed to deal with matters regarding the financial maintenance of children, which gives parents the option to seek legal recourse to compel their partners to comply with financial obligations to their children (Senior 1991:135). Kelly, the 38 year old mother of six received consistent support from her current partner but also expressed frustration over the fact that she sought recourse for child support from a man who fathered and experienced difficulty in providing for her youngest son who was six years of age. Kelly utilized the Jamaican proverb “one hand cannot clap” to explain that she could not
provide for her children alone, she needed the support of her child’s father to provide
basic necessities for son as she indicated:

Alright mi have a likkle boyfriend an’ him bring him money ah fortnight when him get
him pay. Him carry like a 5000 [US$50] or 6000 [US$60] come gi’ mi an’ mi buy food
an’ someting [...] Yeah mi nah go lie inna di first part an’ mi nah say di likkle boy fadda
never used to help me but true tings get rough [...] From this last time it get serious an’
mi affi go ah family court last year cause ah 100 000 [US$950] odd dollar him owe an’
yesterday him come an’ him all bawl but mi say yuh need fi come wid school, mi nuh care
how small it is, yuh come. Yuh come we satisfy. Yuh come cause it rough pon’ mi an’ mi
ah try my best so yuh come an’ help too. One hand cannot clap, join wid me an’ seh mi
have a 1000 [US$10] dolla come an’ do dis wid it.

In the following section I will further explore reliance on PATH as a source of
income support in addition to examining aspects of conditional cash transfer programmes
(CCTs) that have captured the attention of international feminist critics and evaluators of
the PATH programme in Jamaica.

*The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH)*

Considering the growing concerns regarding the efficacy of CCTs such as PATH,
I argue that although these programmes represent a shift in neoliberal regimes toward
poverty reduction strategies, they are an insufficient means of challenging the structural
root causes of poverty as they are oriented toward short term solutions that provide
minimal support to families. Feminist critics such as Tabbush (2010) are critical of the
influence that institutions such as the World Bank have on social protection programmes,
as she constitutes them as a problematic method of including women in poverty reduction
and empowerment strategies. Ruckert (2010:830-832) argues that the introduction of
CCTs represents an attempt to materially integrate the poor into the neoliberal world
development order through policing measures. This form of intervention does not
envision social protection from volatile markets as CCTs are designed to increase the
capabilities of the poor to directly navigate market structures (Ruckert 2010:834). Thus, social investments in CCTs are focused on human capital formation for families and children in order to improve their independent and productive capacities. Ruckert (2010:823-824) also contends that CCTs are so popular with the World Bank because they combine the market-oriented provision of social services using subsidies for the poor, which enables the state to further download the responsibility for social reproduction to the private sector and households.

With respect to social reproduction, Tabbush (2010:437) indicates that CCTs rely on the “maternal functions” of poor women and their families as part of a strategy to tackle poverty. Although CCTs claim to improve the economic situations of women, Tabbush (2010:438) questions the ability of these strategies to empower women and challenge unequal gender relations unfavourable to mothers. The bias toward women in poverty reduction programmes also contributes to the “feminization of responsibility and obligation” as women are expected to manage their own poverty and social risks, which can perpetuate male privilege as men are absolved from welfare obligations at the household level (Tabbush 2010:439). CCTs are also instrumental in emphasizing “moral judgments on the conduct of poor women” as they are held accountable for the well being of their families even though the resources provided by programmes tend to be meager in comparison to the structural obstacles that they face (Tabbush 2010:447).

In an evaluation of PATH, Levy and Ohls (2010:422) utilized quantitative and qualitative data to determine whether the programme was reaching its intended population, or if it was increasing the human capital of poor households through school attendance and healthcare usage. The authors found that PATH reached 58 percent of its
target population (Levy and Ohls 2010:426), as it was relatively effective in raising school attendance and preventative health care visits for children (Levy and Ohls 2010:433-434). However, the authors noted that PATH was largely geared toward short-term outcomes as opposed to long-term results that would have a greater impact on increasing human capital amongst the poor (Levy and Ohls 2010:423). Furthermore, they suggested that increasing attendance to schools and health centres alone would not sustain longer term outcomes as improvements to infrastructure were needed to improve the quality of services being provided (Levy and Ohls 2010:439). Additionally, beneficiaries indicated that delays in the approval process and the receipt of benefits were burdensome especially when postponements incurred transportation costs as a result of making multiple trips to post offices in order to obtain updated information or payments (Levy and Ohls 2010:425).

Approximately eleven parents that I interviewed received assistance from PATH, while all responses were consistent with the information available on the programme. Parents received J$1500-$1600 (US$15-US$16) per child, every other month, and indicated that if their children were not in school for more than three days or missed visits to the Maxfield Park Health Centre, they would experience a disruption in receiving their cash benefits. Two parents also cited difficulties in getting on the programme even though they met eligibility requirements. Nevertheless, Lucy, a 29 year old mother of 3 indicated that income support from PATH was very useful because it provided money to purchase basic items for her children as she stated:

*The PATH programme, that is a very good programme cause more time it help me out a lot. Yeah sometimes when it come mi buy a pack of pampers with hers an’ with the older boy an’ girl mi buy all case a juice an’ some snacks.*
Anne was a 49 year old mother of 4 who lost 3 of her children to gun violence in 2010. She indicated that PATH supported her and her remaining 14 year old daughter especially during times that she had no money. However, Anne recognized that reliance on the programme was a bottom-line survival strategy because the income support was minimal as she stated:

_To be frank mi nah tell no lie..sometime the PATH come di time when mi have no money and it help, it small but as old time people say half a bread is betta than none at all._

Parents with large families such as Kelly, a 38 year old mother with six children indicated that she utilized PATH income to purchase food items. However, Kelly indicated that the amount she could buy was limited in comparison to the need and number of children in her household as she stated:

_People struggle more now, sufferation more, everybody ah bawl it rough man an’ when di likkle PATH come in wi jus buy likkle food to help di pickney who ah go ah school mi nah lie mi use my own buy food [...] It nuh really help it just give us a one night dinner or suh. Yuh know a six children mi have so mi cyah cook no likkle bit of food, 1500 [US$15] dollars buy likkle rice an ‘this an that’, an’ likkle seasoning._

Like Kelly, Tina a 38 year old mother of an 11 year old boy and a 16 year old girl received PATH support for both of her children and one of her sister’s children. When asked how useful she found the benefits to be Tina considered the limited use that she had for the money so she resorted to simply purchasing some basic food items, school project supplies, or small luxuries such as fast food for her children as she indicated:

_Mi give mi daughta di card mek she draw it an’ she save it an’ do her project an’ ah next time mi just mek dem draw it an’ she buy KFC ah Half Way Tree an’ bring down an’ mek dem eat it [...]All ah dem love meat so she wi buy one 9 piece an’ ah nearly 2000 [US$20] dolla, so yuh know 4,200 [US$42] nuh go no weh. Cause yuh go inna di PATH programme dem tell yuh seh di money is not yours, is fi dem [...]When mi collect it mi buy milk, cheese an’ juice an’ some likkle snacks fi dem an’ so and put dem inna di fridge because it cyah do nuttin fi yuh fi you di adult so yuh spend it pon dem an’ mek it just done because $4,200 ah nuh really money._
Although many parents were successful in obtaining support from PATH, Shannon, a 19 year old mother of a two year old girl and Kim, a 23 year mother of 4 children felt disillusioned by the difficulties that they faced in getting on the programme, which were seemingly related to the lack of bureaucratic responsiveness within the application process. Shannon specifically explained that she followed all the necessary steps to get on PATH but she was experiencing a delay in receiving payments for unknown reasons. This reflected some of the same grievances that were expressed in evaluations of PATH as she stated:

Yeah she’s on it [PATH] but I don’t receive anything for her yet. I registered last year September an’ I don’t get anything an’ I could use the money for food an’ clothes. They visit my house an’ I went to the post office yesterday an’ they said that nothing has come for me so I’m going back up there today to talk to them ask them what is going on.

The income support from PATH generally limited parents to purchasing basic consumer items for their household as the financial resources provided were not significant enough to allow parents to gain access to other opportunities or make social or economic investments that would noticeably change their daily experiences of poverty. Thus, in the following section I will further explore the types of worries and stress that parents face on a daily basis in addition to shedding light upon the hopes and fears that parents have for their households and children.

