

**THE ASPIRATIONS FORMATION OF DISADVANTAGED JAMAICAN MALE  
YOUTHS**

by

Kenroy A. Walker

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State  
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

Curriculum and Instruction

APPROVED:

Dr. Darrel Clowes, Chair  
Dr. John Burton  
Dr. Jimmie Fortune  
Dr. Terry Wildman  
Dr. Joyce Williams-Green

January 30, 1997  
Blacksburg, Virginia

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## **(Abstract)**

This study examined the aspirations formation of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths. The design of the study was a Type 3 holistic design which considered the global nature of multiple cases, and focused on the impact of work, family, school, peers and siblings on subjects' aspirations. Six case studies were conducted using observations, focus groups, taped interviews and document inspection techniques. Data were analyzed using McCracken's coding techniques. The results showed that the youths' aspirations were leveled, reflected realities of their employment possibilities, and were patterned after their father's occupations. The youths' reluctance to raise their aspirations signals the need for Jamaican policy makers to address the problems caused by low aspirations among youths. Recommendations for further research are offered.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The completion of this study was possible because of direction and assistance from my advisory committee: Dr. Darrel Clowes, Dr. John Burton, Dr. Joyce Williams-Green, Dr. Jim Fortune, and Dr. Terry Wildman. They helped to refine my methodology and to develop adaptable strategies that suited the research conditions. Dr. Clowes guided the study with practical advice and suggestions. His patience when I was frustrated, his direction when I was lost, and his sacrifices when I needed his time, deserve highest credit for the completion of this study. I am grateful to the Jamaicans who accepted and tolerated me, and to the men of BGSO who encouraged me.

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this study to the memory of my father Percival Walker, who worked hard and was still trying to figure it out when he left. To my mother Idalee Walker, who sacrificed much to make her children proud, and smiled with satisfaction when we did good. To the male youths of Jamaica whose future is unsure, and to the women of Jamaica who provide the men with stability and security as their future becomes their present.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Since the 1970s working class Jamaicans have had a difficult time finding worthwhile jobs. Those with college degrees have been forced to accept employment that does not utilize professional training and some without specific skills do not get hired. Many students leaving college find that they are locked out of work. As a result young people's desire to pursue an education wanes and aspirations for social mobility go unfulfilled.

Strudwick (1985) investigated the relationship between education and anticipated future employment and/or continued education as mediated by social background on Jamaican high school students. Information on social background, educational and occupational aspirations and expectations was examined. Strudwick (1985) found that educational aspirations were leveled reflecting the realities of the labor market in that students did not seek further education in any great numbers. The students sampled were somewhat pessimistic about employment opportunities and Jamaica's economic future. Subjects from higher social economic backgrounds were more confident about further education, more concerned about employment opportunities, less concerned about the island's future, and indicated intentions to migrate to the US to pursue the "American Dream."

Dave, Quame, and Ranaweera (1986) reported that during the '70s the unemployment rate for Jamaican working class youths between 17 and 20 years old was about 16 percent. Beckford (1975) reported that the unemployment rate reached as high as 25 percent among young people under 25 years old. The unemployed and underemployed included people with intermediate level of education and those with some secondary education but no school certificate or its equivalent. The Jamaican government offered vocational educational training to aspiring disadvantaged youths that opened new job opportunities not requiring a college education (Dave et al., 1986).

Pincus (1980) stated that during the 1970s vocational education in the US was developed in response to the rising educational aspirations of the working class and the decreasing opportunities for young college graduates to find employment. This period brought hard times for young people as the economic security previously promised by a liberal education was replaced by fierce competition for a relatively small number of jobs normally associated with college graduates. Pincus (1980) reported that the unemployment rate for college graduates under 25 years old ranged from 5 percent to 8.3 percent. Community colleges offering vocational education training to working class people were accused of "cooling out" students (Clarke, 1960) by maintaining the agenda of the dominant culture. This "cooling out" process according to Clarke (1960) begins before the student enters college. A battery of pre-entrance tests are given, and low scores lead to remedial classes which not only cast doubt on the student's promise but which also slows his/her movement towards credit courses. Meetings with college

officials convince the student to choose a “realistic” program. Some of these students end up in an orientation course that places emphasis on the problem of “unrealistic aspirations.” There is also probation that forces students to enroll in “realistic” courses which kill off their hopes.

Karabel and Halsey (1977) noted that academic standards justify the university as a means of distributing privilege and of legitimating inequality. One conflict that results is between low-status students demanding upward mobility and a system unable to fully respond to their aspirations because it is too narrow at the top. Rothbart (1970) concluded that academic standards are located at the midst of this conflict and serves as a “covert mechanism” which enables the university to do the dirty work of the rest of the society. The “cooling out” process is the expression not only of an academic conflict, but also of submerged class conflict. Great strides have been made by a new awakening in education and development. However, there are still problems, especially the high incidence of unemployment. Young people need both literacy and marketable skills and those leaving school need employment.

Presently the Jamaican government operates a two-tier approach to education. The traditional method allows a few low-class people to experience social mobility but “cools out” the rest. The new method places emphasis on the provision of literacy and skills training for the 15-20 year-olds, the development of publications for new literates, the expansion of the Social Development Commission (SDC) which embraces Youth and Sports, and the Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART) Program. HEART has been structured to offer training in business skills, agricultural skills, craft skills and various garment skills. HEART represents Jamaica’s approximation of America’s community colleges.

The School Leavers Program - a branch of HEART - is designed to provide training on the job as well as formal training in designated institutions of learning. It attempts to train a minimum of 12,000 young people over three years and is geared towards graduates of secondary schools between the ages of 17 and 20 years who are neither in school nor employed. Continuing education is another aspect of HEART. Dave et al., (1986) observed that there are thousands who live in the rural areas with a desire to enter teachers’ training college or nurses’ training schools or some other form of higher training. A program of continuing education is arranged whereby students will raise their aspirations at schools within easy reach and be able to continue their education.

MacLeod (1987) and Willis (1977) conducted research on disadvantaged students in America and Britain respectively to determine career aspirations. They found that students were refusing to include college in career plans. MacLeod (1987) and Willis (1977) reported that students from lower economic classes in both countries have come to believe that they stand a better chance to improve economic status through manual rather than mental labor. Jamaican youths are not seeking economic mobility by completing academic degrees and apparently agree with Coleman’s (1965) deduction that schools make no difference. Young people in developing countries like Jamaica apparently see little or no relevance to a college education, especially with the new opportunities

HEART programs offer, and are expected to go to work after high school instead of pursuing a college education.

Dunlap and Canale (1988) and Born (1991) reported that male high school graduates have higher aspirations than female high school graduates, especially if fathers have an impact. MacLeod (1987) and Willis (1977) conducted ethnographic studies to test career decision making and academic aspirations of disadvantaged male high school students and reported low career aspirations among subjects. Aronowitz and Giroux (1977) showed how social, economical, political and environmental conditions can impact people's decisions. Mau (1968) believed man's thoughts about his existence in time - his history, what he is, what he might have been, and what he might possibly be - are of critical importance for his choices and decisions concerning what he ought to be. Scott (1995) and Born (1991) have shown how decisions students make can affect social status, academic and economic achievements.

While America's and England's economies remain strong, Jamaica is presently struggling to exit the economic and social doldrums and return to the kind of prosperity that prevailed prior to the decade of the 1970s when the dollar was strong. Then, most college graduates found productive employment, people benefited, the country prospered, and economic growth impacted social class mobility. But the current economic and social conditions in Jamaica are not encouraging and the schools provide few answers for students who seek employment.

In spite of students' feelings and perceptions about schools, the school system may still claim to give a fair and equal chance to all, and to play an important role in the democratization of society (Rahnema, in Hall & Kidd, 1978). This may be true in principle, but in practice only a minute percentage of the less privileged classes actually reached the top. Furthermore, the school system has little or no effect on the power structure and the inequalities upon which it is based. It merely integrates a few successful members of the disadvantaged classes into the ruling elite, thereby strengthening the very structures that constitute the basis of existing inequalities. Rahnema (in Hall & Kidd, 1978) reported that educational reforms cannot transform the social structures that breed inequality. With the apparent lack of job opportunities in Jamaica for college educated working class youths, a study that examines career aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths is needed to inform public policy.

Brown (1979) wrote that an industrial worker in Jamaica may find it impossible to have any interest in his manufacturing job or to further his/her education because he/she thinks that there is no hope for the Black man. Karabel and Halsey (1977) believed that in the American ideology about equal opportunity through education, one could advance as far as his/her abilities can take him/her regardless of social origins. Karabel and Halsey (1977) stated that most Americans believe in the possibility of upward mobility through education and that the lack of proper degrees may well be fatal to the realization of aspirations. Unrealized educational aspirations, almost always linked to a desire for upward mobility, reach genuine massive proportions among lower class students. Working class students attend community colleges with high hopes that they never realize and are convinced to adjust to their situation.

American community colleges are located at the very point in the structure of educational and social stratification where cultural aspirations clash head on with the realities of the class system. "Cooling out" developed as a means not only of allocating people to slots in the occupational structure, but also of legitimating the process by which people are sorted. Karabel (1972) argued that "cooling out" was not designed by anyone but grew out of the conflict between cultural aspirations and economic reality. At the bottom of an increasingly formalized tracking system in higher education, community colleges channel working-class people away from four-year colleges and into middle-class technical occupations. Having gained access to higher education, the low-status student is often "cooled out" and made to internalize his/her structurally induced failure. The tremendous disjunction between aspirations and their realizations, a potentially troublesome political problem, is thus mitigated and the ideology of equal opportunity is sustained.

Beckford and Witter (1980) wrote that in the 1980s, seventy percent of Jamaica's population was under 29 years old and that the future of the country plainly rested with creative capacities of the youth population. Beckford and Witter (1980) thought that youths learned from the lessons of hardships and struggles and were looking beneath the surface at the underlying dependent economic relationships in which Jamaica is trapped. While young people have been subjected to illusions and false hopes stimulated by the distractions and opportunities for escapism through commercial advertisement, professional sports, drugs, and generally increased exposure to the way of life in advanced capitalist countries in North America and England, the very failure of their "unrealistic" expectations to materialize has resulted in a rising level of frustration and impatience with the glaring injustices and inequalities of class privilege in present day Jamaica.

Between 1970-82 the proportion of the Jamaican population below 14 years increased from 35.8% to 38.3% (Boyd, 1988) yet the education budget was cut. The increasing number of school-age children led to considerable competition for places in primary schools and even more so in secondary schools where places were always in short supply. In 1973 the government took over the financing of secondary schools providing free secondary education. In 1975, due to a chronic shortage of secondary school places, a two-shift school system was introduced. This virtual doubling of the secondary school capacity, however, was immediately entirely absorbed. In 1985, 46,887 children took the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) for a total of 10,066 places. The problem is not one of children passing the examination, as more children pass the exam than there are places. It is fair to say that starting from the 1960s certainly the availability and perhaps the quality of education has declined.

Boyd (1988) reported that the 14-24 age group comprised 22.1% (495,600) of the population and 31.7% (332,300) of the labor force in 1982. High underemployment, unemployment, and low income are the characteristic feature of this age group. The overall unemployment rate for the group in 1982 was 50.5%. Considerable evidence exists (Boyd, 1988) to support the view that economic policies over the 1970s and 1980s have served to worsen the conditions of the poor in Jamaica. Current available figures show that 32.5% of the population is less than 15 years old and 31% between 15 and 29

years old (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1992; 1993; 1994). The labor force in Jamaica stood at 1,078,900 persons in 1992. Female workers accounted for almost 47% of the total labor force. Overall official unemployment has declined markedly, from 25.6% in October 1985 to 15.9% in October 1992, but youth and long-term unemployment in particular remain major problems. The island suffers from a severe shortage of skilled labor, partly because of the high level of net external migration which amounted to 20,500 in 1992, with North America taking 89 percent.

### **Significance of the Study**

Most aspiration studies read by this researcher were done on students in America, England or other countries where economic and social conditions differ from those in Jamaica. Researchers report that a variety of influences impact students' aspirations. However, while some of these influences have been studied and related to aspirations of mostly students outside Jamaican, little knowledge exist that establishes the formation of low career and academic aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths and their effect on career decisions. This study is designed to help fill that void. It will add to the general research on aspirations and specifically to the research on disadvantaged Jamaican male youths. Additionally, this study will seek answers to how the aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths are formed, and will have particular relevance to Jamaica as the country attempts to address an issue about which much is not yet known.

Jamaica's economy was robust during the years following independence after nearly 300 years of British rule. Then, most students graduating from high school found a ready market for their skills, or a place in one of the colleges. Presently, with the advent of stringent economic measures, due mostly to IMF policies, the Jamaican government has shifted some resources from education to other areas. It also appears that the experience students get through high school frustrates them as they attempt to move through the education system.

Despite research affirming that students who aspire to, and work towards a goal, do better than those who don't, critics question whether students' college and career aspirations can adequately predict future social class status. To understand how this phenomenon impacts the career decisions of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths, and to provide additional answers and alternatives to the problem of leveled aspirations, this study will:

- (a) examine and describe some of the structural and cultural factors related to the aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths;
- (b) evaluate and compare the findings of this study with working-class students as reported in the literature;
- (c) make judgments, conclusions and recommendations about the phenomenon.

## Statement of the Problem

Jamaica's present economic, political, and social ills partly result in the lack of will and motivation of students who do not see a congruency between education and social prosperity. Many students refuse to adhere to the seemingly empty encouragement to excel academically. Therefore, there is a need to examine the development of attitudes of disadvantaged Jamaican young adults towards career aspirations and educational achievement.