II. Worries, Stress, Hopes, and Fears

In this section I will examine poverty-related stress amongst the urban poor in Jamaica that significantly affects the everyday experiences of parents. As discussed in chapter two, “the crunch” of Caribbean economic crisis in the 1970s and 1980s meant that families struggled more to survive on single wages as they absorbed a greater share of the costs of survival, creating a heavier burden for poor men and women (Deere et al.
Leo-Rhynie (1993:19) indicated that the shrinking economic base of Jamaican families threatened their physical well being and impacted the psychological climate and quality of life in the home. Thus, poverty-related stress placed strain on parents and interactions with their children as a study by Anderson and Ricketts (2008:61) revealed that one out of every four Jamaicans parents felt overwhelmed with their child rearing responsibilities. The demands of parenting roles and high levels of stress translated into lower levels of interaction with children, while pressures resulting from economic insecurity and deprivation made families more vulnerable (Anderson and Ricketts 2008:61-62). Levy and Chevannes (2001) indicated that socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and physical insecurity compounded problems related to aggressive discipline practices amongst Jamaican parents (cited in Anderson and Ricketts 2008:64). Child welfare advocates such as Marie Samms-Vaughn (2004:51) further analyzed high stress levels amongst Jamaican parents as she utilized the “Parental Stress Index” to measure and reveal that Jamaican parents felt stressed because of their perceived lack of competence in parenting and the severe impacts of personal and economic constraints that were common to parents with lower incomes (Samms-Vaughn 2004:55).

In order to gain insight on the daily stressors that parents faced in Waltham Park they were asked about what worried them most or what made them feel stressed in relation to their everyday experiences of being a parent. An overwhelming number of parents responded that their worries and stress levels were directly related to the daily aspects of social reproduction such as fulfilling basic needs, the cost of living, and the welfare of their children. Thus, parents were most worried about providing food, paying
utility bills, and paying auxiliary school fees associated with school trips and projects. Parents in the focus group discussion also indicated that the lack of education and employment opportunities, as well as low wages further increased their levels of stress. Incorporated into these concerns were experiences of racial discrimination that prevented them from accessing employment opportunities outside of the community as parents indicated that: “if they see yuh dark skin or from a certain community, from yuh seh Kingston 13, yuh nah get through”. Max, a 62 year old father with 9 children, the eldest of which was 42, reminisced on the socioeconomic circumstances of the 1960s compared to the socioeconomic conditions that now exist in Jamaica. He specifically saw the high costs of living, food prices, and low wages as major contributing factors that increased stress in his household and community. He indicated that although the wages were small in the 1960s, so was the cost of living and now that wages remain small and the cost of living has drastically increased, he found it difficult to provide food for himself and his children. His response was highly indicative the impacts and aftermath of structural adjustment policies that devalued the Jamaican dollar while inflation increased the cost of living and food for families as Max reflected:

_Yuh see at dat time, di wages was small. Cost a living was down too, small. But in dis time now cost a living is high, so it cyah work. Because the cost a living higha dan di wages now. When you go out an’ you woulda seh bway you woulda work all – a $20 [US$2] fi di day, di $20 could able fi buy dinna – coulda buy yuh food fi you an’ yuh children. But, now you work a $1000 [US$10] now, di $1000 cyah buy food fi you an’ yuh children fi di day._

High food prices and living costs meant that Ashley, a 48 year old mother of 4 had to endure silent suffering and emotional pain when she could not afford food and basic necessities for her children. The “hardest times” for Ashley was when her children went to bed without a meal as she stated:
The hardest part of my life as a parent is not having to give my children dem the things that they need an’ fi watch dem sometime go to dem bed not eating an’ yuh cant cry to let them see you, an’ I think those were the hardest times when I couldn’t find anything to give them an’ even now when you talk about it, its kind of heart breaking.

In a journal entry, Anne, reflected on what made her feel worried and stressed on a daily basis as her necessity to survive and take care of her daughter and having to pay bills meant that she had to forgo buying basic food items if she did not generate enough income from selling items such as juice. Thus, the ongoing presence of daily stressors was indicative of her need for support and resources. In the midst of difficult economic circumstances, Anne still maintained a sense of empathy for other community members, which challenged the notion that poor parents were only concerned about the survival of their own households. A stressful financial situation and hunger did not prevent Anne from expressing her desire to help others as she wrote:

*About my life when my bills come I cannot go to market. I cannot buy food I have to pay my bill you know if don’t pay my bill, you know what will happen. I pray everyday for the Lord to help me and my daughter. I sell like bag juice, bottle juice but sometime I have to eat out of it and give money to my daughter to go to school. When I do that I cannot go to buy back stuff so if I can get a little help that I can help people. I hope everybody who had this journal will see what I’m talking about. My life is up and down sometimes I wish I can help people who need it. I myself cannot help myself sometimes so if anyone out there can help me with anything so help me, people they must help people. I am writing this journal with a hungry stomach because I want some one to help me from the bottom of my heart. Nobody knows how it feels only the Lord knows everything.*

For parents with children attending high school, auxiliary fees and other school related costs were very burdensome and stressful. Tina, a 32 year old mother of two children attending high school, expressed that her difficulty resided in having to pay school-related expenses on a single wage even though she tried to budget in order to account for these costs. The stress of dealing with school fees that were both high and unexpected was further exacerbated in times that she was unemployed. It is clear in this case that her
limited ability to pay school related costs was not a matter of poor choices as it was
directly related to her limited access to employment opportunities and resources provided
by schools as Tina stated:

Sometime true yuh nah work an’ then sometime when maybe dem will have all project fi
do an’ yuh ah budget pon something an’ di project fi do. It kinda haad fi yuh cause yuh
woulda plan fi dat, then dat just drop in so yuh affi leave what yuh did waan fi do, fi dem
interest [...] When dem have project fi do sometime the money weh you give dem,
sometime di project cost more money then the lunch money weh you gi dem fi go ah
school cause yuh affi prepare dem fi go back ah school, yuh get dis biiiggg booklist. Then
yuh affi pay dis big extra school fee an’ then on top of it sometime the school still ah tell
yuh seh dem waan during di summa [...] Like me now it ago struggling fi mi because mi
ago have two who ah go high school.

In relation to dealing with stress and emotional strain, a pattern that appeared in
the responses given by parents exemplified how religious faith was utilized as a
significant coping mechanism. Ellis (1986:10) indicated that religiosity was one of the
strategies adopted by Caribbean women who were coping with psychological strain as
religious institutions functioned as support systems that helped parents to alleviate
emotional stress in times of economic crisis. The same could be said of men as Ray, a 38
year old father of 4 indicated that being Christian helped him to manage the emotional
and psychological strain of being unemployed. Ray indicated that his faith gave him a
sense of inner peace and “strength” when he was experiencing stress related to survival
and providing for his children as he stated:

Since I know Jesus now every burden gone. I did have fear yes but I’m Christian now I
get baptize in early March, all when the trouble is there I just feel joyful. Jesus give me
that joy within like he tell me don’t worry, he going to make a way out so I just keep that
faith an’ just keep that going an’ I put everything in Jesus hand. I just want to mediate on
him so all the stress an’ the pain he have it in his hand. I leave it that way yeah all when
my bills pile on me, I don’t care I just go to God an’ he make a way [...] I don’t stress my
mind like one time mi used to worry when they don’t have feeding, when the mother said
they don’t have no money an’ I didn’t go thief, I pray. Since I become a Christian I
believe that our strength depends on God.
After I inquired about what worried and stressed parents the most, I asked how their lives could be made easier and fifteen out of seventeen parents indicated that stable employment would allow them to have a better life. I found the following responses to be largely symbolic of Jamaica’s current socioeconomic circumstances and the desire that parents had to be economically independent, which challenged widespread assumptions regarding the perceived lack of aspiration and laziness amongst working class populations. For example Matt, a 49 year old father of 3 indicated that employment was “only thing” he wanted to improve his life circumstances because a job would help him to provide for himself and his children as he stated:

*Wow, the only thing somebody can give me to make my life easier as a parent is get me a good job that I can earn the type of money that I want. Then I can able to finance as big as my children be, I can be able to finance them the way I want. I can able to pay my mortgage [and] take care of my daily needs.*

Tina, 32 year old mother of 2 also explained that stable employment would allow her to share in more positive experiences and interactions with her children as she reminisced on times that she was able to take her son and daughter outside of the community for small luxuries and activities that the average child would enjoy. When Tina was working she was able to take her children to buy fast food and ice cream from popular meeting places in Kingston such as Devon House as she reflected:

*Mi just like work cause mi know seh if mi work pon Friday mi know mi cyah carry dem ah Devon House, buy ice cream an’ cake an’ take one likkle picture then we talk come down ah Half Way Tree an’ we go ah KFC go sit down an’ walk come down back an’ talk an’ dem something there. But when mi nah work certain tings dem always ah say “mummy rememba when you did ah work you carry wi go ah Devon House an’ we tek picture an’ we eat ice cream an’ sit down inna di grass an’ so?” So when mi nah work an’ dem bring back dem something deh to you like yuh just say if mi did ah work, dem still woulda get it, but true yuh nah work you say it nah guh happen again.*
Ray, a 37 year old father who spoke about how his faith helped him to cope with stress also felt that his moral values and life changes that he made were tied to notions of being a “good worker” as he expressed his need for a permanent job. This is indicative of the fact that religiosity is often associated with what is considered to be respectable in Jamaican society. Ray believed that his faith validated his worthiness of employment as he responded:

*Trying to get a permanent job, I’m a good worker, a permanent job. I don’t smoke no more, I don’t drink no more. I don’t gamble, I was reckless gambler, I can tell you, a reckless gambler...evvery cent I work I’m going to the gambling, card pack, cash pot, all of those gambling. Drinking, smoking all of those things an’ now I become a Christian, all of those things lock away from me no spliff from the 6th of January. I don’t shuffle another card to buy another ticket even a lotto ticket or nothing I just have that faith in God that God gonna see me through. So the dream for me is to get a permanent job so I can able to manage my income an’ save something aside because all that I used to save gone dry I draw, an’ eat, draw, an’ eat so it gone, its done.*

In the following section I will explore how community violence impacted the daily experiences of parents who expressed concerns regarding social erosion in their community and its connection to broader public anxieties regarding national crime levels.