This study proposes a qualitative approach to data collection utilizing case studies on, and individual interviews with, six Jamaica families. Three comprehensive case studies and three partial case studies will be used as the bases for data analyses. Comprehensive cases will include the youths' nuclear and extended families. Partial cases will be limited to the youths' immediate family and friends. The major questions to be addressed are: What are the career aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths and what factors contribute to their aspirations formation? The sample to be used for the study will be individuals selected from a population of high school students and family members that is appropriate to the particular interests of the researcher.

Until recently, the career aspirations of Jamaican male youths were thought to be very high — no job, profession or occupation was beyond achieving. But during the last two decades, a rethinking and reassessment of these aspirations have been evident. No longer are these young people striving for high status occupations, partly because there are too few of those, but mainly because the promise that an education will prepare young people for them is not true. Pincus (1980) reported that college personnel work to convince students to be "realistic" with aspirations. MacLeod (1987) believed that aspirations provide a conceptual link between deep rooted structures in the society, and the institutional agencies that enforce them. Although both are rooted firmly in individual proclivity, they are acutely sensitive to perceived societal constraints. Disadvantaged Jamaican male youths are acutely sensitive to, and have difficulty overcoming these constraints. By promising rewards that are not there, the structure of the Jamaican society frustrates youths who see through these false promises and recognize enormous constraints placed on them. Since there are very few Jamaicans who realized their aspirations through the education system, it appears that the tendency is to aim for the lower levels of the social economic ladder, or behave in other "realistic" ways.

MacLeod (1987) and Willis (1977) suggested that present trends among disadvantaged students show that they have low aspirations and are not seeking careers in the upper levels of society. Reasons for this belief are many, but included among them are responses that seem to state that students are easily satisfied; that they don't see themselves succeeding any more than their parents did; that they have come to see as a lie what schools say an education will do for them; that many realize and prefer the manual approach to success instead of a mental one; that only a few will get to the top in this society; and that the education system only succeeds in frustrating those who think that they will get good jobs after graduation. Aronowitz and Giroux (1977) concurred and suggested that society works to keep things as they are. In Jamaica, the uphill struggle

required of the disadvantaged if he/she is to succeed economically, very often proves to be overwhelming. Possibly, the experiences students gain in the education process provoke a reality check and lead to leveled aspirations.

Most students graduating from Jamaican high schools do not go on to tertiary institutions to earn degrees and certifications in fields that are traditionally controlled by middle and upper class people. Rather, many pursue short courses that often lead nowhere, or they drop out of the education system altogether. Some, if not most of the causes for students' current aspirations, may have resulted from prevailing economic and social conditions that impact greatly on the experiences of students in general, but especially on students in developing nations like Jamaica. Disadvantaged Jamaican male youths may have answers for their low aspirations but none addressing the problems low aspirations cause. If solutions are not found, young people may be permanently mired in the underclass, and the country will suffer from an acute problem with human resource and productivity. Government appears unwilling or unable to bring about change in any significant way, schools continue with traditional curricula, and society lament the plight of the poor.

### **Research Questions**

The main research questions to be addressed by this study are:

- (1) What are the aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths?
- (2) What factors contribute to the aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths?

### **Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The following limitations and delimitations should be considered when deliberating the implications of this study.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

The study will be confined to three comprehensive and three partial case studies on six families in Jamaica. The data gathering instruments (case studies/long interviews and observations and documents) are not specific to conditions in Jamaica.

#### **Delimitations of the Study**

Subjects selected for this study are limited to disadvantaged families with young men attending high schools in 1996. The study will be descriptive with no attempt to generalize findings to a larger population outside Jamaica.

## **Definition of Terms**

In order to understand some of the terms used throughout this study, what follows under this heading represent the working definitions.

### **Aspiration**

A strong desire to achieve a satisfactory level of education, income, job, or profession. The desire students have for upward social and economic mobility.

### **Case Study**

An investigative method used in social research to collect data. The case study's essence is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result (Schramm, 1971). The case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1989). Case studies are preferred when investigators seek answers to "how" or "why" questions, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context.

### **Disadvantaged Students**

Students without traditional economic and social support needed to succeed in college and society. Usually this means students from the lowest level of the socio-economic scale living in depressed areas of Kingston, Jamaica. The term also applies to students with low scores on traditional test, which places them at a disadvantage in comparison with the majority of working class students.

### **Long Interview**

Non directive interviews with no time limits. A protocol is used at the discretion of the interviewer to guide the discussion with probing questions as needed.

### **Parish**

A political and geographic subdivision with its own local government.

### **Valence**

Degree of thematic attractiveness youths possessed as a behavioral goal.

## **Assumptions**

It will be assumed that the presence of the researcher and/or facilitator have no influence on students' responses during the interviews and discussions. It will be assumed that the physical facilities were unbiased toward any particular student or group of students. It is assumed that the case studies will provide useful information about student's aspirations and attitudes in a shorter period of time. It is assumed that students' attitude about themselves and the future will determine students' choice of career paths.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### **Background on Jamaica**

##### Brief History

In 1494, Christopher Columbus came to Jamaica and met the first Jamaicans - Arawak Indians leading simple lives, with aspirations of catching fish and trapping wild animals. But Columbus brought the Spaniards, along with diseases and atrocious behaviors, and by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century all the peaceful natives were dead. In 1655 British forces seized the island, and in 1670 the Treaty of Madrid literally gave it to them. Sugar and slavery, important elements in Jamaica's history and development, made Jamaica one of the most valuable places in the world for more than 150 years. In 1838, ahead of most slave societies in the New World, formal slavery was ended.

After a long period of direct British colonial rule, Jamaica gained a small degree of local political control in the late 1930s. During this period, which was marked by social unrest and occasional violence, the groundwork was laid for Jamaica's major political parties. The first election with universal adult suffrage was held in 1944 and was won by the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP). Since then, both JLP and the Peoples' National Party (PNP), have shared power for about two terms at a time. In 1958 Jamaica joined the nine other British colonies in the West Indies Federation but withdrew when in a 1961 referendum voters rejected membership. Independence was declared in 1962 but the country remained a member of the British commonwealth.

Jamaica boasts a proud people who have excelled in all aspects of human accomplishments. A member of the conglomerate of Caribbean islands, it is the third largest of the Greater Antilles. Only Cuba and Hispaniola are larger. It is located in the northern Caribbean Sea, about 160 km. south of Cuba. Its total area is 10,990 sq. km., (4,244 sq. mi.) slightly smaller than Connecticut. The climate is true to what makes the Tropics tropical: hot and humid. The terrain is mostly mountains with narrow, discontinuous coastal plains. Natural resources include bauxite, gypsum and limestone. Only 19% of the land is arable, with permanent crops claiming 6%, meadows and pastures occupy another 18%, forests and woodlands 28%, and 29% is used for a multitude of other operations. Just under three million people live in Jamaica, and with a population growth of 1.02%, Jamaicans migrate at a rate of 5.9 migrants/1,000 population (1994 est.).

Jamaicans age 15 and over have a literacy rate of 98% for the total population. Males have a 98% literacy rate, with females at 99%. The ethnic divisions are: African 76.3%; Afro-Europeans 15.1%; East Indians and Afro-East Indians 3%; White 3.2%; Chinese and Afro-Chinese 1.2%; with others at 1.2%. The official language is English but Creole and Patois resonate in the daily lives of Jamaicans.

The government is one of constitutional monarchy, adopted when the island gained independence on August 6, 1962. There is an executive branch with a governor general who is the chief of state representing the British monarch, a prime minister, and a

cabinet. The legislative branch - a bicameral parliament - has 21 senators and 60 representatives. The Judicial court of appeals is also the court of original jurisdiction. Major political parties are the Peoples National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labor party (JLP). Jamaica's economy has a GDP (1993) of almost J\$100 billion dollars, with real growth rate (1993) of 1.2%. Agricultural products include sugar, bananas, citrus, fruits, coffee, and allspice. There are a few industries concentrating on bauxite and alumina, tourism, garment assembly, processed foods, sugar, rum, cement, metal, paper, and chemical products.

Jamaica is a multiracial society made up of people who primarily are of African origins, along with other diverse groups. Its national motto, "Out of many one people," suggest a desire for harmony. Class distinctions from the colonial periods were somewhat reduced through increased social mobility due to education and wider ownership of property in the decade after independence. But any gains seemed to have been eroded in the decades of the seventies and eighties. Religion plays an important part in the lives of many Jamaicans.

#### Education

In 1932, about 50% of the Jamaican children were registered in elementary schools; of this number only a little more than half were attending regularly. At that time only 20% of the school age population was receiving regular education. Some of the causes were due to long distances from home to school and rough and difficult terrain; heavy seasonal rains, sometimes causing floods; lack of clothing and adequate food; and the need for child labor to collect produce for the market and to take care of smaller children at home (Dave et al., 1986). Since then, education in Jamaica has had quite a dramatic history. A number of educational institutions have been established by the Ministry of Education and private organizations, and remarkable progress has been made in all types of education. A general policy for education was developed in 1953, governing four levels: infant, primary, post primary and tertiary. Since 1972, successive governments have placed great emphasis on primary education and have aimed at providing school places for every child at primary school level in order to meet the basic needs of the population and provide a better equipped and substantial flow-through of students into secondary and higher education.

However, during the '70s and early '80s the average attendance for primary schools was only about 67% of the number enrolled. As a result, an estimated 53% of the children of the age 11+ at the end of primary education had not attained acceptable standards in literacy and numeracy. A history of Jamaica's education (Dave et al., 1986) showed that attempts have been made to introduce compulsory education from as far back as the 18th. Century. Until recently, however, none of these attempts were successful. In September, 1982 in keeping with the Government's New Thrust for Education, the Compulsory Education Act was enforced in two of Jamaica's fourteen parishes and in 1985 the act became effective throughout the island. The education system consists of a primary cycle for six years, followed by two secondary cycles of three and four years respectively. In 1990 enrollment in primary schools included 100% of children of the relevant age-group, while for the secondary level enrollment was 61%.

Higher education was provided by The University of Technology (UTech); the School of Agriculture; and by the University of the West Indies (UWI). Government expenditure on education in 1992/93 was estimated to be some J\$2,200m. representing an increase of 29% on expenditure in the previous financial year (Payne, 1995).

Jamaica's educational system is based on the British model of meritocracy. From an early age, students are rigorously prepared to sit and pass exams which will determine their future. Many with the desired elitist qualification have problems getting placed in colleges due to the selection processes and an acute lack of places. There are only three traditional colleges and not enough room for those aspiring to gain entry. The University of the West Indies and The University of Technology, as well as the Agricultural College have more qualified applicants than they can accept each year. Students who are rejected seek alternative means to survive and consequently provide most of the labor for lower level jobs.

Students begin their public school education at age six. There are two chances to pass the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) before age 12 and go on to traditional high schools. Failing that there is another opportunity before age 14 to pass the technical school entrance exam or the Grade Nine Achievement Test. These exams mainstream selected students. The Grade Nine Achievement Test selects the few who will be trained in some of the special technical and secondary schools. Students failing to gain entry into any of these schools end their education at age 15, continue to educate themselves on their own, or go to work. Most disadvantaged students choose the latter. High and technical schools prepare students to take the British General Certificate Exam (GCE) at "Ordinary" or "Advanced" levels, or the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). Success at this stage prepares students to enter either the University of the West Indies; The University of Technology; or a Teachers' or Agricultural College.

Education, while technically both free and compulsory to age 14, has been put beyond the reach of thousands of working-class and middle-class families through fees imposed by individual schools to pay for books, supplies and repairs. The education system is slanted towards private elementary schools which send 57% of their graduates to college-preparatory high schools. Government-supported primary and all-age schools in contrast, send only 20 percent of their students who take the Common Entrance Examination on to high schools. In all only some 10,000 of the 100,000 or so students eligible to take the CEE each year end up in high school with a chance to proceed to tertiary education. Technical places are even harder to come by - there are only 11 secondary-equivalent technical schools on the island. With this picture in students' mind, it is no wonder that they seek opportunities outside the classroom and many migrate to the US.

Jamaica's dependency on "foreign things" imported mostly from the United States consumes most of the available resources and leaves little for education. Young people aspire to go to America or Canada to begin the pursuit of the elusive "Dream." In spite of the differences in the economic structures and educational institutions of the USA and Jamaica, many disadvantaged Jamaicans migrate with the hope to achieve the equivalent of the "American Dream." Historically, emigration by Jamaicans has been

heavy. Since the United Kingdom restricted immigration in 1967, the major flow has been to the United States and Canada. About 13,000 Jamaicans enter the United States and 3,500 enter Canada each year with immigrant status. In addition, about 200,000 visit the United States yearly. It is hard to determine the number who migrate illegally to the US. New York, Miami, Chicago, and Hartford are among US cities with significant Jamaican populations

#### Government

The 1962 constitution established a parliamentary system based on the British model. As chief of state, Queen Elizabeth II appoints a governor general on the advice of the prime minister as her representative in Jamaica. The governor general's role is largely ceremonial. Executive power is vested in the cabinet led by the prime minister. Parliament is composed of an appointed Senate and elected House of Representatives. Thirteen Senate members are nominated on the advice of the prime minister and eight on the advice of the leader of the opposition. General elections must be held within five years of the forming of a new government. The prime minister may ask the governor general to call elections sooner, however. The Senate may submit bills and it also reviews legislation submitted by the House. It may not delay budget bills for more than one month or other bills for more than seven months. The prime minister and the cabinet are selected from the parliament. No fewer than two nor more than four members of the cabinet must be selected from the Senate. The judiciary is modeled after the British system. The Court of Appeal is the highest appellate court in Jamaica. Under certain circumstances cases may be appealed to the Privy Council of the United Kingdom. Local elections were last held in 1995 when the PNP won a decisive victory. Jamaica law requires that local elections be held every three years but may be delayed through legislation.