*Fears and Community Violence*

Elevated violence and crime levels are a source of growing concern for the Jamaican state because of the burden it places on the national security and justice systems. The government is particularly anxious about the relationships between the trade of illegal firearms and drugs, as well as the activities of organized criminal groups and street gangs that attract youth. Kingston is targeted for intervention because of the concentrated levels of violent crime that occur within inner city communities (Holland and Moser 1997:6). Explanations and reporting of high crime levels also contribute to the notion that Jamaica is a “killing society” where violence is perceived as a way of life
However, I argue that ongoing community violence is indicative of the limited investments that are placed in spaces of social reproduction, while economic violence and poverty created by Jamaica’s engagement with neoliberal economic development strategies contribute to high levels of physical violence (Mullings 2009:174-175). Consequently, violence creates social erosion, which causes parents to feel unsafe and employ certain parenting practices in response to the fear of violence. The repressive tactics utilized by the police and the state to control the intensity and spread of violence further complicates this, as parents feel more protected by those who participate in illegal activities, rather than state authorities.

With respect to parenthood and social reproduction, the involvement of dons in providing “gang welfare” complicates notions of parenting and social justice as dons perform state-like functions by providing security, mediating of domestic disputes, assisting families with the costs of health care and education, and sponsoring of community events such as children’s Christmas treats (Thomas 2010:36; Mullings 2009:180). In a study of urban poverty and violence in Jamaica, Holland and Moser (1997:38) signified that dons have historically provided strong leadership within inner-city communities, which created a level of stability because they became patriarchs who distributed collective benefits, resources, and protection. These types of assistance were significant in spaces where the Jamaican state retreated from excluded communities (Thomas 2010:44).

However, within the context of my study it was difficult for me make explicit connections between parents and dons based on the responses given in the interviews, focus group discussion, and journals because parents avoided making direct references to
dons and their support. I speculate that concerns for safety and prevailing codes of silence potentially played a role in this distinctive pattern that prevented me from eliciting information on how area leaders or dons might have assisted parents with social reproduction and daily survival. Yet, when parents were asked about what their fears were all of them expressed deep and profound concerns about the level of violence in their community.

The eminent threat of unpredictable “community war” between gang members, families, and police contributed to the overall fear of violence that parents had as they were most concerned for the safety and well being of their children. This was a consistent pattern in the responses elicited from the focus group, interviews, and journals as parents expressed how gun violence caused death, injury, and separation in their families, causing them to live in fear because “anything can happen...the least likkle ting can crack up”. In cases where family members and partners were implicated or at risk of violence, parents explained that specifically fathers would often have to leave the community, leaving mothers to raise children by themselves. Having a husband, boyfriend, or male relative involved in “community war” meant that in some instances women and children could be caught in crossfire as some parents were forced to choose sides or isolate themselves. Anne, a 49 year old mother who lost three out of four children to gun violence attested to this in the focus group discussion as she indicated:

*Dem say yuh ah violate yuh know...yuh switch..true yuh nuh fi talk to the person, ah foolishness dat!*

Mothers expressed regret over the fact that they rarely allowed their children to freely play in the area because there were very few safe spaces for children to be. They also felt that their children were traumatized by violence in the community while concerns were
raised about the lack of effective community policing as parents felt that authorities relied upon repressive methods to control levels of violence. For example, Linda, a 23 year old mother of 3 expressed in the focus group how she felt unprotected and disillusioned by the community’s relationship with police because she thought that gang members in Waltham Park were better at offering protection from danger as she stated:

Dem supposed to protect but dem nah protect, dem same gun man protect wi from di police, dem protect wi...Mi nah tell police nutting, none ah dem.

Brittany, a 27 year old mother of a 4 year old boy echoed these concerns as she signified that the aggressive methods utilized by police were indicative of the ineffective and intimidating relationships that characterize the state’s interaction with inner city communities. Brittany also reflected on how her childhood experiences in rural Jamaica were drastically different from that of her child, causing her to feel that her son would have more freedom and a better life if he did not live in Waltham Park as she stated:

Police are too violent, they are supposed to serve an’ protect but dem shoot first an’ ask questions lata [...] I miss down in the country cause the childhood that I had with my grandparents I cant have it up here because of the violence. For example, I grew up playing hide and seek, we go out in the forest and we explore. I cant have it up here for my child because you never can tell when war may break out and I think the schooling by country is better because I enjoy my school days but up here there are negative impacts in school up here, not that I’m saying that its not down by country but its not like how up here stay. So more time I will tell you mi feel like sending my son down to country to go to school knowing that down in that environment its much more better off than up here.

Parents such as Shannon, a 23 year old mother of 4 expressed how fearing violence was a part of her life since she was young child as her extended family restricted her from playing with other children in the yard because of the unpredictable nature of conflict. As Shannon reflected on this she was reminded of the ongoing impacts of violence in Waltham Park because gunmen targeted her two brothers during my time in the field:
My aunt she never really like me to play with the other children cause the yard we live into is a walk through yard so things can happen at any time, you can get gun shot at any time. Saturday night my brother get gunshot and he is in the hospital yeah from yesterday I go see him, true I was in the hospital I couldn’t come yesterday, he get 4 gun shot, my step-brother get one, yeah gun shot in him side.

In addition to the unpredictable nature of violence, Ashley, a 48 year old mother of 4 pointedly expressed how the cycles and impacts of community violence were largely beyond her control as her ability to shield her children was limited. Thus, violence placed fear both in her and her family as she made efforts to mitigate its psychological effects by doing things such as following her children to school and comforting her children without showing visible emotion. Ashley’s fears were intensified by the fact that she had already lost one of her children to gun violence as she stated:

*When the violence start its like it neva even waan stop an’ it put a lot of fear inna yuh children dem, puts a lot of fear inna yuh you an’ yuh affi comfort di child an’ not showing that yuh ‘fraid or yuh feel scared, cause yuh nuh waan she get scared. Sometime you have to follow them to school cause the violence is hard. Sometimes the children dem ‘fraid fi go ah school or distracted from their work; true the gunshots, the fire, an’ the killing. It was in crime that my daughta died yuh understand’? So I am very scared when those things [happen] even if it was not my child…its just heart breaking.*

In a journal entry, Taylor, a 26 year old mother of an 18 month old boy reflected on the impacts of gun violence in Waltham Park that claimed the lives of youth, while creating tension and division amongst individuals. Her response was also indicative of the community norms that were employed during times of violence and turf wars, which eroded social cohesion and justice. Violence caused community members to “*mind their own business*”, seclude themselves, or leave the area as she wrote:

*Crime in my community is not easy so many innocent had die, too many young. I don’t like the war in the community because murders prey on the innocent life. There wasn’t any justice in the community. People had to mind their own business when violence is in the [community]. Children had to stay back from school, I was so afraid to sleep at night. People was scare[d] even being on the road late at night. Well I’m glad for everything is over for now. [I] watch[ed] son turn on each other for turf. I am glad that I didn’t have*
any family in war. They had to run away from their homes to other communities. I can remember it like it was yesterday when I was coming home from work and massive gunshots were firing [...] There is so much that has happened, we are just praying for the best right now as life passes.

Although the presence of worries, stress, and the fear of violence permeated the lives of parents, in the following section I will demonstrate how their hopes and dreams for the future were indicative of the strength that they possessed in the midst of ongoing socioeconomic difficulties.

Hopes for the Futures of Children and a Better Life

I thought it was important to ask parents about what they hoped or wished for their children’s future as their responses demonstrated high levels of resilience and determination. I also contend that their responses challenged the assumption that working class or poor populations lack future aspirations because they are preoccupied with the rudiments of daily survival. Although the experiences and circumstances that parents faced in Waltham Park could reasonably justify feelings of hopelessness, all of the parents I elicited responses from had high hopes and aspirations for their children, which were mainly related to escaping poverty, positive childhood experiences, and academic achievement. Taylor, a 26 year old mother of a 1 year old boy pointedly expressed how she was determined to give her child a “better” life as she communicated her desire to give her son all of the material comforts, educational opportunities, and positive childhood experiences that she did not obtain in her childhood. In order for her child to have a head start, Taylor wanted to send her son to basic school as soon as he was potty trained and beginning to talk as she proudly stated:

Mi always tell myself the way mi grow up, mi waan betta fi my son, wah mi neva have inna my lifetime, mi want my son come have it. What my fadda coulda neva buy me, mi waan can buy my son. Honestly, mi neva own a bed fi myself until mi turn big woman, mi
neva buy a bed, mi neva have a bicycle. Mi want him fi have a future, mi want him fi become a doctor or a lawyer, everyday mi tell him you know pops, mi waan yuh be a doctor or lawyer pops [...] an’ mi tell him seh pops you ago buy yuh madda a car? Hear him say “yeah!” yuh ago buy daddy a car? “Yeah!” yuh ago buy mi a house? “Yeah!” So mi baby talk when time mi ah talk to him, him ansa’ mi. Yeah that’s why when mi baby start, mi ago start potty train him, so when him start talk mi waan try see seh if mi can get him inna basic school.