#### Economy

The Jamaican economy traditionally was based on plantation agriculture, particularly sugar and bananas. However, the discovery of bauxite in the 1940s and the subsequent establishment of the bauxite-alumina industry became dominant factors in the island's economic growth. During the 1960s, the expansion of tourism and establishment of local manufacturing industries were emphasized. Foreign investments and local production accelerated and by the 1970s, Jamaica had emerged as a world leader in exports of these minerals. Bauxite revenues fueled an economic expansion that began in 1965, but in the 1970s Jamaica's economic good fortunes were hurt by high oil prices and recessions in the economies of important trading partners. The Manley government's imposition of a levy on bauxite production in 1974 was followed by a decline in output of more than 25%. Foreign investment slowed in the mid- and late-1970s. By the end of the 1970s, Jamaica's relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had likewise deteriorated.

The JLP led by Edward Seaga was elected in 1980 on a platform of economic revitalization using a private sector and export-oriented strategy. The Seaga government sought foreign investment to help diversify the economy and reduce dependence on traditional export products. The economy enjoyed positive growth rates in 1987-88

spurred by buoyancy in the tourist sector and recovery in the bauxite/alumina industry. Unemployment declined to 18.2% and the inflation rate stabilized at under 10%. In 1988 hurricane Gilbert caused a major setback to a generally favorable economic performance.

Current economic policies encourage foreign investment in areas that earn or save foreign exchange, generate employment, and use local raw materials. The government provides a wide range of incentives to investors, including remittance facilities, tax holidays, and duty-free access for machinery and raw materials imported for approved enterprises. Free-trade zones have stimulated investment in garment assembly, light manufacturing, and data entry by foreign firms. The "807A" program which guarantees access in the United States for garments made in the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) countries from textiles woven and cut in the United States, has opened new opportunities for investment and expansion in Jamaica. More than 80 US firms have operations in Jamaica, and total US investments is estimated at more than one billion dollars. The American Chamber of Commerce in Jamaica was formed in 1986 to enhance trade opportunities between Jamaica and the United States, promote Jamaican exports, attract new US private investment to Jamaica, and provide Jamaican and American businessmen with a forum through which to advocate public policies enhancing the business climate.

Jamaica faces a difficult short-term economic situation, and the long-term outlook is mixed at best. The major constraint on Jamaica's economic prospect is a heavy foreign debt of more than \$3.6 billion, the servicing of which currently consumes 49% of the budget. Although tourists arrivals remain near record levels, heavy discounting by local resorts has affected overall receipts. Cruise ship patronage meanwhile is declining because of higher taxes and heavy competition with other destinations. While export prices appear set to return to historical levels after a multi-year slump, price increases of imported commodities such as petroleum would hurt the Jamaican economy. Continuing environmental degradation can also hurt tourism as well as food production, fisheries and the products for continued sustainability. The preferential access for Jamaican products and garments under CBI, CARIBCAN, and the Lome Convention may be replaced before the end of the century by free-trade regimes under GATT and NAFTA.

#### Foreign Relations

Jamaica is a member of the British Commonwealth. Historically it has close ties with Britain, but trade, financial and cultural relations with the United States and Canada are more predominant. Regionally Jamaica is linked with the other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean through the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). Though Jamaica is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) the NAM has become a less significant part of Jamaica's foreign policy following the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, Jamaica has been active in the councils of primary-product countries, particularly with efforts to receive a better price for their exports and over the issue of Third World debt. Jamaica is also active in the United Nations and in other international organizations.

The island has diplomatic relations with most nations. A whole range of countries and international organizations maintain missions in the capital city of Kingston. The United States maintains close and productive relations with the Jamaica government. The

present prime minister, Percival Petterson, has met with president Clinton and other members of his administration. The United States has been strongly supportive of the Jamaican government's efforts to revitalize the economy and are cooperating on narcotics control measures. The country's inability to take care of its own needs causes dependency on outside assistance especially from the USA. This is thought to have negatives consequences for its citizens. Poor youths are no less affected when they see that most of the good things in life are beyond their reach.

Jamaica's political system is stable. However, the country's serious economic problems have exacerbated social problems and have become the subject of political debate. High unemployment averaging 16.3% (official 1993 estimate), underemployment, inflation, depreciation of the Jamaican dollar and labor unrest are the most serious economic problems. The migration of unemployed people to urban areas coupled with an increase in the use of and trafficking in narcotics contribute to the high level of violent crimes. Young people caught in the rush to make money choose limited short-term occupations after high school instead of college classrooms.

### **Issues in Economic and Social Mobility for Working Class People**

Rahnema (in Hall & Kidd, 1978) reported that the expansion of education and health services, increased public employment and other measures and products of development have served not to narrow but to widen the gap between the rich and the poor. While the rhetoric of development has stressed equality, its observable consequence has been the production of inequality. Accordingly, three major trends are particularly evident and also appear in more subtle forms in developing nations. First, regardless of the widely-recognized almost universal crisis confronting education systems, formal schooling continues to appropriate the bulk of all resources allocated to education in many countries, and a growing percentage of national wealth.

Second, despite attempts to make the formal system more relevant to individual and collective needs, it remains largely indifferent - if not positively hostile - to the objectives of a truly democratic, man-centered and humanizing society. So-called "reforms" of educational curricula and structures, while ostensibly designed to adapt to the needs of the nation and its citizens, have, in fact, frequently served only the needs of an internationally-constituted power structure and the prevailing international division of labor upon which it is based.

Third, the concept of life-long non-formal and adult education have recently received considerable attention. Education planners appear at least to be showing a serious interest in the forms of education as offering a "parallel track" to the formal system, and more generally a means of adapting education and production needs. But since the history of education dictated that disadvantaged individuals will not be included in any large numbers among the economical and socially successful groups, why should students accept what the schools now say is a serious effort to bring about meaningful change?

According to the dominant ideology, students who attend and do well in school can become the president or prime minister of his/her country (MacLeod, 1987). This perspective characterizes many democratic societies as open ones in which barriers to success are mainly personal rather than social. In this meritocratic view education ensures equality of opportunity for all individuals, and economic inequalities result from differences in natural qualities and in one's motivation and will to work. Success is based on achievement rather than ascription. Individuals do not inherit their social status - they attain it on their own. Because schooling mitigates gender, class and racial barriers to success, the ladder of social mobility is there for all to climb.

Most of us are familiar with the rags to riches theme that resonates in the psyche of people. We hear about people from humble origins who have achieved spectacular mobility through their own unremitting efforts. The "American Dream" is held out as a genuine prospect for anyone with the drive to achieve it. But a statement like "I ain't going to college. I'd end up getting a shitty job anyway" contradicts our achievement ideology. Many students feel this way about the ability and capacity of the schools to "deliver the goods." MacLeod (1987) felt that such a view offends some people's sensibilities and seems like a rationalization.

That there is a point in the statement is not in doubt for a lot of students are left behind to occupy positions in the class structure not much different from those held by their parents. Many Jamaicans who have adopted the "American Dream" work hard at the same kinds of jobs their parents had. MacLeod (1987) asked about the static, nearly permanent element in the working class whose members consider the chances for mobility remote and therefore lose all hope. These people are shunned, hidden, and forgotten, because as the self-made man is a testament to certain ideals, so the very existence of the "underclass" in society is a living contradiction of those ideals. When students see that there is no improvements in sight it is understandable when they lose hope.

Hopelessness is a striking aspect of students' outlook and they seem to have lost the basic ingredient of all vitality. With this view, there is little left to lose. Ronald Reagan's remark that "anything is possible in America if we have the faith, the will, and the heart" is rejected for the lie that it boasts, the hollowness it represents, and the hallucination that it is. There is a strong relationship between aspirations and occupational outcomes (MacLeod, 1987) and if individuals do not even aspire to middle-class jobs then they won't get them. In effect, these individuals disqualify themselves from attaining the American definition of success - the achievement of a prestigious, highly remunerative occupation. The existence of this disqualifying mechanism suggests that people from low class encounter significant obstacles to social mobility.

Quantitative sociological research has demonstrated that the social class into which one is born has a major influence on where one will end up (MacLeod, 1987; 1995). Although mobility between classes does take place the overall structure of class relations from one generation to the next remains largely unchanged. Quantitative mobility studies can establish the extent of this pattern of social reproduction but they have difficulty demonstrating how the pattern comes into being or is sustained. Leveled aspirations have

been identified as a powerful mechanism by which class inequalities are reproduced from one generation to the next (MacLeod, 1987; 1995).

### **Economic Theories, Schooling and Social Barriers to Disadvantaged Youth's Aspirations**

The world of working-class youths is defined by the physical boundaries of the neighborhood from which they come. Youths in many Jamaican high schools are from neighborhoods where the buildings are rundown with broken everything; where the roads are in disrepair; fiends, criminals, and crackpots are abundantly present and not much comes from the outside to give any support. Fights are common; policemen, fire engines, and other emergency vehicles are the order of the day, all hours of the day. Theorists have some explanations for this situation. In the most general terms, social reproduction theory explains how societal institutions perpetuate the social relationships and attitudes needed to sustain the existing relations of production in a capitalist society. Reproduction theorists attempt to unravel how and why individuals of modest social origins are at a decided disadvantage in the struggle for lucrative and prestigious jobs. Some advocate deterministic models of production, others put forth models that allow for the relative autonomy of individuals in their own cultural settings. Deterministic theories take as their starting point the structural requirements of the capitalist economic system and attempt to demonstrate how individuals are obliged to fulfill predefined roles that ensure the successful accumulation of capital and the perpetuation of a class society. Culturally attuned models begin with the experiences of individuals, and only after understanding people on their own terms do these models attempt to connect those experiences with the demands of capitalist social relations.

According to Bowles and Gintis (1976) the American educational system is subordinated to, and reflective of the production process and structure of class relations in the United States. They suggest that the major aspects of the structure of schooling can be understood in terms of the systemic need for producing reserve armies of skilled labor, legitimating the technocratic-meritocratic perspective, reinforcing the fragmentation of groups of workers into stratified status groups, and accustoming youths to the social relationships of dominance and subordinancy in the economic system.

With support from legislation and egalitarians, educators implemented what was considered an innovative and welcome solution to bridge the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged youths who worked towards, and gained social mobility. The belief was that not enough students from the lower tiers of the socio-economic ladder were making it through the education process. Something had to be done to correct this unbalance and programs were put in place. Mostly, students in these programs were disadvantaged minorities from all walks of life, but they were also students who did not do well in high school, had low SES, and therefore were not expected to attend or graduate from college. These are the "at risk" or "new students" who traditionally do not belong in the college bound group in our schools. Now that a fair number of these disadvantaged students are in college one wonders what they aspire to become. What sort of jobs do

they see themselves in when they leave school and go out to work? Some who graduate manage to secure employment. But did they get jobs that require a college education? A lot of these students are from backgrounds where they are the first in their families to attend college. Parents hold low paying dead-end jobs and life without an education does not seem to offer any hope for change in the near future. The expectation is for students to follow parents' example and do poorly in life.

If one is to believe that parents' education and economic status influence children's aspiration, how will a college education impact the lives of these students? Factors like jealousy from friends, intimidation by peers and other social constraints, may also affect students' attempts to change their economic and social destiny drastically from that of those around them. Unless there are very good reasons to do so people usually follow the easy way out and do what others do. In the lives of many poor students instant gratification is "where it's at." The thinking is that a payoff for work done today should be immediate. A lot of students are not patient enough or see any satisfactory reason to work towards a future payday. Therefore their aspirations are immediate and quite limited. This is not surprising since poor students do not have the economic, educational and social strength to make investments for future gains. Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock (1986) reported that lower SES homes are often characterized as having fewer study aids and as providing less opportunities for non-school related learning. Parents tend to have lower levels of formal education as well as lower educational expectations for their children. They are also less likely to monitor both the in-school and out-of-school activities of their children. Gadwa and Griggs (1985) also pointed to the increased personal, family and community levels of deviant behavior and economic dependence that could affect students' aspirations.

Students who grow up seeing parents and friends doing odd-jobs or committing crimes, we are led to believe by the literature, are expected to follow suit and settle for low-class jobs, guaranteeing that they remain in the underclass (MacLeod, 1987; 1995). They get some immediate rewards for their efforts, albeit it, meager. That some manage to break away from this vicious cycle that further perpetuates low expectations is a challenge to the dogma that they are random exceptions, aberrations, or plain lucky. De-Pauw (1987) thinks that parents become present-oriented and fail to maintain a vision of what education can do for their children. Coupled with that students also feel humiliated by their inability to compete materially with peers.

### **Variables in the Formation of Student's Aspirations**

Dunlop and Canale (1988) conducted research to determine factors that affect the aspirations of college freshmen. This study examined several internal and external variables, including gender, college major, self-concept, parental occupation, parental education level, and parent's career aspiration for the child. These researchers sought to determine how these variables might influence the career aspirations of college freshmen and motivation for a particular career. The results showed that subjects gender and academic degree level significantly contributed to prediction of career aspirations.

Father's job type significantly contributed to freshmen's career aspirations and to males' but not females' career aspirations. Male college students continued to aspire to traditionally high prestige/male classified careers, while females more typically aspired to moderate prestige/female classified careers. Females tend to lower their career aspirations as they continued through the formal education process.