Similar to the vast majority of parents, Matt, a 49 year old father of 3 indicated that his greatest desire was to see his children receive the “best” education so that they could escape poverty and become independent through obtaining stable employment. Matt strongly believed that education would allow his children to have a better life as he indicated:

Well my daughter got 3 subjects and what I would like her to do or would like for her is to get a good job then she can go back to school and take it on from there. My son well he don’t get any subject, he is now learning a trade. I would like him to come and master that trade that he learn and know seh at the end of the day he can take care of himself and a family when he reach to that point. My other son well I would like him to get one of the best education that ever exists, to make him what he want to be.

The aspirations communicated by Brittany, a 27 year old mother of a 4 year old boy were related to how she experienced life as a single mother, as well as the feelings she had towards the father of her son. Thus, Brittany utilized words of affirmation to express how she wanted more positive experiences and outcomes for her son as she stated:

I wish that he would be a better role model than his father is, each day I call him my Corporal, Sergeant Thompson, or I would say wah gwan mi Pastor Dupes! Yeah that’s how I talk to him cause I want positive things in his life not the negative.

In the following section I will explore the perceptions that parents had of parenting programmes and the role of S-Corner in Waltham Park in order to demonstrate both the importance of community organizations and the efficacy of parenting interventions.
III. S-Corner and Parenting Workshops

First Encounters

In a study of parenting support and service delivery, Ghate and Moran (2005:333) indicated that a critical factor in creating effective impacts was the ability of community workers and facilitators to build stable and respectful relationships with parents while working in partnership with them. The authors found that the perceived trustworthiness of those who were involved in delivering parenting support was an important element as service providers who became a part of social networks within the communities in which they worked were more successful in recruiting and retaining parents (Ghate and Moran 2005:334).

Within the context of community development and service delivery in Waltham Park, it appeared to me that S-Corner was successful in creating long-term, positive relationships with community members. This was reflected in the responses that I received from parents as they all spoke of their trust and respect for S-Corner both in terms of its work as an organization and the relationships that they built with staff members over time. Thus, S-Corner enjoyed the advantage of maintaining a presence in a community where it and its staff members were highly regarded. The testimonies given by parents suggested that S-Corner was one of very few neutral, safe spaces in Waltham Park where residents lauded the benefits of their services and activities. All of the parents I interviewed had contact with S-Corner prior to attending parenting workshops as all of them had a long term history of utilizing services such as the former clinic (it closed 2-3 months prior to my field visit). Parents and their families were also in contact with S-Corner through their former grassroots college and evening classes, as well as their
current homework programme where children receive remedial assistance to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Subsequently, ten out of the twelve parents who were involved in the parenting programme heard about the workshops directly through staff members at S-Corner, which may have potentially increased levels of commitment because they were invited by people that they knew and trusted. The question that I posed was designed to further explore this as I inquired about the other forms of contact that parents had with S-Corner prior to attending workshops. Many of the responses exemplified the overall enthusiasm for S-Corner that existed in Waltham Park, which can be attributed to the dynamic role that the centre plays as an important source of collective support in the community, as well as the outreach of the staff members. For example, Taylor, a 26 year old mother who completed high school expressed the excitement that she had for attending evening classes when they were running because they allowed her to improve her literacy and numeracy skills. Taylor also indicated that she received support from the former clinic, which was how she came to know about the parenting workshops conducted by Ms. Wilmot. As a result, Taylor’s previous encounters with S-Corner played a role in her consistent attendance to parenting workshops as she stated:

Mi come ova here, come clinic an’ dem usually have a evening class over there mi usually attend it but it stop dem usually have a evening class over there fi big people like me, a after hours [...] yuh just come ah one evening class an’ get likkle math, likkle English, likkle spelling, an’ dem ting deh, extra help yeah an’ yuh see di clinic? Di clinic is a good clinic, helpful, helpful clinic dis, it support people in many ways. Yuh come over here an’ say yuh want likkle protection an’ they give you a pack of condoms, dem all do all immunization over here an’ so forth. Dem have family planning clinic, yeah. Miss Wilmot kept a parenting class, yeah, teach us about parenting, how we should treat the child..every Thursday when she have it mi come over here.

Many parents such as Ashley, a 48 year old mother of 4 heard about parenting workshops directly through Ms. Wilmot. Ashley explained that her growing interest in parenting
workshops was connected to her previous engagement in other community outreach activities involving S-Corner’s clinic as she stated:

*I heard about them through Miss Wilmot, since I became a lane leader at this clinic an’ it is based upon our community an’ they always call me I’m always here. Yeah mi tek part inna everything. Mi tek part in the parenting workshop an’ other workshops…I try my best to be at every workshop, at every time, every time dem call me I’m always there.*

Parents were also asked “what made you want to attend the workshops after you heard about them?” Some replied that they simply wanted to participate in another aspect of S-Corner’s community activities, while others saw the workshops as an opportunity to gain insight and knowledge on parenting skills, as well as finding a new way to alleviate stress. Lucy, a 29 year old mother of 3 wanted to attend workshops because she enjoyed the encouraging advice given by Ms. Wilmot as she responded:

*Its because Miss Wilmot encourage yuh an’ she have lots of nice speeches…she is a very encouraging lady.*

Kelly, a 38 year old mother of 6 children also attested to the long-term, positive relationships that staff members had with community members as she described the good relationship that she had with Ms. Stultz. Additionally, Kelly had a long-term history of attending workshops because she loved to express her opinions within group settings as she stated:

*Fi years now all of di workshop dem always call mi…Yeah she [Angela] always call mi when she have it she always invite mi and mi come…mi would say ‘bout 7, 8 years cause mi did come before mi have mi likkle last one. They are good around here, Angela nice…mi just love fi explain mi part cause mi don’t hide my part from anybody an’ yuh ask mi anything, mi haffi tell yuh an’ that’s how it goes.*

While many parents expressed their enthusiasm for S-Corner, others indicated that they had a desire to improve their parenting skills and thought that Ms. Wilmot offered good parenting advice. For example, Brittany, a 27 year old mother of a 4 year old boy
explained that she attended workshops because of her desire to “learn more” about parenting and child rearing as she responded:

*I wanted to get a better grip on my parenting skills so I wanted to learn more about parenting, how to treat my child an’ how to raise my child, know what steps to take.*

In keeping with learning opportunities, Shannon, a 19 year old mother of a 2 year old girl who did not complete high school saw parenting workshops as a way to gain access to educational opportunities as she stated:

*I really wanted to learn more things, go back to school cause I dropped out of school early so I really need to pick up where I left, its very helpful I learn things that I didn’t learn at the other school.*

Although a number of parents saw the workshops as a learning opportunity, some parents simply wanted to find ways to their decrease their stress by occupying their time and getting out of the house. Kim, a 23 year old mother of 4 indicated that workshops gave her a chance to take her mind off of stressful circumstances as she indicated:

*I’m sitting down stressing out myself an’ don’t really have nothing at home doing so I just go instead of being at home stressing. I just go there to more occupy my time, keep my mind off of certain things that stress me out.*

**Lessons: Discipline, Child Care, and Self-Esteem**

This section explores the main lessons that parents took away from workshops and how this information fits within the broader aims and objectives of parenting interventions that are focused on changing individual behaviours by teaching parents how to be more responsible for themselves and their households. In order to gain insight on what parents learnt from parenting workshops and how those lessons were helpful in their every day lives, I inquired about what they distinctly remembered from the workshops and how that information was assisting them to parent. All of the parents indicated that the workshops taught them “things they didn’t know before” while the main lessons that
parents took away from workshops were mostly related to developing positive relationships with their children commonly in the areas of communication, affection, and discipline. Some parents also indicated that they began to look out for the welfare of other children since they began attending workshops, while others signified that they felt less stressed and more confident in their abilities to parent. It was apparent that attending parenting workshops gave parents the sense that they could better raise their children using methods that were taught within academic and group settings where Ms. Wilmot delivered information and advice on parenting. Most of the parents completed a series of workshops that lasted anywhere from six to twelve weeks and received a certificate of completion. Attending and completing parenting courses gave parents a sense of achievement that contributed to a boost in self-esteem and confidence. For example, Christine, a 57 year old mother of 7 children ranging from ages 19 to 39, proudly explained that she attended more than one parenting workshop and received a number of certificates, but distinctly remembered S-Corner’s workshops as she recalled Ms. Wilmot’s lessons on preventing child abuse. As a result, Christine felt that she was able to “betta manage” her parenting responsibilities and communicate with her children differently as she stated:

_I remember Miss Wilmot did one fi three months, an’ mi did have a next certificate weh mi go bout 3 months at S-Corner di next two over there suh so the next three months again mi did get a next certificate. Food fi Children have a workshop over there...Mi betta manage, mi know more about di children an’ how to talk to dem an’ show dem right from wrong but mi always remember Miss Wilmot one more than the other one cause mi learn a lot about S-corner, the community. We talk about nuff tings she say don’t abuse unno children, don’t put out yuh children, don’t sell dem fi money._

Many of the parents indicated that they specifically learnt about positive discipline techniques and how to build nurturing relationships with children. Taylor, a 26 year old
mother of a 1 year old boy felt that workshops helped her to avoid being “ignorant” towards her son. In this context, Taylor was referring to how she tried not to get angry or use physical punishment when disciplining her child. Furthermore, Taylor indicated that workshops gave her insight on how to develop a loving relationship with her young son as she stated:

*It help mi out a lot you know, fi nuh be ignorant towards my baby…Alright if the child do something wrong don’t be hitting the child all the time, talk to him, talk to him let him know what’s right from wrong…it teach me about discipline an’ how to love him.*

When asked how they applied the lessons they learnt in workshops, a number of parents expressed how they gradually changed the way that they communicated with their children. For example, Lucy, a 29 year old mother stated that she did not ignore or speak to her children harshly as often as she did before attending workshops. As a result, Lucy felt “better” about herself in terms of her parenting skills and responsibilities as she responded:

*More time mi used to call dem, eh bwoy! eh gyal! and mi wi cuss an’ Miss Wilmot said that’s not nice, talk to the children more nicely. It mek mi feel more better, more responsible...cause some of di time mi cuss dem mi nuh badda talk to dem and mi all malice dem so those things changed.*

Brittany, a 27 year old mother shared memorable lessons that were similar to Taylor and Lucy as she explained how she changed her methods of communication and discipline as a result of attending parenting workshops. Through parenting programmes Brittany obtained helpful advice on methods of rewarding and disciplining behavior instead of physical punishment and harsh communication such as the use of time out, taking things away, and words of affirmation as she stated:

*Alright it teach me that I mustn’t scold my child too much because beating the child will not stop him from doing what he is doing. I must try and discipline him other ways cause he ask for something and he is rude I mustn’t give it to him and I can give him time out in*
a corner and if he is good I must praise him, love him...if he is good I will give him a star or buy him something to show him that I love him. Before I went I was used to shouting at my son, I used call him and say “yuh ugly like yuh wotless puppa!” But from I started the course certain behavior that I used to show my son I drop that. I don’t call him any names anymore.

Ashley, a 48 year old mother expressed how she felt encouraged by the workshops because she learned about child welfare and protection. Her response suggested that parents in Waltham Park shared the burdens of social reproduction and had a deep sense of community as they were not only concerned about the children in their own household, but were also engaged in some form of community parenting, which involved the protection of children that were not necessarily their own. Learning about safe sexual practices “uplifted” Ashley because she did not learn about those topics as a child. As a result of her experiences in workshops and other community activities, she became an ambassador for safe sexual practices in the community. Subsequently, Ashley was involved in talking to youth about the use of protection and giving out condoms provided by S-Corner’s clinic. It was apparent that engaging in these types of activities positively contributed to Ashley’s self esteem as she stated:

*I get fi know more about parenting, more about the value of the child and the welfare of the children dem and other people children out there dat mi seh if you see that child on the street yuh can protect that person same way an’ it lift me yuh understan’? Mi learn about safe sex when I grow up mi neva did know about those things. Mi preach safe sex an’ it come like yuh ordinary talk an’ sometimes some people neva want to talk about sex an’ using condom...mi carry the condom go gi dem, mi nuh ask dem if dem want it, mi give it to dem yeah yuh know an’ say you have to use this...One thing that stick out my mind that I learn from all these workshops an’ these meetings that I have attended is that it uplift me, it let me focus more an’ it is always pushed me to do better.*

The focus on changing discipline and communication practices was the most prevalent theme amongst the lessons that parents learnt from workshops, which reflected nationwide concerns and efforts to alleviate child abuse and violence against children in
Jamaica. Governmental efforts in this sphere are largely aligned with the protocols of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as UNICEF is concerned about the level of violence against children and corporal punishment being utilized as a “problem solving mechanism” in Jamaica (UNICEF 2009:10-11). Local concerns also appear in the research findings of Samms-Vaughn et al. (2005), which found that 46 percent of Jamaican parents of six year olds utilized physical discipline methods such as spanking and pinching, while 25 percent utilized psychological methods such as shouting and threatening to hit (cited in NPSP 2011:35). Anderson and Ricketts (2008:64 and 72) also explained that high stress levels amongst poor parents translated into low levels of interaction and harsher disciplinary practices compared to those experiencing low stress. Jamaica’s Child Development Agency (CDA) and The Office of the Children’s Advocate (OCA) expressed concerns as reporting of child abuse has increased over the last seven years. Recent reports in 2013 showed that levels of child abuse remained high as the OCA received reports on 8,030 cases of child abuse between January and August (Hussey-Whyte, 2013). In light of national crime levels, public concerns in Jamaica over the last 10 years have been two-fold, as policy makers and researchers alike questioned whether the use of corporal punishment led to child abuse and the extent to which this also resulted in violent behavior amongst youth (Anderson and Ricketts 2008:72).

However, I argue that levels of child abuse are also indicative of the same socioeconomic stressors that contribute to high violent crime levels within marginalized communities across Jamaica. In this regard, a study on the impacts of violence on children by Crawford-Brown (2010:9) found that a combination of factors related to the effects of globalization and socioeconomic vulnerabilities in the Caribbean region
contributed to harsher discipline practices and child abuse. The study also suggested that children were vulnerable to macro socioeconomic changes that made violence more visible at the community level (Crawford-Brown 2010:9). In the following section, I will examine the extent to which parents thought that parenting workshops could alleviate community violence and crime in Waltham Park.

*Parenting Workshops and Violence Prevention*

Parents were asked if they believed that parenting workshops could play a role in alleviating violent crime in their community. The majority of parents believed that workshops presented opportunities to address violence because they saw the participation and interest of young men as a potential sign that discussions about crime and violence in workshops could yield positive results for the entire community. However, Chloe, a 36 year old mother of 3 children disagreed as she felt that the workshops “help parents alone because others don’t listen”. Nevertheless, Ken, a 67 year old father of 6 children believed that while there were benefits to be had, the reality was that conditions of poverty and limited resources presented major constraints to engaging parents in workshops. Ken also explained that S-Corner was previously effective in helping the youth involved in one of Waltham’s Park’s most dangerous gangs to move away from crime but limited funding created obstacles for S-Corner as he stated:

*Look here, parents will gain a lot. Mi can tell yuh straight, its not easy to get hungry parents fi come up here cause dem tink bout dem belly foremost right? As I said dem would gain a lot but dem hungry. If you invite dem ago ask if food ago deh deh...You would like to have a moderator talk to dem and if yuh tell dem refreshment ago provide yuh see dem come before it start [...] A poor, poor community we deh inna. They will gain a lot...you have yute roun’ here yuh know dem call Rat Bat, dem change and get progressive through S-Corner, but now no substance nuh deh deh, dem woulda like do some boxing, some income generating project but weh di funding deh?*
Although parents recognized that S-Corner faced financial obstacles related to limited donor funding, Brittany, a 27 year old mother still explained that as a result of attending workshops fathers began to develop positive relationships with their children by displaying affection towards them as she felt that workshops were effective in addressing “violent attitudes”. Brittany noticed that fathers and other parents began to change their discipline practices as a result of attending workshops and stated:

*It helps you know because I’ve seen when I did the parenting course there were a couple of fathers in the course as well and the changes that I’ve seen in the fathers that weren’t there most of the time for the children but when they came to the workshop like Jahmona, they take out a part of it and I see where they are showing a lot of improvement – love, they hug their child, they tell them “I love you” so yeah the program do help us a lot because it teach me as well and other parents that I know had violent attitudes towards their children it helps to calm them a little bit more it teach them not to scold their child as much as how they used to.*

Parenting workshops also presented opportunities to share frustrations about community violence in group settings as Kelly, a 38 year old mother of 6 children indicated that workshops provided a safe space for parents to come together to talk about how violence affected them and how to maintain respectful relationships with police as she responded:

*Yeah cause we talk about that more time when she [Claudette] is here, we talk about crime an’ violence an’ how the police dem come to wi an’ how dem treat people in the area and how we fi respect dem back an’ suh. Wi talk about what we like and we cry and a whole heap ah likkle tings.*