One may not condemn students' low aspirations without examining the reasons for frustration with, and rejection of the status quo, especially since the uneducated and criminals are rampant in society and appear to be enjoying the luxuries of life at the top levels. Schools apparently are conditioning students to accept what they teach as the best way to economic gains, but the evidence is that this is very far from the truth, and researchers agree with such a premise (MacLeod, 1987; Willis, 1977). Aronowitz and Giroux (1977) stated that schools exist in contradictory relation to the dominant society, alternately supporting and challenging its basic assumptions. Some working class students either resist or reject the notion of book learning and other forms of literacy in favor of subversive school behavior and a celebration of physicality and manual labor. Strong opposition can be seen in some Jamaica communities where the peddling of contraband and acts of violence are rife.

According to Willis' (1977) "lads" in England, the principal means of discrediting formal standards is to see behind them and how they really work. These "lads" contend that it is possible to get on without qualification and school work because what really matters is knowing a bit about the world and having your head screwed on, and pulling your fingers out when necessary. Laboring in modern society is about subjective containment and not extension. This the 'lads' feel is achieved through a definition of labor as emphatically manual rather than mental. In the communities that Jamaican disadvantaged students come from, most of the working population that "made it" legally did so through tough manual labor, and that was not the way the schools said it should be done. As a result students feel alienated and betrayed, resorting to their own brand of physicality and manual labor to improve their lot.

Based on the British model the Jamaican approach to education selects a few of the social types that will be moved up the social ladder. Bernstein (1975) stated that the schools transform the identities of many of the children: transform the nature of the allegiances to their families and communities and give them access to other styles of life and modes of social relationship. The student's response to the school is likely to transform the way in which he/she thinks and feels about his/her friends, community and society as a whole. Foner (1973) in an anthropological study of Jamaica's poor argued that while some educators disseminated an ideal of tutelary democracy and equality before the law for all men regardless of color, it was these very same educators who set the standards for the racial calibration of the social scale. One of Foner's assumptions is that poor people are oriented to achieving goals which are structured in the national system of stratification: they desire prestigious and well-paid occupations, and they want to live, as closely as possibly, in the style of the elite.

Attitudes to education for the non-traditional disadvantaged Jamaican student are thought to have changed over the years, especially within the last two generations when

almost everything seemed to make sense only in economic terms. Students therefore get mixed messages and their changing attitudes and rejection of the present system of education may be their response. In the Equality of Education Report, Coleman (in Born, 1991) said public schools give unequal access to the “American Dream.” Other theorists have developed models to identify the reasons why minority students have such difficulty accessing the “American Dream.” McDermott (1987) took the position that failure is a necessary part of the system. Others consider the interface of the school culture and the value system of the student. Some of this comes from the tensions and conflicts that are interwoven into relationships between the home and the schools. Responding to this position, other theorists have developed models to explain why students tend to exit the education system with much the same social and economic potential as their parents. Students do not seem to be buying in to efforts and encouragement to improve themselves. Ogbu’s (1987) model of resistance indicates that minorities appear to develop a new sense of social identity in opposition to the social identity of the dominant group. They do so in reaction to the way that the dominant group members treat them in social, political, economical, and psychological domains.

### **Students’ Response to Formal Education**

Disadvantaged students have different theories on how to succeed. In America schools are equated with White culture and complying with the expectations of the schools by non-whites is seen as being a sell-out (Born, 1991). Gray (1991) stated that during the 1960s Jamaica’s unemployed male youths exhibited open disregard for “respectable” classes. They called themselves “rude boys” or “rudies” and adopted exhibitionistic forms of behavior. In inventing what Gray (1991) called a culture of resistance, the youths selected those aspects of the moral codes most cherished by the upper and middle classes and inverted them. To risk pursuing academic success is to risk losing friends and community support without any certainty of acceptance by the dominant culture. Born (1991) believed that the resulting minority behaviors don’t only seem to be oppositional, they are, and represent resistance in every sense of the word.

There are also Reproduction Theorists like Apple (1982) who believe that schools recreate the social and economic hierarchies of the larger society through what is seemingly a neutral process of selection and instruction. They take the cultural capital of the middle class as neutral and employ it as if all the children had equal access to it. By selecting for such properties schools serve to reproduce the distribution of power within society. Cultural and linguistic models of education have identified incongruities between classroom procedures and students’ home culture with the goal of generating alternative culturally appropriate methodologies. Born (1991) believed these models attempt to align instructional styles and expectations of the school to the learning styles and cultural orientations of the students.

Aronowitz and Giroux (1977) have developed a notion of reproduction in which working class subordination is viewed not only as a result of the structural and ideological constraints embedded in capitalists social relationships, but also as part of self formation

within the working class itself. These authors think that students who individually appropriate knowledge and values of the dominant culture, or who individually or collectively choose to resist or reject them, are developing their own responses to their situation. Rather than resorting to passivity, students actively participate in arriving at their own socioeconomic destinations. Caught between reproduction, resistance, and some sort of appropriate response students do their own thing by either aspiring to low-level jobs, engaging in anti-social activities or dropping out of the education system. The latter action severely limits the future aspirations of these students as far as the dominant culture is concerned.

It could be beneficial to see how disadvantaged Jamaican youths aspire to careers relative to fathers' income, education, and job, because these variables seem to be strong indicators of students' success in college and future economic status. Since males in some of the above cited studies showed higher aspirations than did females, it could be concluded that disadvantaged students in Jamaica will do well if they are males, but especially if their fathers are positively influencing their lives. MacLeod (1987) Willis (1977) and Aronowitz and Giroux (1977) concluded that the fate of the disadvantaged lie in the hands of those who have power and the authority, and it seem like the disadvantaged do not have a reasonable chance at improving their economic status. But despite the odds a good many fight on. This researcher wonders to what end.

### **College and Student Compatibility and the Goal of Education**

Because each institution selects those who will be admitted as students, those who will be allowed to remain, and those who will be given credits, degrees, and other credentials, it is easy to avoid disadvantaged students who will make the job more costly. Institutions determine which persons will be excluded from the higher educational system altogether. In the selection of its students college preparatory high schools in Jamaica enroll mostly those students whose traits will be compatible with the programs and purposes of the institutions and leave the rest for public schools to educate.

Dewey (in Bowen, 1977) said that what the best and wisest parent want for his own child that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal of our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon it destroys our democracy. Sanford (1969) expressed a similar concept stating that as we approach the challenge of universal higher education we need to keep in mind that the poor, the culturally deprived, even the stupid are our own. In the absence of effective institutions for helping these people, a society that cares for its own has no alternative to creating new institutions in which the child or young person who has low intelligence or is 'unmotivated' can be educated up to the level of his potential, which now is usually unknown.

Closely related to the aim of helping students is the goal of helping them discover themselves - their attitudes, interests, values, commitments, and aspirations. Personal self-discovery is in a sense a by-product of the instructional process, but it is nevertheless one of the most far-reaching purposes of education. College and universities are designed to offer students a wide variety of experiences and to introduce them to a

broad range of ideas, to put them into contact with peers and role models, to acquaint them with multiple possibilities that life affords, to allow them to try themselves out in a variety of fields and tasks, to help them discover their limitations, and to motivate them to achieve their ultimate potential as human beings.

The studies and investigators cited described the plight of disadvantaged students and the role of society in finding a remedy for the situation. Bowen (1977) suggested that economics lie at the bottom of general and educational policies, where policy makers prefer to consider opportunity costs forgone in spending on education. Heard (1973) remarked that the largest common goal in all education is to create and stimulate the kind of learning that breeds strength and humor and hope within a person, and that helps build a society outside that stirs his pride and command his affection. A goal for individual students involving emotional and moral development is personal self-discovery. This is knowledge of one's own talents, interests, values, aspirations, and weaknesses. One of society's goals is "improvement" in the motives, values, aspirations, attitudes, and behavior of members of the general population. Hardly are these goals being realized in Jamaica.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This chapter presents the qualitative research methods used in this study. The design of the study, population of interest, instrumentation, data collection, and methods of analysis are discussed.

Qualitative data is valid in social science investigations (Yin, 1989). To determine the nature of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths' attitudes towards school and subsequent employment, their aspirations and the factors that contribute to their formation, this investigation used a case study design to collect data. Structured interviews were conducted with students and their families and were supported where possible, by observations in classrooms and semiformal interviews with siblings, peers, teachers, guidance counselors and administrators.

### **Case Studies Research**

Yin (1989) reports that case studies are the preferred qualitative strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. Disadvantaged Jamaican male high school students were asked “how” and “why” questions about their aspirations. The case study approach to this phenomenon can contribute to our knowledge of the process of aspiration formation generally and in a Jamaican context specifically.

The need for case studies in educational research arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena. Case studies allow an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, including individual life-cycles (Yin, 1989). Whyte's (1943) famous descriptive case study asking “how and “why” questions, traced the career advancement of lower-income youths and their ability or inability to break neighborhood ties. “How” and “why” questions are explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies as the preferred research strategies. This is because such questions deal with operational links in contemporary events that need to be traced over time. Events in the case studies cannot be manipulated and they rely on direct observations and systematic interviewing as data sources. One unique strength of the case study is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence (Yin, 1989). The case study was relevant to this investigation because it addressed “how” and “why” questions about a contemporary set of events over which this investigator had little or no control. According to Schramm (1971) the essence of a case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or a set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result. Yin (1989) stated that a case study is an empirical inquiry that:

investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (p. 23).

This definition helps in understanding case studies and also distinguishes them from other research strategies. Case studies research includes both single- and multiple-case studies. The essence of qualitative research consists of the use of close-up, detailed observation of subjects' natural world by the investigator and the attempt to avoid prior commitment to any theoretical model (Van Maanen, Dabbs, & Faulkner, 1992). MacLeod's (1987; 1995) model which focused on the interactions between disadvantaged youths and the five broad areas (cited above) that impact their aspirations was used a template.

Case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research (Cronbach et al., 1980; Patton, 1980; Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The most important application is to explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. A second application is to describe the real-life context in which an intervention has occurred. A third benefit is that an evaluation can benefit from an illustrative case study of the intervention itself. The case study strategy can be used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 1989).

### **Research Design**

Yin (1989) defined a research design as the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately to its conclusions. A research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where "here" is the initial set of questions to be answered, and "there" is some set of conclusions about these questions. Five components of a research design are important:

1. The study's questions;
2. Its propositions, if any;
3. Its unit(s) of analysis;
4. the logic linking the data to the propositions; and
5. The criteria for interpreting the findings.

The study's propositions examined how and why students formed their aspirations and their significance for the reproduction of social inequality. The units of analysis for this investigation were three comprehensive cases and three partial cases with six male youths and their families. Linking data to propositions was done through pattern matching (Campbell, 1969; 1975). This was achieved by comparing pieces of information from the same case to MacLeod's theoretical propositions which contend that work, family, schools, peers, and siblings, are the main influences on student's aspirations. This case study illustrated and explored the aspirations formation of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths. The purpose of the exploration was to determine what these aspirations were, how they came about, and whether the findings follow current theories.

The method of generalizability of any findings was an analytic generalization in which a previously developed theory (cited above from MacLeod) was used as a template

with which to compare empirical results of the case study. The design of this investigation was a Type 3 case study design (Yin, 1989) which is a multiple-case holistic design. Despite the multi-case disadvantages of extensive resources and time as compared to single-case designs, the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and robust (Yin, 1989). Each case was carefully selected so that it either predicted similar results (a literal replication) or produced contrary results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication). In this multiple-case design this investigator considered six (3 comprehensive and 3 partial) cases sufficient for this investigation.

A pilot case study was conducted to reveal inadequacies in this study's initial design. It include a preliminary focus group interview with one subject and his peers. This was because the selection of cases may have had to be modified due to new information about the cases. Hour long open-ended interviews were tape-recorded and used as the vehicle for data gathering. To establish construct validity and reliability, data collection followed three principles (Yin, 1989):

1. Used multiple sources of evidence - interviews, documents and observations;
2. Created a case study data base from notes, observations, interviews and documentation;
3. Maintained a chain of evidence through an external observer (at the data reading level).

### **Analysis of the Data**

Data analysis was done through pattern-matching and explanation building that examined the lives of the subjects (Patton, 1980). The analysis included putting information into different arrays, making a matrix of evidentiary categories, tabulating the frequency of different events, and putting information in chronological order. Pattern-Matching compared empirically based patterns with a predicted one and helped to strengthen the study's internal validity. Explanations stipulated a set of casual links and used narrative form to reflect theoretically significant propositions and insights into the public policy process of the Ministry of Education in Jamaica.

### **Population and Samples**

The principal subjects interviewed for this study were six male disadvantaged youths who attended urban high schools in Kingston, Jamaica. Selection was based on low social class status and economic background. When available, other members of the family, teachers, peers, and counselors were included in the samples.

Respondents were asked to explain events in their experiences. Such explanations are best answered by the case study (Patton, 1980; Yin, 1989). To achieve what Patton (1980) termed a methodological mix, triangulation was used. This approach employed

multiple data sources within qualitative methods to interpret a single set of data. This meant comparing and cross-checking consistency of information derived at different times and by different means. This investigation collected and compared observational data with interview data, compared what respondents said in private with what they said in public, checked for consistency in what respondents in a situation said about the situation over time, and compared the perspectives of respondents from different points of view (Patton, 1980). It employed the use of interviews, observations, and documents, theory triangulation, theoretical propositions, and theoretical sampling, (Patton, 1980; Yin, 1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In selecting the subjects, attention was paid to McCracken's (1988) suggestion that respondents not be viewed as a sample and sampling rules not be used to govern their selection. To identify a pool of potential informants, counselors were asked to provide a list of working-class male students. Students were selected from this list, contacted and interviewed. Classroom observations and interviews with teachers were also done to allow the investigator to become familiar with the appearance, behavior and performance of subjects to be studied. It also served to elicit appraisals of the students from the teachers. The next step was an informal meeting with potential informants where they were allowed to choose or decline participation. A few students dropped out after conflicts were discovered.

Interviews were conducted individually and in small groups when possible in accordance with subjects' availability. The initial questions were designed to establish rapport and confirm information. Many appointments were broken or forgotten as students developed new priorities. During the later rounds of interviews some of the original respondents were visiting the US for vacation and were dropped from the study.

### **Protocol**

The interview protocol focused selected open-ended questions on broad issues related to the formation of students' aspirations: work, family, school, peers, and siblings. The broad questions are: What are the aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican male youths, and how were these aspirations formed? Further, how do family members peers, work expectation and school influence these aspirations? Questions reflected the full set of concerns from the (initial) design recommended by Yin (1989). Questions covered the five levels below:

- Level 1 asked questions of specific interviewees;
- Level 2 asked questions of the individual case;
- Level 3 asked questions of findings across multiple cases;
- Level 4 asked questions about the entire study;
- Level 5 asked questions about policy recommendations and conclusions beyond the scope of this study.

## Interview Protocol

The research suggests that job opportunities, family members, schools, peers and siblings, influence students' aspirations. Questions from this protocol focused on these five areas throughout the research.

On schools: Questions addressed how the schools prepared the youths academically; what part schools played in the youth's aspirations; how respondents felt about schools; how schools prepared the youths for the job they had or wanted. On teachers: Questions addressed youths' feelings about teachers; how teachers contributed to the youths' aspirations. On peers: Questions addressed how youths developed friendships with peers; why friendships continued and the influences they had. On work: Questions addressed the youths work expectations; their views of the future; why they wanted the careers they did. On Family: Questions addressed parents' jobs; parents' aspirations; how family members reacted to students' career decisions; how siblings impacted the youth's aspirations. On society: Questions addressed aspirations across class lines; how respondents viewed their prospect for social upgrading; how this view affected respondents' aspirations; how respondents made sense of and acted upon the messages emanating from family members, peers, work-place and school. Youths' resistance to the status quo (counter-school culture) and opposition to authority was also addressed.

## Compilation and Data Analysis

### Analysis Process

In analyzing the data, attention was paid to McCracken's (1988) suggestions. To understand the meaning of what informants said, each idea was examined independently. At this point it was important to judge to what degree the belief structure of the individuals had been exposed and what was revealed. For this analysis a code derived from the literature based propositions was entered at the end of each phrase or sentence (see pattern matching below). Each long response (sentence) was treated as a separate idea and its meaning was coded. Short responses relating to a previous phrase or sentence were ignored, but when standing alone were coded. The responses were not reported in positive or negative measures, so if the related themes impacted strongly on the youths' career aspirations it was not known whether the impact was positive or negative.

Pattern matching followed three steps:

- 1 The cases were read comprehensively and extensively (to get a sense of) informants' perspectives.
- 2 Each sentence was examined; meanings were inferred and written (in short phrases) in the margins of the manuscript: (Informant is concerned with his future; Father wants son to seek immediate employment; Youth disliked academics).

- 3 Meanings were first categorized under “working themes” and were later reduced to the five broad Themes: (Work; Family; School; Sibling; Peers), represented by W; F; S; Sib; and P; respectively).

The codes, which were created prior to the field work, developed from a combination of the study’s conceptual frame work, the research questions, and researcher related variables that impacted the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994 p. 58). The codes were used as labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study.

Themes were identifiable topics that were expected to occur with some regularity. They were given a “name” (ex.: Work Related Themes), and instances of them were marked with a shorthand label (a code). Using a computer, the topics were differentiated, clustered, and sometimes relabeled. Work Related Themes were coded “W”; Family Related Themes were coded “F”; School Related Themes were coded “S”; Peer Related Themes were coded “P”; and Sibling Related Themes were coded “Sib” (see Appendix A). Codes were attached to “chunks” of varying sizes - words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting (Miles and Huberman, 1994. p. 56). Coding and recoding ended when the analysis appeared to have run its course - when all the incidents were classified, categories were “saturated,” and sufficient numbers of regularities emerged (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss, 1987).

In processing the data, the researcher used the following five broad categories:

1. Themes identified and linked to the impact of work opportunities.
2. Themes identified and attributed to the impact of the family.
3. Themes identified and related to the impact of the school.
4. Themes identified and interpreted as emanating from the impact of peers.
5. Themes identified and connected to the impact of siblings.

Two other categories were considered but did not produce any relevant themes. One was the youths’ affiliation to religious organizations, and the other was youth club membership. The codes were tallied under informant’s respective thematic categories, frequencies and percentages calculated, and compared within-case to identify similarities or contradictions that became evident (see Figures 1-3). The researcher then examined the data to uncover patterns and themes, and to get a broader perspective and understanding of each informant (see Tables 1-5). From this understanding, a biological vignette was developed for each informant in which individual stories were revealed from informant’s perspectives. Individual vignettes are reported in the case studies appearing in Chapter V.

To answer the research questions, applicable data from informants’ statements were selected. The Figures and Tables were examined within individual cases and across cases to identify patterns and contrasts within and between the cases. The Figures and

Tables appear in Chapters IV and V respectively, and are supported by written descriptions of related data.

Following the data gathering, initial analysis, and the writing of the vignettes, a further review of the literature was done to discover evidence that defended the interpretation of the data. The collection of citations used in the interpretations are reported under the five broad themes in Chapter V. The review of the literature in Chapter II formed the foundation for the reexamination. Chapter VI presents the interpretations of the data and suggestions for further research.

### **Summary**

The Study's research design was structured after the case study, affording flexibility in methodology and quality of data collected. Long interviews were used as primary instruments and were supported by focus groups, document reviews, and observations. Validation for the study was sought through the review of the literature, multiple strategies, and the selection of the informants. Reliability was sought through the methodology and supplementary information that collectively served to answer the research questions.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Informants

The youths' stories directed subsequent questions and formed the cases' foundations during the interviews, observations, and document inspections. Each subject brought an unique personality, experiences and expectations to this investigation. The individual stories were told in the first and third persons with a mix of standard English and Jamaican patois. Individual qualities were synthesized into biographical vignettes. There was no significance in the order of appearance. One young man, Orhan, was open, talkative and likable; Garth appeared shy and quiet. He spoke slowly, and thoughtfully; Mugabe also appeared to be shy but was not. Rolando smiled often and responded eagerly; Marlon's sly eyes were puzzling; Kevin's calm, almost mellow demeanor was stimulating. The experiences of these young men and how they shaped their aspirations are expressed below.

### Comprehensive Cases

#### Orhan

Orhan was 18 years old with aspirations to be an electrical engineer. He was short, bright, alert and friendly. He had a light brown complexion with freckles below his eyes. He smiled often and his dimples made him look younger than he was. The women he lived with spoke fondly of him and his teachers and counselor praised him for his dedication to hard work despite the odds against his success.

Orhan said his reason for wanting an engineering career, was "Well, through my father is an electrician. So I was thinking that I will go in that same field but a little further than he is." Orhan claims "me and him don't move too good" but they see each other about twice monthly. There were hurdles in the way which he pondered and cautioned, "...but I have to look at the financial part. You see that it is kind of stiff. So that's why I say I am to look a little work on the side and gwaan." About his future, Orhan said: "After I leave school, I am going back down to the country. I was going to get a job as I leave school. I was going to Kemps Hill Comprehensive to get a job in the science department as a lab tech. But because you have to stay there for five years I left to come to Kingston. I am planning on going back there now to help them out with some electrical...or go back in the science room as a lab tech until I gather enough funds." In response to how his friends viewed the value of an education, Orhan said: "I only have couple friends right now but only some of them thinking of going on to further studies." He said that when he was in the country all his friends had similar aspirations. Orhan took his school work seriously. He did his home work and studied hard. He got good grades and his teachers and counselor reported that his conduct was good. He was offered a position to do maintenance work at his school, which he initially refused, but accepted later in the investigations. Orhan said he was "pretty comfortable for the time being" with his foster family and realized he would "have to move and go on my own soon." His relationship with his foster grand mother was supportive. "She usually give(s) me

good advice and ask if I am all right.” He said he would keep in touch with them when he left “and make sure they are all right.”

### Pat

Pat said she was satisfied with Orhan’s behavior, attitude and performance. She said he was a nice young man, very obedient, very ambitious, willing and honest. “I can see that there is a lot of interests in his schooling” is one of the many positive comments she made about Orhan. Pat felt that if Orhan got the opportunity to study electrical engineering he would be successful, but financing it was the main problem. Asked what role she played in Orhan’s life, Pat said she did what she could by offering shelter.

Pat said Orhan had not come to her with any personal problems and that he had a good relationship with his “adopted” family. She said her relationship with Orhan was better than the relationship she had with her own kids, but she did not know if it had anything to do with Orhan being male. She thought his relationship with her two daughters was “quite all right.” She did not have any problem “because the same way my daughters love up each other and then war with each other, it is the same way they will love him up and then war with him.”

Pat believed the academic subjects Orhan pursued at school were appropriate because “they are in line with what he wants to do.” Her only concern was for him to continue in school instead of working. Orhan was offered a temporary maintenance position for \$1,400 (US\$40.00; {US\$1 = J\$35}) per week at his school which Pat asked him not to take because she wanted him to concentrate on his studies. But he said he was tired of school and she left him to his decision.

Even though Orhan was surrounded by women Pat said she had no concerns about the living situation. At the start she had some fears because she realized he was a young man living among young ladies. But after seeing how they lived she said she stopped worrying because her daughters accepted him as a brother. If there were “something going on” Pat said she would have to “talk to Orhan hard” because he was not ready for a relationship. She said “even though many men in his position have a relationship he is not ready for that because he does not have the financial power.” Pat projected that in five to ten years time Orhan would be a successful electrical engineer. Orhan’s academic weakness was math and he had been picking up lately. Pat said she saw all his school reports and they all looked good. His class ranking was as high as fourth in a class of thirty-five students.

Pat contended Orhan’s academic performance was better than her daughters’ because he showed more interests than they did and had more zeal to achieve what he wanted. When Orhan did his home work he used a time table, locked himself in his room and refused to come out for anything. Afterwards he watched TV or cooked a meal.

### Foster “Relatives”

Orhan had three foster sisters. Niesha, the eldest, was working as a secretary like her mother. Tisha was in fifth form at a high school and Kay attended a private preparatory school. They did not study as much as Orhan. They did homework with a

tape recorder and the TV on. They used the phone all the time and claimed they could not “study without those things.” Tisha planned to do CXC exams and wanted to be a secretary like her mother. When Neisha started to work she helped with a few bills but came up with excuses about her own bills and said she could not help anymore. She made other small contributions to the running of the house. She made six thousand dollars (US\$172 approx.) per fortnight for which her mother was pleased. Tisha was very talkative and feisty. She frequently asked Orhan to do things, dominated the TV and made sure the telephone worked. Kay was always trying to find a pencil to draw in her school book and Ivy (Orhan’s foster grand mother) sat in the living room most of the times with lazy eyes as she issued half hearted commands.

Several themes emerged from Orhan’s case study (see Figure 1 below). Of four hundred and forty two themes, the impact of work (W) accounted for 25.57% (113); the family (F) accounted for 35.29% (156); school (S) accounted for 25.34% (112); peers (P) accounted for 6.56% (29); and siblings (Sib) accounted for 7.24% (32). It appeared that family, work and school had strong impacts on Orhan’s career decisions.

According to the literature (Willis, 1977; MacLeod, 1987; 1995) disadvantaged students’ career decisions are affected by family members (parents and siblings) peers, school, and work opportunities. Family had the strongest impact on Orhan’s career decision even though he was not living with his natural parents. School and work opportunities also impacted strongly on Orhan’s decision making. Orhan decided to follow his father’s profession but at an advanced position. Students who buy into the achievement ideology (MacLeod, 1987) want to excel in school and out perform their parents. Orhan indicated he wanted to do better than his father and was getting an education to improve his economic condition. Some themes were case specific and others were the result of the local situation. There was concurrence with the literature that working-class male youths tend to work in the same low-paying jobs their parents did. Orhan’s case seemed to follow the pattern of working class youths as they make a decision about work and their own lives. Orhan had high aspirations and wanted to perform well academically, but most of his friends did not. Because of his limitations he deferred pursuing his goal and accepted a low-paying manual job.

Figure 1 Orhan’s Thematic Frequencies and Percentages.

Family	School	Siblings	Peers	Work	Totals
156	112	32	29	113	442
35.29%	25.34%	7.24%	6.56%	25.57%	100%

## Garth

The Bogies' house was an attached bungalow in a new housing scheme in Greater Portmore. As I entered, the small front yard and cluttered verandah did not prepare me for the order and beauty inside. The house had three bed-rooms, two bath-rooms (one added), large living- and dining-rooms by current housing scheme standards, a wash-room, and the usual small front and back yards.