**Positive Impacts and Community Survival**

The testimonies given by parents exemplified the impact that S-Corner was able to create in Waltham Park. Thus, in order to gain more insight about how the absence of the organization might be felt, parents were asked “*what do you think would happen to the community or to parents if S-Corner was no longer present in Waltham Park?*” The overwhelming response was that the absence of S-Corner would be deeply and negatively
felt as parents expressed the concern that violent crime and abuse would spiral out of control without community-based intervention. Parents also felt that others including themselves would “struggle more” because it would be difficult to receive community support for their families and gain access to health care and education services, the impacts of which have already begun to emerge as parents expressed their disappointment about the closing of S-Corner’s clinic. For example, Taylor, a 26 year old mother explained how S-Corner provided basic necessities for some community members while the organization also brought the community together through activities on sexual health, violence prevention, as well as support for the elderly and youth. However, these reflections were met with the realization that S-Corner’s limited access to resources impacted their ability to continue employing positive community development efforts as Taylor stated:

Mi nah tell nuh lie S-Corner help people a lot cause yuh see dem do tings fi people, dem give dem food, dem give dem clothes, dem give dem all reading books, dem gi weh nuff tings, dem help out di community a lot. Dem keep all dem treat fi children, treat fi older people, dem keep a lot of treat. Dem keep all stage show an’ talk bout crime an’ violence out there suh an’ dem did ah talk bout sex education, dem did all act it out there so. A long time dem tings nuh gwan inna di community, a long time. If S-Corner did still on top again, mi nah tell nuh lie dem woulda do a lot fi dis community... dem nuh have nuff sponsa again dat mi feel. If wi coulda get some sponsa fi dem, tings woulda happen back fi dem, cause dem do nuff tings fi di community.

Ray, a 37 year old father also attested to the fact that S-Corner was a collective source of survival for many community members, especially those who were elderly and poor. In his response Ray indicated that without S-Corner specifically elderly community members would be living in greater circumstances of destitution if they did not receive the daily meal that S-Corner currently provides as he stated:

*I couldn’t tell you cause they provide food for the elderly, the poorer class. The people who don’t have it to buy food an’ they can get a meal and that’s good cause sometime*
you see people come sit and wait for the food to come so if S-corner didn’t do this maybe most of them woulda pass off already, dead for hunger, yeah. So it’s a good thing and God provide for S-corner to do this for the needy.

**Conclusion**

As neoliberal development strategies negatively impact spaces of social reproduction, parents in Waltham Park demonstrate examples of how impoverished men and women in Jamaica respond to socioeconomic crisis in creative ways. Subsequently, their tactical and innovative methods of survival and coping were concentrated into flexible and precarious occupations as the majority of parents engaged in informal labour activities such as vending, selling, personal services, and relying on casual work to generate income. Meanwhile, receiving support from transnational household arrangements in the form of remittances served as an important social safety net for parents as a number of them received financial and material support from family members living abroad. However, as useful as this strategy was, changing and even unstable familial relationships and economic circumstances in sending countries complicated reliance on remittances as a long-term survival strategy. Additionally, it was not a universalized experience amongst the parents I encountered, which emphasized the underlying inequalities that existed between families who benefitted from this practice and those who did not. The 17 parents that I encountered relied upon any form of assistance that allowed them to navigate socioeconomic constraints and engage in the “messy work” of social reproduction on a daily basis. Reliance on relationships of reciprocity with partners were utilized as a survival strategy particularly for female-headed households. However, once again this method of ensuring household survival was complicated by structural issues and economic stressors such as unemployment as fathers...
found it difficult to sustain the needs of their partner’s or ex-partner’s household on minimal wages or limited access to employment opportunities (Bolles 1991; Deere et al. 1990, Senior 1991).

With respect to the efficacy of social protection programmes such as PATH, it represented a source of collective support that parents greatly appreciated. However, its usefulness in attending to the crisis of social reproduction and the structural root causes of poverty was limited as parents still experienced many of the same socioeconomic constraints in their daily lives even though they were receiving benefits from the programme. Furthermore, critics such as Tabbush (2010) and Ruckert (2010) highlighted how this form of social protection represents a disciplining technique as the conditional elements of these programmes are designed to target the conduct of poor families through a gendered responsibilization process that relies upon the unpaid domestic role of mothers engaging in the work of social reproduction. It is also important to note that the resources provided by PATH tended to be meager in comparison to the cost of living and basic necessities. Thus, I further contend that the Jamaican government’s effort to implement social protection programmes are greatly complicated by the enormity of socioeconomic stressors that exist in poor communities especially considering the state’s ongoing commitment to neoliberal strategies of development that require austerity measures in order to meet debt-servicing requirements and not the needs of its poor population. The impacts of this can be seen in Waltham Park as parents who engaged in a combination of strategies and coping mechanisms in addition to receiving support from PATH often indicated that they were “just barely making it”. Their major concerns were also indicative of the ongoing effect of worries and stress associated with unemployment, high
costs of living, poverty, and racialized experiences of discrimination that prevented them from accessing long-term employment opportunities in their community and elsewhere in Kingston. In this regard, the most prominent pattern that emerged from the responses was the need for stable employment as 15 out of 17 parents felt that this would significantly improve their personal and household well-being.

Poverty-related stress was further compounded by fears related to the impacts of community violence that permeated the daily experiences of parents and families, as well as the nature of social relationships in Waltham Park. Studies of urban poverty and violence (Holland and Moser 1997) exemplify how limited investments in spaces of social reproduction contribute to physical violence that damages social cohesion and relationships in poor urban communities. The repressive tactics employed by police on behalf of the state contribute to the complex issues related to social injustice in Waltham Park as parents indicated that police were “too violent”, causing them to feel more protected by gunmen. In the face of such problematic issues, authors such as Levy (2009) indicate that having some form of community association or organization is significant in terms of building the trust and cooperation that is eroded by conditions of poverty and violence. This speaks to the importance of community as a component of developing social capital, which includes social networks, reciprocity, and trust that can facilitate coordination and cooperation within and between communities, individuals, and households (Benfield 2010:78; Holland and Moser 1997:9). In the case of parenting workshops at S-Corner, they were utilized as safe spaces where parents could express their honest feelings and grievances related to violence and their daily experiences, as parents signified that they “talk about violence and cry together”. Thus, it was apparent
to me that S-Corner encouraged positive social relationships amongst community members while employing efforts to cushion the effects of violence and economic crisis.

Since the 1980s, Deere et al. (1990:101) indicated that local development organizations responded to and mitigated the impacts of economic crisis on poor and working classes in the Caribbean by developing income generating activities, cooperatives, health and nutrition campaigns, as well as the promotion of educational opportunities designed to link community consciousness to self-empowerment. The existence of community organizations also improved the collective chance of survival while improving individual and household well-being, as “resilient collective responses” allowed communities to cope with conditions of poverty and marginalization (Bolles 1996:11).

Within the context of community development in Waltham Park, S-Corner has largely taken a holistic approach to providing collective resources as their work ranged from health and sanitation services, remedial education, income generating activities, early childhood education, sports and extracurricular activities to parenting workshops and support for the elderly. Thus, when asked what they thought would happen to Waltham Park if the organization and its activities were no longer there, parents attested to the fact that the community would be detrimentally impacted by the absence of the organization while they also expressed their respect and desire for the work of S-Corner to continue. It was also apparent that utilizing community services and attending parenting workshops could too be considered a survival strategy for parents as S-Corner provided ongoing and even daily sustenance for community members. Considering the reliance and the relationships that community members formed with S-Corner, this likely
played a role in how parents internalized parenting expectations communicated to them in parenting workshops. Furthermore, based on the responses given by parents it was evident that workshops were more effective in addressing behavioral issues related to discipline practices, communication, and relationships with children, as opposed to noticeably challenging the systemic root causes of why parents were living in conditions of poverty and marginalization. This is related to the broader aims of national parenting programmes, as they are geared toward regulating behaviours and choices instead of breaking down the socioeconomic structures that disadvantage poor families.