Garth was no longer in touch with his mother who lived in the United States and they did not correspond anymore because he said "She changed man. Sometimes she is making too many promises she is not able to fulfill." He was not even sure of her correct address and changed his mind about joining her because "I have been waiting too long! As a mother...really. Turn me off." Garth got his job after walking off a previous one because he could not cope. He said "the responsibilities were too much, and although I love responsibilities yes, but too much is not good for me." One of his closest friends lived in the same housing scheme and another was employed as a sales clerk and lived in Kingston. Both were 21 years old and they met almost everyday to talk about themselves. Neither friend had any plans to go back to school. Garth said he wanted to be an accountant and prepared for it by studying accounting ledgers, journals, and accounting transactions in evening school. Garth said his career decision was made after he started doing accounting subjects in high school. He studied accounts, principles of business, math and office procedures. To become an accountant, Garth said he had to join an accounting association which he planned to do when he finished school. Garth said he was not very successful in high school. As he stated, "My performance wasn't good. When I did exams (CXC) I passed accounts, principles of business, office procedures and math. He did poorly in English. A second sitting of the exams was no better than the first. He planned to do GCE in November and took some pride in his ability to do math well. Garth's problem with English was comprehension. He said he remembered what he read "but the problem comes when I am answering the questions. I make some mistakes but I need to do some more work in comprehension." One reason he had not started evening school was the fee which in his words was "a substantial amount of money."

Garth had plans to attend Excelsior Education Center (Exed) if he did well in the exams, and study business administration and accounts. But he said "right now I need to get the English. I need to get the English before I can go." He chose Exed over The University of Technology (UTech) because he knew some teachers at Exed and wanted to return to a familiar environment. He planned to complete the two-year certificate in accounting and get a job. He said he recognized that "if you don't have the qualifications and the experience you are not saying anything." He figured that in five years he would be working for an accounting company.

Garth lost contact with his three brothers and did not know much about them. Some of his friends studied at UTech to be nurses and engineers, a few worked as junior sales representatives for a distributing company, and others had low-paying jobs in the garment manufacturing industries. Only one of Garth's friends was not working. Garth said most of his friends were Christians and their discussions were mostly about the

church and development in general. He knew only three of his friend's parents and thought they were "okay and easy to talk to."

Garth said he feared most of his teachers but said his math teacher taught him well. The other teachers were "not too bad" but he claimed he missed his math teacher. Garth said he was a good student because he ensured his assignments and homework were done. He also participated in class discussions when and where he could. His class record showed he was consistently ranked in the fiftieth percentile. Garth said he attended regular seminars and had yearly career days with his guidance counselor. When Garth was in high school the facilities, equipment and buildings were in excellent shape and included a swimming pool which was later closed. The school had a computing facility which Garth could not use due to his poor grades. While a student at Exed Garth said he was satisfied except for the indiscipline that went on. His major disappointments were the defacing of school property and the closure of the drama club. He proudly reported that he was a good actor.

Garth had three grand parents. His relationship with them was strained because of his poor behavior. He said he was often "guilty of giving them back chat." Despite this, Garth felt he had a good relationship with his grandparents. Regarding the relationship with his father and step-mother he said "Some of the times I have to chance it. My behavior was not...good and I am trying my best to change it." Garth's main problem was talking back to his parents. "When I ready I argue. Most of the times I don't say anything. That's what I do most of the time. To put it on a percentage basis, 80% of the time I am not arguing." He thought his father was "a cool person" who argued about 50% of the time.

When father and son had a discussion the focus was about Garth's academic performance in high school. Asked whether he was going to give his father any reason to change his expectation of him Garth said "Me just going to make my actions speak for themselves. That is all I can say." Garth said he is trying to change but also said "I don't really believe in a quick changing thing but every lickle mek a muckle" (every bit added up).

When he was not working Garth spent most of his time at church with the young people. Garth's advice for his peers was to "look into themselves" because he believed they were lost. "I agree there are some of them who know what they are doing but there are some who don't care." Garth said he had a friend who went to school "only to pretty up the place." He asserted "most youths are taking up guns and killing one another." He did not know anyone killed violently but had an employed acquaintance who carried a gun. Garth was asked to make a projection about himself in five or ten years and said "Maybe by the next three years I will be a successful accountant living on my own."

Six months before the start of this investigation Garth took a low-paying job in a warehouse for \$3,000 (US\$86) per fortnight. His father was very upset because the warehouse was in a high crime area of the city, he believed the workers and their cohorts were mostly thieves, and Garth was qualified for a much better job. Towards the end of this study Garth was arrested for what he claimed was a case of someone setting him up. The problem arose when Garth was suddenly put in charge of loading several bags of

flour on a truck. It was later discovered that more than the prescribed number of bags were loaded on to the truck. The matter was reported to the police who investigated and arrested Garth. The case was booked for hearing early in August. Garth said he suspected his supervisor set him up. His father and step-mother said they were sure Garth did not commit any crime. Garth subsequently decided he would return to school with renewed focus as soon as the case was behind him. He was further convinced that school was the best way to get out of the situation he placed himself in when he took the warehouse job. One positive experience that came out of Garth's dilemma was that his mother who lived in the United States, suddenly decided it was time to help her son financially, his father decided to stand by him, and his step-mother spoke angrily about the way he was treated and charged. It seemed Garth was beginning to get the support he always needed. The situation appeared to have sobered this young man who pondered his future.

### Roy

Roy was 48 years old and worked as a firefighter for the international airport in Kingston for 22 years. Some of his co-workers have been there for more than thirty years. He was of dark complexion, five feet four inches tall, had a paunch, was graying slightly, had thick black eye-brows, a roundish face which he kept clean shaven, and appeared contented with his life. Roy said he rarely drank anymore because of hypertension. Promoted over the years, his job title was "Fire Security Officer in aircraft fire fighting and aviation security." He received a long service award.

Roy's wife was his second, and the third woman that lived with him. They have been married for fifteen years and have no children. Years ago she worked as a telephone operator in Kingston but had plans to try things on her own by studying interior decorating. She seemed to be good at it from the work she did on her house. Roy said he did not have a good relationship with, or knew the whereabouts of his son's mothers, his sons, or the kind of work they did. He said his first wife was sick from an accident suffered on the job, one son was working and another was in the navy. Roy was from a large family of eleven children - seven brothers (one died) and four sisters. His mother was alive but his father died in England at the age of 75 years.

When asked what it was that his son wanted to do he appeared stumped. "That is a hard one.... basically Garth...his decision...I can't tell. Him don't make up his mind as yet as to what he really want in life." Roy said the money his son was making was "bullshit and monkey money." Roy did not know whether his son liked his job. He said, "Boy, I don't know you know. Let me tell you the truth, him really don't come...I try to get to him but when it comes on to the communication part, boy, you know..." He did not know what his son wanted to do other than what (the short term work) he was doing. "He never discussed it with me and said he wanted to be this or that. I tried to find out at all times what he really want and I would help him, but I don't know. I was even thinking about the army."

Father and son discussed the career opportunity sessions held at the school but Roy was not sure what Garth wanted to do. He said he knew very little about his son's

friends. “I don’t know anything about them to tell you the truth. What I can tell you is that he loves church. He has church friends but I don’t know anything about any of them.” He sighed and said “There is so much to say about Garth. He is silent. He does not talk much at home. To me, my opinion is boy! Me say well, him no have no ambition. When it comes to his clothes and things, his attire, him don’t really check for that. I don’t know what he does with his money because I don’t see him buying any clothes.”

Roy said he would like Garth to go back to school and finish up his studies so that he could choose a career and work towards it. As far as Roy was concerned what Garth was doing was not feasible. He would feel better if his son did accounting, or learned a trade. Roy chuckled at the idea that Garth was involved in boys’ scout and cheer-leading activities at school, adding “I have not heard about him playing football and those things, only the scout and cheer-leading.” Roy was also not aware of his son’s academic pursuits except that he was strong in math and weak in English. Although he saw his son’s school reports a number of times, his only comments were that “they are not so good and not so bad.” His perception of Garth’s academic performances was one of mostly Bs and Cs throughout the school years. Showing little confidence in his son’s ability Roy stated “I think right now he is going (to) evening classes for the same English (which he took twice before), but let me tell you something, Garth is very lazy. Garth...he don’t believe in hard work. Him like everything easy. I keep showing him that anything he wants in life he has to work for it.” Roy had no reason to think Garth was taking his advice and said “He is not working hard. Garth will come here and watch the TV more than studying.”

Compared to his peers, Roy thought his son stood tall. “Comparing him with the other young boys, he is well above them. The friend and company business, like say drugs and thing(s) like that, me no have nothing to say about that. Him don’t mix up in that. Church is the thing so I am real glad for that. I don’t know about outside but he does not show it inside. Like you have some young youth who will give you a little back answer and thing, but you have to disregard that sometimes.”

Asked to make a projection about his son’s future in five or ten years, and how it reflected what he tried to instill in his son, Roy said “If him don’t settle down now, and get a good job and start thinking like a man, I don’t know what is going to happen to him.” This, he said, included living up to one’s responsibilities which Garth was not doing to that point. From Roy’s point of view Garth’s late hours did not allow any house chores to be done because Garth often got home after nine o’clock at night, and Roy did not know what Garth did with his time.

The abysmal performance and absence of the males in the productive Jamaican economy created a dreary picture. Roy thought the situation would encourage the youths to become robbers. “I think some of them can do better, but they won’t, so it’s just that mentality they were born with.” He was thankful that his son did not drink or smoke. Roy said “him just want to know what he wants in life and work towards it.” How long it would take was left up to Garth. But he did not have too long to decide. Roy and Sharon threatened to put Garth out to teach him what responsibility was like. Roy said

he believed in setting certain rules and if Garth could not abide by them he should “either get out or take what he gets.”

Roy liked the quiet side of Garth, but disliked “those little faults” he saw in him: his choice of work, his refusal to buy clothes and the way he dressed. Roy said his son should “buy new clothes, good clothes, and wear them like any other young boy.” He said “Garth loves living big and blows his money quickly.” He did not know what kind of work Garth’s mother did except “she is up and down in the church like a fanatic.” He felt she was not working because she could not keep a job. Roy said he was proud to be working “for that is the only way to survive.”

Roy and Sharon thought Garth expected to live the easy life. But Roy is adamant that such expectation would not be catered to by him. “If Garth is looking ahead thinking that his daddy has a house so he does not have to look his own, then he has another guess coming. That is the way these boys think now-a-days. All they will do is wait ‘till you (are) dead fi (and) get it. These kids think that if they can get everything why worry.” According to Roy, the interests of these young people were in “making easy money.” From discussions Roy said he had with these young men he believed the youths were not looking to make a living by working because they thought any kind of job they could get would not pay enough money.

Most respondents did not seem to know what a good salary was. Roy offered a frustrating “it depends!” What was certain was that the government’s minimum wage amount of \$800.00 (US\$30) a week, was far below what was required to live in Jamaica at any decent level. But as far as Roy was concerned, a good amount of money depended on one’s frugality, no matter the amount! He later stated that about \$400,000 per year (US\$12,000 approx.) was a good amount. Roy said that a good salary for a young man starting out should be about half-a-million dollars if one wanted to do the normal things like paying rent, mortgage, and household bills. “When you check a million dollars in Jamaica it’s nothing you know. It goes so fast.” Roy aspired to a comfortable life but he was missing some “essentials” like a car. When mortgage, school fees, and family entertainment were included the goal seemed far away. Roy said It was “hand to mouth business” for the Bogie family, “but we have to gwaan (go on) live (ing).” Roy said he tried to “utilize the little what me get.” The evidence suggested Roy was doing much better than he stated. The construction on his house was a major one and it was by far the most affluent looking house among the subjects in this investigation. It appeared Roy made many sacrifices to get where he was and he wanted his son to pay attention and start early. Roy said he went to work many times without money because “I know what I want. I am working towards something.”

Roy said Sharon supported Garth and made sacrifices by traveling abroad and working as a nurses’ aid under tough conditions in order to save enough money to return home. Roy was sure his wife loved his son but could not take his attitude. Sharon started caring for Garth when he was five years old, and for fifteen years she did her best. The four children Garth grew up with were working in productive jobs and educating themselves. Roy said “all of them are doing well” and reiterated his disappointment with his son. “We were expecting better considering what we really put in. That is why

Sharon gets mad.” The job market in Jamaica was “rough” due to stiff competition among skilled workers, high school and university graduates. Garth had no work experience before leaving high school so Roy got him a job by “pulling a few strings.” But Garth was fired because he was dilatory and performed below expectation. There was no improvement in Garth’s work attitude. Roy said Garth got his current job through an agency, and said nothing to either him or Sharon until long after he started working. This vexed and hurt them both. The hurt and disappointment came out when Roy said “Garth in here a work and me never know say him a work you know. All now me don’t even know the phone number for down there. He never come and give it to me.” The statement seemed to lie at the bottom of Garth’s present troubles in the home, but Roy blamed the breakdown in father-son connection on a communication problem.

Perhaps in rebellion against Roy and Sharon, Garth studied carpentry at HEART then worked at a fast food restaurant against his father’s wishes. Garth was promptly issued an ultimatum to leave the home or secure a worthwhile job. (Garth later said he went to HEART only because Roy was pressuring him to do something). But Roy said he had to “put his foot down or he would still be here sitting down watching TV.” Roy believed Sharon treated Garth as she would her own child, and wanted to see the best of him after putting out so much. He said it was reasonable to expect Garth to make something good of himself irrespective of the fact he was not Sharon’s child. Roy and Sharon participated in PTA meetings and activities and had many conversations with Garth’s teachers. The teachers said Garth’s actions, behavior, and the way he carried himself at school gave the impression that he lived and came from nowhere. Teachers felt Garth could do much better but was too lazy to put in the effort. Roy even decided to pay for college (UTech) if Garth passed his subjects and wanted to go. Garth could expect help from his father only if he showed serious interest.

Roy said he thought something was wrong with Garth because he did not believe in working for what he wanted. Roy said he only asked his son to “take a turn in his life” for which he was not going to wait too long. Sharon was willing to wait five years.

### Sharon

Sharon was a beautiful, petite, well proportioned, mulatto woman with accented African-Indian-European features. Taller than her husband, she was five feet six inches tall. She topped the scale at one hundred and thirty pounds. She wore simple light multi-colored frocks that invited the wind to play. She wore her long, black hair in “country plaits” style during our meetings. Her eyes held me trapped in attention and her nose belie her African roots. The proud protrusions of her lips would tantalize, provoke, and embarrass the most audacious man. Her chin was long above an elegant neck. When she spoke her eyes came alive and watched me closely with a searching, sultry, lingering look that made me very uncomfortable. She was thirty-eight years old but depending on her mood could look like twenty eight. She was married for fifteen years but there were no children in the union.

Sharon claimed responsibility for all the work in and around the house including laying tiles, paintings, all the decorating, and the design of the house’s interior. Three

years ago the Bogies moved to this new house, (their first), and Sharon decided to do a full time job of making it look good. The flooring had fancy tiles that Sharon brought from Brooklyn. The walls had paintings, racks, family pictures, a neat looking clock, and other decorations. There were added ceiling lights in each of the two main rooms and they illuminated the furniture Sharon's uncle made.

Sharon was impatient with Garth for taking too long to decide on a career path or to return to school. She said she registered Garth in evening school to study English so that he could go on with his education. Garth procrastinated so Sharon made initial contacts, completed the necessary forms, and got money from Garth to pay the required fees. She took credit for Garth's student status but said he was lackadaisical and had to be constantly pushed to attend school. She did not know if the school fees were paid. Garth said he was attending school but Sharon appeared unconvinced and uninterested.

Sharon thought Garth's academic problems resulted from his inability to reason, which I did not detect. On the contrary, in our discussions, Garth discussed a wide range of topics and used correct expressions most of the times he spoke with me. Garth was strong in math but Sharon believed "math alone cannot carry you around the world. When you have English you have a better chance of getting a proper job." Sharon said she had no special job in mind for Garth, and offered "Him must know what him want to do. Understand me, you have a child, (you) send him to school, you give him the best you can, you don't expect to have him sitting in here. You expect him to hold down a job so that he can handle himself. Someone who can stick up for himself."

Sharon discussed her perception of Garth's career decisions and her role in their implementation. "You can't choose for children. You can only tell them you don't want them boxing around." She wondered aloud how it would look if she continued to support Garth at his age. "After me send him to Excelsior Primary, Excelsior High School, Excelsior Community College; me send him to Saturday school, and now him a just behave like that! Garth go out there and wasted his time and now him a come back and expect you (her) to pay. I am not paying." Sharon expected Garth to be "holding down a good job" and her disappointment was obvious. She seemed annoyed when I asked for her idea of a good job. "I don't know what Garth wants. First he said he wanted to be an accountant, fine with me if that is what he wants." Garth switched from computer programming to accounting and Sharon believed "you can't be jumping from one thing to the other. You have to hold down one thing first. You can't be master or jack of all trades." She said "If Garth had done well in school, if he were really willing to try and put interest in it, I wouldn't mind supporting him." But Garth's sitting around annoyed Sharon because it "showed he was not putting any interest in anything."

Sharon said she was frightened to learn Garth worked in a warehouse. When Garth was "promoted" he said nothing to his parents. One morning Roy saw him putting on a tie, and on further inquiry learned of the "upward" move from loading flour on a truck to "filing and other stuff" in an office. The promotion meant \$1,000 (US\$29) more on his paycheck but no health benefits or other worthwhile incentives. It appeared that Garth's love for what Sharon called mediocrity had apparently taken its toll on her and she was at a loss for solutions.

Sharon said the “least meaningful amount of money (one) could work for in Jamaica was \$3,000 (US\$86) a week and that is a drop in the ocean.” Sharon later said a monthly sum of \$8,000 (US\$230) would be acceptable. Sharon said she was awaiting the day when Garth would be self sufficient and “not around me to be annoying me and begging me for anything.” Garth was in a predicament for even if he were earning a decent salary he would not have been allowed to stay in the house. Sharon gave an emphatic “no” to that question saying “Garth must go on his own. He must put his perspective right and go on his own. If he is going to live here he must start paying his way in the house.”

Garth’s teachers said that he sometimes “just get rough with the pickney them and want to use chair and hit them down” (fights and hits other students with chairs). This behavior was first exhibited in fourth form. Garth even lost his rented school books which Sharon had to pay for. Garth considered returning to Exed to begin his accounting career and Sharon was all for it. “You see when it comes to education, I am behind you all the way if I see that you are interested. I never got all those opportunities so I would push Garth if I see that he is willing to work because I realize that you have to have a “backitive” (someone supportive) these days. She said he had an “I don’t care” attitude which came from his mother whom she called “simple and slow.” Sharon said she knew Garth’s mother. “Sometimes you don’t want to listen to her talk.”

Sharon said she knew Mark, one of Garth’s friends, and laughed when I asked about him. He was a year older than Garth but they were in the same grade at different schools. He lived next door and helped Garth with his school work. Mark was studying engineering at UTech. Sharon continued to call Garth “slow” and “lax” and believed he was getting too much. She was conscious of her own susceptibility and cautioned “Garth is not really my birth child so I don’t want anybody to talk about step-mother and what have you but what I did for Garth is way more than what Ena did for Garth.” She paid for Garth’s exams when Ena did not but refused to pay for “irrelevant subjects” like French and social and human biology “because they totally are not the relevant subjects to what he wanted to do.”

Sharon refused to blame the teachers for Garth’s poor achievements. When asked what role she thought the school played in the boy’s preparation for work she said that the teacher can only do so much and no more and that it was up to the students. Asked how much time Garth had to get rid of his laziness and turn his life around Sharon said she did not know but said “my tolerance run out long time.” She thought it was full time Garth “ruffle up him feathers and take a little pride in himself.”

Sharon knew Garth’s paternal grandmother who visited from the country. Garth visited her as recently as last May. Sharon said she was close to Garth’s grandmother but did not know how close Garth was to her. She judged the relationship to be “all right” but had never overheard a conversation between them. “Granny sees me more often than how she sees her grandson Roy” she boasted. Sharon’s father was dead. Auntie Ester (Sharon’s mother) was a house-wife and Ma (Sharon’s grand-mother) whom she grew up with was a 91 year-old pensioner. Sharon’s father was a jack of all trades. He was a hatter, an artist, and did alterations on clothes. He specialized in the craft when he lived

in Canada. He was 82 years old when he died and Sharon had only praise for her father, a black man who had 9 children with different women. Sharon’s mother-in-law was white and her grand-mother had Chinese and Indian blood in her veins. Sharon met one niece a few years ago (I was shown a picture of a young woman who looked white). Some of Sharon’s sisters- and brothers-in-law were white. Despite the mix Sharon declared “I am a real Negro!”

A tabulation of Garth’s themes is displayed in Figure 2 below.  
 Work = 22.56% (208); Family = 38.83% (358); School = 24.40% (225);  
 Peers = 9.98% (92); and Siblings = 4.23% (39).

Figure 2 Garth’s Thematic Frequencies and Percentages

Family	Peers	Siblings	School	Work	Totals
358	92	39	225	208	922
38.83%	9.98%	4.23%	24.40%	22.56	100%

Garth placed some importance on education and work but (as in Orhan’s case) family pressures had the strongest impact on his career decisions. Some themes were case specific (step-mother’s influence) and others transcend cases (ultimatums and work attitudes of Orhan and Garth). Garth wanted the male to “take charge in his house” but did not seem to be preparing to do the same himself. He did not aspire to his father’s profession, avoided peer pressures and refused parental guidance. He was considered lazy, unkempt and easily satisfied.

Mugabe

Mugabe was a tall, thin, handsome, soft-spoken, seemingly shy, 20 year old youth. (His father named him after the African president Mugabe). When he was a small boy family friends from Africa wanted to adopt Mugabe and take him to Africa but his father refused. Mugabe’s eyes were large. He had thick eye brows, grew his hair long, and seemed to be searching for explanations to why he was not working or attending school. He walked languidly, was slow in answering questions, and stingy with his responses. Mugabe had not decided on a career but wanted to own his own business. He said he was willing to settle for “something that pays well enough.” After saving enough money Mugabe planned to start any business that could be later extended. He said there were many businesses to choose from and figured it would take about one hundred thousand dollars to start. When asked to make a choice between the many businesses in the area Mugabe narrowed his choices to “a bar or a club, or a clothing store.” Mugabe considered a partnership with his mother who wanted her own sewing business, because it was easier for her to obtain financing. Mugabe’s mother traveled abroad and worked as

a nurse for as long as six months at a time. During the course of this study she was away. Mugabe indicated he would like to accompany her on a trip to the United States, but he did not have a visa. Like Garth, Mugabe had been out of high school for two years, but unlike Garth he was not doing anything productive. He thought he had time to “make his move.”

Mugabe attended St. Andrew Technical High School (STATHS) and studied electronics and auto mechanic in first form. He left prior to completing second form. He attended the Vocational Training and Development Institute (VTDI) in Gordon Town for one year. While there he learned electronics, math, English and technical drawing. But “it never work out up there” Mugabe commented. In fact it seemed that nothing had “worked out” so far for Mugabe. After three years of post primary education Mugabe was out of school, unemployed and not sure what his next step would be. He dropped out of VTDI he said, “because my mind changed again.” Then he did math and accounts in the CXC examination “but that did not work out either.” The results were poor. He did not seem too concerned about his poor performance however because he laughed as he described his low grades. Last year Mugabe failed his CXC examination. Mugabe claimed he studied but the exams were difficult because most of what he studied did not appear on the examination.

Mugabe said he felt upset as a result of the exam experience. He thought about joining the army as a lieutenant officer instead of a regular recruit. The requirements were high so Mugabe did not apply. He said he no longer had the intention to join the army and planned to do a computer course at Exed some time later. He said he wanted to work until September and then return to school at Exed to pursue a certificate in computers. He was unsure whether he would get a job afterwards, or if he would need to do further studies at UTech. He said if he got a job it would not be for much money but the certificate was a requirement for admission to UTech. Ultimately Mugabe wanted to have his own business. Of that he seemed reasonably sure. He limited himself to two years after UTech in which to get a job and earn and save enough money to get the \$100,000 he estimated was needed to start his own business.

Mugabe had two sisters at home and a step-brother who lived on his own. His smaller fourteen year-old sister was not involved in Mugabe’s affairs, and his twenty-five year-old sister wanted him to join the army without delay. Mugabe said he did not discuss much with his father who patiently waited for him to do something with his life. “We don’t really talk about it, but he will ask me if I am not going to get a work.” Mugabe was under some pressure to do something because his father refused to support a noncontributing son.

Mugabe said his friend Shaun did not have much to say about Mugabe’s plans or why he was not in school because he knew the situation. Mugabe claimed to have “lots of friends” both in and out of school. One friend left school with “a lot of subjects” and could not find employment because he was “over-qualified.” Mugabe said he met his friends at their homes or the mall. They went to movies, ‘sessions’ and ‘clubs’ together. Mugabe’s teachers’ commented that he “has the ability but is lazy,” “could work harder” or “need improvement.” Mugabe said the teachers were helpful “because when you have

problems you can go to them.” After years of schooling Mugabe said he was only prepared to do CXC’s. He believed that with CXC’s passes “you can get some types of work but the technical schools trained students for work.” The two years Mugabe spent at St. Andrew Technical High School were not enough because the curriculum focused on “writing and theory.” The next two years would include practicals from job related experiences, but Mugabe withdrew early. During the second form at high school, students were given a choice of careers, and third and fourth forms were spent developing skills in the chosen areas. Mugabe selected electronics which he said he first became aware of in the second form. He had a friend who knew electronics well and allowed him to watch when he worked.

Asked to look ahead, Mugabe said in five or ten years time his plans were “to open my own business and live by myself alone.” His life would change for the best and would include a house and a car. He was familiar with a popular reggae song encouraging youths to keep many girl friends, but said he would not follow such advice. There were no plans for children or a permanent woman in his life. Eventually he would like to become a father but would like to “have the money first” which in Mugabe’s opinion required “a lot more than a million dollars because you can’t get a house for a million.” Mugabe said his friends’ future would be occupied with work and college activities. Mugabe seemed unsure of himself during the initial interviews, but had since managed to put “a few things” in focus. His father would be happy to learn about this new thinking because he waited on Mugabe to make a decision and was more than a little concerned.

### Trevor

Trevor was Mugabe’s sixty years old father with a wife, (who was traveling in the US), two daughters and Mugabe. There was one son living elsewhere who was only briefly mentioned in conversations with the family. Trevor was an amicable gray-bearded man, shortish, had a paunch and drove an old car. His house was modern and well kept. Trevor drank and smoked often. He had a gravelly voice, and coughed frequently when he spoke. But his voice was forceful and strong at times and laughter and seriousness interchangeably masked his face. Trevor worked at several professions. He was an optical technician and a welder, and ran his own bar and wholesale/retail business. He attended St. Andrew Technical High School evening division, and got optical training at Imperial Optical Company. He was proud of the ten years he spent working with specialists from England, Germany and France. He was seeking to begin a new economic venture with a partner, and hoped to be off and running within a few weeks.