Nevertheless, I still contend that community organizations like S-Corner are helping community members to survive in addition to supporting the emotional and psychological well being of parents and families in Waltham Park. In the midst of financial difficulties, S-Corner remains as a source of encouragement and moral support for community members through every day interactions, the significance of which is undervalued in efforts to further advance positive community development and social cohesion. Although parenting programmes were an aspect of S-Corner’s work, it was one of many activities employed by the organization, which implicitly suggests that parenting programmes alone will not be sufficient enough to challenge social breakdown that is manifested in the form of broader, structural issues such as high youth crime rates, elevated poverty, unemployment, and low levels of social capital. Addressing these issues will require more focused and collective state efforts that address the structural and systemic root causes of Jamaica’s most pertinent socioeconomic challenges.
CHAPTER 7: New Directions and Heroic Efforts

In the current moment parenting intervention has become a way of “doing something that is better than nothing” and highly indebted countries such as Jamaica are noticeably implementing programmes that are pragmatic and visibly aligned with those providing funding and technical assistance. In this regard, implementing what donor agencies think are effective solutions to social disorder, poverty, violence, and debt reduction provides a way to unlock at least some financial support for social protection even if it does not attend to the root causes of social disorder and breakdown. As I discussed in Chapter two, Jamaica’s commitment to neoliberal development strategies was first apparent in the 1980s when Jamaica and other Caribbean nations began to align themselves with the objectives of neoliberal institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. This noticeable pattern was continued as Jamaica committed itself to UN protocols aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the 1990s, as well as to the World Bank’s poverty reduction strategies and the associated conditional cash transfer programmes. As these institutions continue to influence policy development in Jamaica we have seen the implementation of the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) (2002), and Jamaica’s most recent pledge to implement parenting policies and programmes on a national scale (National Parenting Support Policy, 2011). Making use of available resources provided by donors is not inherently wrong especially when local constraints prevent governments from allocating the desired resources to social protection programmes. However, the reliance that indebted nations have on international donors and institutions to provide collective welfare provisions and implement social protection
programmes designed to support families is problematic because the policies that national
governments subsequently implement are not necessarily in the best interest of the
nation’s society and population. In the Jamaican context, policy makers and political
leaders were influenced by discourses of neoliberal responsibilization and as a result
contemporary social problems were framed in terms of a lack of individual, market-
oriented choices that were characterized as being deficient. Consequently, Jamaica’s poor
families were pathologized as being dysfunctional and irresponsible in policy discourses
even though many of their difficulties resided in the structural, racial, and economic
barriers that exacerbated their material disadvantages and limited their access to market
and labour opportunities.

In the context of the historical concerns that existed in Jamaica before parenting
became a policy solution, the deficiency of working class men and women was largely
perceived to be the source of broader societal problems. In contemporary discourses on
parenting, colonial concerns have been replicated insofar as they continue to interpret and
pathologize poor Jamaican families as being dysfunctional family units. Therefore,
parenting should be considered as an intervention that not only targets behaviours and
spaces of reproduction, but also focuses on particular bodies that are gendered, racialized,
and poor. We must also question if the perceived dysfunction of poor and black Jamaican
families is the source of structural and poverty related issues, or if their difficulties in
raising and providing for their children are demonstrations of a long, grueling history of
material disadvantage that was worsened by the retreat of the Jamaican state from spaces
of social reproduction. I reiterate that current anxious discourses around the lack of
parental responsibility amongst pathologized black families do not account for the material disadvantages that neoliberal development strategies have themselves created.

Jamaica’s engagement with neoliberal strategies of development have also affected the state’s reach and impact in local communities, which places a greater burden on small non-government organizations. My research findings particularly exemplified how local organizations such as S-Corner took on the responsibilities associated with collective provisioning and the complexities that existed in this domain. In light of limited local resources and the necessity to sustain social reproduction in Waltham Park, S-Corner was compelled to rely more on external sources of funding, which were largely determined by the priorities of donor agencies and impacted by the uncertainties faced by international partners such as Jamaican Self-Help. Staff members expressed how complexities related to obtaining financial resources contributed to the frustration and fatigue that they experienced as they continuously employed pragmatic survival strategies in order keep the doors of S-Corner open to community members in great need of their support. Staff members at S-Corner mainly valued parenting programmes because of their ability to improve parent-child relationships and the self-esteem of parents. However, it was apparent that parenting programmes also provided opportunities to incorporate the objectives of other community development activities such as violence prevention and livelihood projects, especially due to the fact that there were limited resources available for other programmes. Even though parenting programmes were indeed focused on changing behaviours, they provided the space and the resources for S-Corner to help parents cope with an ongoing crisis of social reproduction even if they did
not necessarily challenge the greater structural and collective issues that existed in Waltham Park.

In light of the downward pressure that is placed on community organizations and households to sustain the work of social reproduction, we should be wary of parenting intervention as a site where individuals might be made more responsive to the social and economic requirements of greater global market integration. I believe that parenting programmes are problematic because of their limited ability to challenge the broader structural and systemic barriers that make it difficult for households to survive. Even though some individuals learnt techniques to independently cope with few resources while obtaining advice on how to be entrepreneurial and competitive, when they left the classroom setting, they were still faced with the same structural realities and stressors that prevented them gaining access to stable employment opportunities. An example of this was demonstrated in the responses that I received from parents living in Waltham Park. Many of the parents enjoyed and internalized the lessons taught in workshops as they indicated that they felt “more responsible”, “uplifted”, and “encouraged” as a result of receiving parenting advice and interacting with other parents in a group setting. However, the vast majority still faced difficulties that revolved around unstable income generating activities and providing for their households, as some parents pointedly expressed they were “barely making it” and that “any job” would make their lives easier. When it came to accessing market structures, parents also felt that racial discrimination, and the location in which they lived prevented them from obtaining opportunities. For as many indicated being “dark skin” and living in Waltham Park distinctly marked them as poor men and women, which contributed to their consequent exclusion and marginalization. As I
demonstrated in Chapter six, even though parents faced structural and socioeconomic barriers on a daily basis, they still engaged in the uphill battle of continuously exhausting flexible resources and survival strategies in order to be good parents. However, discourses that continue to label the social reproductive strategies of poor parents as deficient, as disorganized, and dysfunctional because they are not market oriented have the effect of devaluing their every day survival efforts.

Moreover, the everyday experiences of poor families occur within the context of much broader structural constraints at the national level, as Jamaica’s debt-to-GDP ratio at the end of the 2013/2014 fiscal years was 139 percent (Miller, 2014). In addition to this, the Jamaican state is still committed to the current IMF programme that requires the implementation of measures that are designed to create fiscal surplus so that the nation can pay down its debt and create a “foundation for sustained economic growth” (Thompson, 2014). Within this context, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller indicated that the government has earmarked J$5 billion for social protection programmes including PATH in the coming 2014/2015 fiscal year, which is evidence of her administration’s commitment to protecting the most vulnerable Jamaicans from the effects of the current economic adjustment measures under Jamaica’s macro-economic transformation programme (McIntosh, 2014). Although I commend the Government of Jamaica for making efforts to cushion the effects of austerity measures, I still question whether pragmatic measures are enough to truly alleviate an ongoing crisis of social reproduction especially when I consider the enormity of the challenges faced by the Jamaican economy and the difficulties that encumber poor families. These reflections lead me to consider the future of social reproduction in neoliberalizing states that
encourage their populations to become more responsible for themselves and their households. Based upon my research findings, it was apparent that neoliberalism as a set philosophies and economic strategies still produces difficulties that make it challenging to reconcile economic growth and development with the “messy work” of social reproduction because of the emphasis that is placed on individualism and market liberalization. Therefore, I reiterate that collective efforts and investments in spaces of social reproduction should be the priority of Jamaica’s national government and economy as a necessary component of any sustainable growth strategy. Efforts to improve the material and socioeconomic conditions of families are needed as long-term enhancements to affordable housing, infrastructure for health, education, and social services, as well as an intentional effort to address gender and racial discrimination in the job market would greatly contribute to the stability of households. Social reproduction is important not only because it produces labour needed for the smooth functioning of markets, but also because it is intrinsic to the survival of households, communities and ultimately Jamaican society itself.

In light of this, parenting interventions cannot be a structural solution to collective and systemic issues such as poverty and violence because the focus of these programmes is centred on regulating and disciplining individual behaviours, rather than challenging the implementation of economic measures that contribute to Jamaica’s structural difficulties and social disorder. It is also important to note that austerity measures and policies often get implemented in the midst of unequal power relations between local communities, national governments, and international institutions. Therefore, the rejection of parenting as a structural solution must happen at a number of scales and
domains that include multilateral institutions like UNICEF, the World Bank, the IMF, and the Government of Jamaica. Although institutions like UNICEF are child and family oriented, this organization is also implicated in a neoliberal system that does not touch where the roots of socioeconomic problems lay. I recognize, however that, the Jamaican government is caught between the pressure to implement strategies that reflect the priorities of international development organizations in order to gain access to resources, and responding through programmes of redistribution to the social reproductive needs of poor families. I want to be clear, however, that rejecting parenting interventions as a sufficient structural solution does not mean that current programmes should be abandoned. Indeed many of these programmes are the thread that parents and families are grasping in order to survive and cope. Nonetheless, rejection does require the Jamaican government to recognize that focusing on the parenting skills of poor men and women, places Jamaica at risk of replicating many of the ethnocentric, pathologizing discourses about the family, that ultimately contribute to the racial injustices and economic inequalities that perpetuate the social exclusion and material disadvantage of poor black families. This is particularly important if Jamaica as a nation seeks to alleviate poverty and social disorder, in addition to strengthening its developmental growth in social and economic spheres. Considering the fact that the National Parenting Support Commission is a newly established body, I believe that there is a window of opportunity, however small it might be, for this organization to take on a new direction that departs from the dominant ideas about how parenting programmes should work. It is here that open, transparent lines of communication and coordination between workshops facilitators like
Ms. Claudette Wilmot will be crucial in forming programmes that are responsive to the concerns of both service providers and parents.

I want to conclude this study by applauding the heroic efforts of S-Corner Clinic and Community Development (SCCD) as the organization is not only the beacon of hope for many impoverished community members in Waltham Park, but for parents who are still engaged in an ongoing struggle to survive and provide for their families. As a student researcher and a member of the Jamaican diaspora, it is evident to me that the Waltham Park community is a place where vibrancy, resilience, and determination thrive in the midst of socioeconomic challenges and constraints. Thus, I believe that if S-Corner has managed to graciously serve its community for the past 22 years, the organization can continue to make positive impacts in Waltham Park if given the adequate resources and support to do so. Perhaps my love for Jamaica and situated experiences predispose me to making this stance, but I firmly advocate that we can be critical and optimistic that the nation can engage in collective efforts to not only improve the lives of parents, but that of Jamaican society as a whole.
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SAGE Publications
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Demographic Information on Participants

Table 1: Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent /Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education (latest year of schooling)</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Years Lived in Waltham Park (WP)</th>
<th>M/F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Ken)*</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>6 (ages 31-40) (2 murdered)</td>
<td>20 +</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Anne)***</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>4 (ages 14-29) (3 murdered)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Taylor)***</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>1 (18 months)</td>
<td>Born in WP</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Tina)**</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>2 (ages 11 and 16)</td>
<td>Born in WP</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (Linda)**</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>3 (ages 1-7)</td>
<td>Born in WP</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (Matt)*</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>3 (ages 5, 19, 20)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7(Christina)**</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>7 (ages 19-39)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (Max)*</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>9 (eldest is 42)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 (Adam)*</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>1 (age 11)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (Lucy)**</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>3 (ages 1, 9 and 12)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 (Ashley)*</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>4 (ages 19-32) (1 murdered)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (Kelly)*</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>6 (age 6-17)</td>
<td>Born in WP</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 (Brittany)**</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Vocational Training (Gracehouse Learning Centre)</td>
<td>1 (age 4)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (Ray)*</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>4 (ages 10-19)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 (Shannon)**</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>1 (age 2)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 (Kim)**</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>3 (ages 5-8) + 1 (7months pregnant)</td>
<td>Born in WP</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 (Chloe)**</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>3 (ages 2, 10, 19)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *interview only, ** interview and focus group, ***interview, focus group, journal
Conducted in June 2013 (Waltham Park, Kingston, Jamaica)
### Table 2: Additional Focus Group Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Parents in Focus Group (Pseudonym’s given)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 (Tammy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 (Iris)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 (Samantha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 (Karen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 (Barbara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 (Megan)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. S-Corner Staff and Other Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela Stultz</td>
<td>Program Manager/Director</td>
<td>S-Corner Clinic and Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valin (Barry) Sinclair</td>
<td>Community Development Worker/Elderly Feeding Programme Co-ordinator</td>
<td>S-Corner Clinic and Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudette Wilmot</td>
<td>Community Youth Specialist/Parenting Workshop Facilitator</td>
<td>S-Corner Clinic and Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisa Kaczmarczyk*</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Jamaican Self Help (Peterborough, ON, Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bolt</td>
<td>Former Director –General of Parenting, Student Support and Citizenship</td>
<td>Ministry of Education (Kingston, Jamaica)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants gave consent to disclose their real name, position, and organization and interviews were conducted in June 2013 (Waltham Park/Kingston, Jamaica)  
*Interview conducted on Sept. 16, 2013 (via Skype)
APPENDIX B: Interview Guides for Parents

Introduction
1. What is your name?
2. What was your age at your last birthday?
3. What is your most recent level of schooling?
4. How long have you lived in Waltham Park?
5. How many children do you have?
6. Can you tell me the sex and age of each of your children?
7. When did you have your first child? (Date of Birth)
8. What do you enjoy most about being a parent?
9. What does it mean to be a good parent?

Now I’d like to ask you about your experiences as a child and as a parent.

10. How would you describe your childhood? (prompt: your relationships with adults/parents, the physical environment, the community institutions that you grew around - school, church, other centres, economic circumstances, your struggle/happy times, exposure to violence, sense of community, sense of safety, sense of belonging, level of poverty)
11. Is your relationship with your children any different than the one you had with the person (s) that raised you?
12. Do you have a relationship with your child’s mother (s)/father(s)? (note: there may be multiple mothers/fathers)
13. If so, do they help you take care of your children? (prompt: parenting, financially, guidance, discipline)

The next set of questions are about the ways in which you generate an income to provide for your household.

14. Did you engage in an activity in the past month for which you generated an income?
15. What was it? Can you tell me some more about it? (i.e how often, when, where)
16. Do you have any other sources of income? (prompt: support/money from other family members in Jamaica or abroad) How regularly?
17. How well does your income match the needs of your household and children? (prompt: money for food, clothing, housing, school etc.)

The next set of questions are related to some of the worries/fears/stress that you might face as a parent.

18. What are you worried most about as a parent?
19. What is the hardest part about your life as a parent?
20. What do you feel you need most to make your life as a parent easier?
21. What do you wish for your children in the future?
The next set of questions are about your opinions on parenting and access to basic services
22. Do you think the government should help parents to look after their children?
23. Do you use any of the following government services/programmes? (i.e health clinic, support from schools, school feeding programmes, PATH)?

The last set of questions are about S-Corner and the Parenting Workshops.
27. Do you or any of your children access other programmes at S-Corner other than the parenting workshops? If yes, for how long?
28. How long have you been attending parenting workshops?
29. How did you hear about the workshops?
30. What made you want to attend the workshops?
31. Do you find the information that you learn in parenting workshops to be helpful? (prompt: using the lessons you are taught to makes changes in the way you parent, approaching situations with children differently etc.)
32. What is the most important thing have you learnt in the workshops?
33. Do you think the parenting workshops and other programmes will help with issues like crime and violence? If so, Why?
34. If S-Corner was not in Waltham Park, do you think parents would struggle more? If so, why?
APPENDIX C: Interview Guide for NGOs/Community Organizations/Government Officials

1. What is your name and position?

2. Can you tell me a little bit more about your organization/department?

3. How does your organization/department recruit parents?

4. What do you hope parents will gain from workshops and other programmes targeted at parenting?

5. How can parenting be effective in addressing social breakdown (i.e. issues related to poverty, crime, unemployment, and violence)?

6. What does it mean to be a “responsible” parent?

7. What are some of the barriers/constraints that parents face in Waltham Park/Jamaica?

8. Do you think the government should have a role in parenting in order to address social breakdown?

9. How are parenting programmes designed? (prompt: what are the key lessons/topics that facilitators would like parents learn, was it designed for a specific age group of parents, what kinds of issues does the programme address)

10. What are some of the obstacles that parents may face in accessing programs?

11. What are some of the barriers/constraints to expanding parenting programmes?
APPENDIX D: Interview Guide for S-Corner Community Development and Clinic Staff (Waltham Park, Kingston, JM)

1. What is your name/position at S-Corner?

2. How long have you been working at S-Corner?

3. What are the main objectives of S-Corner?

4. Describe the social environment in Waltham Park.

5. What are some of the barriers/constraints that parents face in Waltham Park?

6. When did the parenting programmes start at S-Corner?

7. How are parenting programmes designed? (prompt: what are the key lessons/topics that facilitators would like parents learn, was it designed for a specific age group of parents, what kinds of issues does the programme address, who has/can access the workshop?)

8. What are some of the barriers/constraints to the parenting programme? (prompt recent funding/resources)

9. Have you noticed changes in parents and the community since the parenting programmes were implemented?

10. Do you think that parenting can be effective in addressing social breakdown (i.e issues related to poverty, crime, unemployment, violence)? Why or why not?

11. How would you describe what it means to be a good parent?

12. What is your view of social welfare policies/basic services in Jamaica?

13. Do you think that there should be a role for the government in addressing social breakdown and parenting?
APPENDIX E: Focus Group Questions

1. Are there obstacles or barriers to “good parenting” in Waltham Park or Downtown/West Kingston?

2. Do those barriers /obstacles affect men and women differently?

3. Is there a relationship between good parenting and levels of crime and violence in Jamaica?

4. What are the organizations best placed in Downtown/West Kingston to help people parent well? (Prompt: church, government, non-government)
APPENDIX F: Research Ethics Approval

May 30, 2013

Ms. Amalia Gentles
Master’s Student
Department of Global Development Studies
Queen's University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #: GDEVS-027-13; Romeo # 6008130
Title: "GDEVS-027-13 Neoliberalism, Social Reproduction, and the Restructuring of Parenthood: A Jamaican Case Study"

Dear Ms. Gentles:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GDEVS-027-13 Neoliberalism, Social Reproduction, and the Restructuring of Parenthood: A Jamaican Case Study" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

John Freeman, Ph.D.
Professor and Acting Chair
General Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Beverley Mullings, Faculty Supervisor
    Dr. Marcus Taylor, Chair, Unit REB