Trevor stated that his son refused to stay in school. “I don’t know for sure why he withdrew from school but I asked him. I questioned him. I talked to him, and him say that him head cannot take the book.” Mugabe told his father he would prefer to learn a trade instead of studying academic courses in school. Trevor said his son requested permission to learn a trade but the request was considered premature and therefore denied. At that time Mugabe was in school two years. Students had to follow a strict curriculum and there were no exceptions. Discouraged, Mugabe left school before he could pursue a trade. Trevor was not choosing a special career for his son. Mugabe was

free to choose “anything that him love.” Trevor said he had discussed electronics technician work with Mugabe when he was much smaller. Trevor said he noticed that his neighbor’s son (who was twenty six years old and grew up with Mugabe) wasn’t doing well in school. He went to an electronics school and learned to be an electronics technician. He had a job and was doing well. Both young men were friends since they were small boys growing up together. When the Marks moved to the neighborhood Mugabe was one year old and the youth next door was four years old. They have been very good friends since. Trevor hoped “something will rub” off on Mugabe. But he said he had no knowledge that occurred. “I just saw both of them many times doing a lot of things together.” He outlined his willingness to support his son’s decisions. “When he told me that he wanted to learn electronics I even took the radio out of my car and gave it to him so that he could dismantle it and learn from the experience.”

Mugabe older sister was pursuing a psychology degree at UWI and Trevor was proud of her. Trevor felt confident about the quality of the education available in the schools. “I think it (quality of education) is all right. It is up to date. I feel they (students) get good teaching.” He felt the home had an important role to play as well. He said parents must make sure children go to school and do home work. Trevor did not blame anyone for his son’s condition and was willing to “stick out his neck to see (his) children learn.” He said he was aware of the maxim “you can lead a cow to (the) water but you can’t force him to drink. Trevor said he confirmed his son’s apathetic academic performance with Mugabe’s teachers. Trevor gave Mugabe until September to do something before taking any action. He said he discussed the situation with his daughter alone, and that Mugabe was not aware of it, but he was. Trevor made sacrifices for Mugabe. He met with appropriate authorities about a trade or regular schooling, and tried to get a job for him. But without the required skill or training it was a difficult prospect, and the downsizing of major companies made it almost impossible.

Trevor’s father worked as a plumber and welder with the British railway service and the Post Office. But Trevor did not know much about him because he went to England when Trevor was young. Trevor said he followed his father’s footsteps and did welding. He said “He is the reason I love welding.”

Trevor said he liked the idea of women in strong positions and welcome the influx of women moving up. He remembered the lone female drivers of his boyhood days but in his housing scheme almost every woman drove a car. There were about ten homes close to Trevor’s house and he said they were all without men. (He pointed to women and cars in nearby yards). There were reasons, according to Trevor, why the women were becoming professionals ahead of the males. He felt the boys were easily led. They went astray and become gang members and were not interested in anything. They went to dances and movies, and fooled around and wasted time while the girls stayed home and studied. He believed education was the key and said his daughters remained at home and studied while his son roamed.

Trevor said all his children had to decide for themselves what to make of their future because the only impact he could have was “.to give then legacy. Ultimately they have to decide what they want to do and how they want to go about their lives. I can

always advice them about certain things, I can talk to them about certain things.” He recognized the dangers youths faced from violence and said he cautioned his son against engaging in dubious activities. But Trevor saw a bright future for his children because there were more opportunities for them now than there were ten or twenty years ago.

Trevor agreed that manual labor used to be the way to make a good living, but felt that was no longer the case. He said people were taught that education was the key. “And if you did not have an education you may not even get a job to sweep streets anymore.” In Jamaica now you must learn he said. “You must go to school, or you must have some education or else you won’t be getting anything in the near future.” Trevor said he left school when he was pretty young and did not get much schooling. He was only 13 years old when he left all-age school and shared the setbacks he suffered because of it with his children. After leaving school Trevor “did a little thing” on his own, passed some exams and then went to work. He wanted to pass all the exams he could in history but he “opened up a business” which came between him and his studies. At the time he was in his twenties, married, and had his first daughter. But whatsoever Trevor did, he said he did it well, without any help from anybody. “I did it a small way so that I could manage it. But I wanted to do bigger things.”

### Lisa

Mugabe’s sister Lisa, was a sweet, honest likable young woman of twenty five. She was five feet two inches tall and spoke with a soft well trained and deliberate voice. She completed the first year of a bachelor’s degree program in psychology. She was in the first batch of the BA in psychology program inaugurated in September 1995. She also completed a certificate in social work. Her long term career plans were to pursue doctoral studies in clinical or counseling psychology at a foreign university. Our discussions were held at her home and on the university campus where she had a part-time job.

Things were not easy for Lisa. In secondary school she pursued a secretary’s career path and worked for seven years as a secretary. She said she did not do well on exams and math was a tough course for her. At school her classes were filled with mostly women even in the traditionally male dominated “hard sciences.” While on her last job she decided to seek further studies in order to give herself a better chance of improving her economic worth. After working seven years Lisa decided to return to school and felt her brother could get the direction he needed in the army.

She said her friends were cautious about men, having experienced “their usual lies and deceitfulness.” She lamented the plight of the men saying they were taking the easy way out because of the pressures to provide. The women therefore had to “date and marry down.” The men in her age group were less educated, less trained in most fields, and had lower earning potentials. Her internship as a social worker prepared her to work with people which she loved. She was concerned about her brother’s future and thought he wasted enough time already. She took the lead to see that Mugabe got going on something, and was working with her parents on it. Her father gave a deadline for Mugabe to do something productive.

As far as Lisa could tell, Mugabe was not happy about becoming a soldier. She held discussion with him about his imminent future in which she said he had no say. “His options are limited” she said, “and considering what is available to him, the army is the best thing.” She wanted Mugabe to spend the next six years in the army “getting his life together and sorting himself out.” Lisa thought her brother needed all six years to think and act. The army required recruits to pass a test which Mugabe would have to sit. There was no guarantee that Mugabe would be accepted but Lisa would be satisfied that he did something. As far as Lisa knew the army was recruiting youths to become officers. Applicants needed strong qualifications. Mugabe’s only apparent door to the army was to enter as a private. Mugabe was not happy with the plan, specifically the length of time he would be there. Lisa said Mugabe did not want to be tied down to any thing for so long, but six years was the length of the contract. If Mugabe was accepted in the army, he would undergo training in electronics. The difference between the army and a school like Exed, Lisa said, was that the army trained, paid, and disciplined recruits.

One problem Mugabe faced was his residency. The army had a preference for country recruits because there was a problem with Kingstonians. Lisa had already attempted to circumvent the residency situation and contacted an officer on her brother’s behalf. She wrote the required letter and was awaiting a response. When asked about Mugabe’s wishes to go into business she said he had a business knack, but the lack of formal education was not going to help him. Lisa admitted not being privy to much of her brother’s affairs but for young people who wanted formal training, skills or academics, the best place was the army. She felt if Mugabe wanted to start his own business he could do so after he left the army, but as it was “Mugabe needed the discipline. He needed to win himself from here, from the family, and actually go out and make it on his own.”

Lisa admitted not being close to Mugabe saying “he doesn’t discuss his personal life with me.” She considered her brother to be lazy. “He will not do anything for himself,” but that was the extent of her problem with Mugabe. When asked how Mugabe developed such an attitude she said she had no idea but said it could be that he was just feeling comfortable and thought there was no way out. The drive to do something was missing, Lisa said, perhaps because Mugabe had his basic needs met.

All of Mugabe’s male friends that Lisa knew lived affluent lives in the upper-class neighborhoods of Cherry Gardens, Haven Dale, and Red Hills. His female friends attended prestigious schools like Immaculate High School or Holy Childhood High. Lisa did not know them too well but saw them around. Most of them had parents who took care of them. To Lisa, they seemed to have money.

Lisa aspired to work with the Family Court as a probation officer until she “found (her) bearings.” Beyond that she was not sure, but hoped to become a practicing clinical psychologist. Her ambitions were made more difficult because UWI did not offer training beyond the bachelor’s degree which meant going abroad and incurring costs. She said she did not know what she wanted to do permanently but took courses in guidance counseling and human resource management because “It’s not like there are a whole heap of jobs.”

Lisa got full backing from her parents who had no problem with her leaving work to return to school, and to make it easier for them she took student's loans to pay her way. Lisa said she talked with her younger sister but "because she was a teenager she tended to want to rap with her friends more than her." Her sister was "doing better" in school and was about to enter third form. Like Mugabe, Lisa knew nothing about her step-brother and although she saw him "once or twice" she did not know his name. Lisa refused to discuss her mother's feelings about her step brother. Her mother was not available for interviews.

Miss Marks painted a dismal picture of the future for males in Jamaica, especially in the academic arena. In her opinion the future of Jamaican youths looked bleak because the ratio of male and female students at the University of the West Indies was disproportionately female (70/30 in her opinion). She took consolation in the fact that some males elected to go into business and earn a honest living. The recent proposals by government to reinstitute a national youth service and offer skills training in some areas found favor with Lisa. But the prospect of "marrying down" was a bit troubling to her.

### Shaun

Mugabe and his friend Shaun first spoke with me at Mugabe's home. Mugabe said he loved sports. In football he played the forward position, and in track and field which he claimed he was still good at, his specialty was the two hundred meters. At Mona High School, Shaun played defense in football but was not a good player. He graduated from high school last year and said school was "a good experience." He said the teaching was okay, that he learned about architecture and found good friends. Shaun said he had about three good friends all of whom were males. As a friend, Shaun rated Mugabe "all right" and a good and helpful person to correspond with. He said he would say the same about his other friends. They all went to the same high school and were in the same class, but lived in different areas of Liganea, Mona and Red Hills. Shaun said his friends helped him make decisions by "offering encouragement in good things" and by "setting examples for him to follow." Mugabe was a member of the Leo Club which had an agenda to raise funds for the school's benefit. The young men said they attended church and participated in youth clubs. Shaun was not a member of any school club but attended youth club meetings. The focus of the youth club was mainly to "raise funds and keep the community going." Membership of the youth club was about 25 people and there was a membership fee of \$10.00 (\$US 0.30). Shaun remembered attending meetings about six times. Mugabe said when he was with friends they talked about getting rich, clothes, cars, and girls. Parents and school were rarely discussed. Shaun said his friends talked about the future, getting a good job, becoming famous, and girls. Despite pressures on youths to keep many girl friends, Shaun said he believed in a "one-to-one" relationship. Mugabe said "in today's runnings I don't think it is a good thing." They agreed such behavior was disrespectful to women.

When asked to comment on their future, Shaun said he would be an architect. He planned to begin study at UTech but had not yet applied. Shaun acquired interest in architecture in fourth form. He said it was his favorite subject so he studied it and

realized “that was where he wanted to go in life.” Shaun completed CXC and SSC examinations and anticipated their results. His mother was a dress maker and his father was a mechanic. He had three older sisters, and an older brother (no longer living at home) who fixed refrigerators. One sister was a dress-maker and two were accountants. The males and some of the females in Shaun’s family were skilled with their hands. Shaun said if he did not realize his aspirations to be an architect, he would not worry too much because he had accounting and woodworking skills. He “would get a little job on the side” until he could work his way through.

Shaun’s encouragement for Mugabe was not to get himself mixed up with wrong doings, but to get a job and further his education. Mugabe said he tried to get a job but had difficulties. Mugabe encouraged Shaun to put effort into becoming an architect. They said realistic job were found in computers, accounting and business. They said the recent renaming of CAST to UTech meant improved computing standards and made the job prospects for youths brighter. Shaun said perhaps the reason females moved ahead of males was because they were more serious about their future. Both youths said they were ready to take responsibility for everything they did. Shaun said his grandparents had no influence on him. Some lived abroad and he was not in regular contact with those in Jamaica. In guidance counseling sessions, Shaun said discussions included family problems, future plans, and academic progress. Mugabe and Shaun said the counselors were helpful. Students had opportunities to interacted with seasoned professionals to get some understanding of the real world expectations.

Mugabe emphasized school where he did not do well. Mugabe seemed to have decided to become self-employed as his father was. The role school played in this decision is not clear but it could be Mugabe’s attempt to keep up with his affluent and higher aspiring peers. The ultimatum from his father did not appear problematic to Mugabe but he seemed to have felt the family pressure to act promptly.

A tabulation of Mugabe’s themes are displayed in Figure 3 below. Work = 43.25% (346); Family = 12.25% (98); School = 27.00% (216); Peers = 13.25% (106); and Siblings = 4.25% (34).

Figure 3 Frequencies and Percentages for Mugabe’s Themes

Family	Peers	Siblings	School	Work	Totals
98	106	34	216	346	800
12.25%	13.25	4.25%	27.00%	43.25%	100%

## Partial Cases

### Rolando

Rolando was eighteen years old and lived in Gregory Park with his parents, James and Audrey, and his dyslexic brother Jerome. Rolando attended Bridgeport Comprehensive High School and was placed with an electrical company for a three-week job experience. The company was satisfied with his work and offered him a summer job. Rolando said he had an interest in electrical wiring which he learned from working with his father. He planned to attend The University of Technology to read for the bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, or the German Mechanical School for training in mechanical engineering. He said he would work and save enough money to start his own electrical engineering business. He said he thought about taking the CXC and GCE exams and registering in a HEART program. He said his father's influence had been "deep," and his mother "supported" him. Rolando was "doing fairly well" in school according to his teachers, but he felt schools did not work, mainly because teachers did not care. He said "teachers only offer knowledge, but it is up to the students to care." Rolando thought his friends would "not go far in school." Their plans were to migrate to the US or join the army. Rolando said his friends would be gainfully and successfully employed.

### James

James, Rolando's father, was a "jack of all trades" and showed his love for what he did with his smiling eyes and animated expressions. He was five feet six inches tall and weighed about one hundred and forty pounds. James wanted to be a civil engineer but got expelled from school for truancy and behavior problems. James felt Rolando would follow his footsteps because he taught Rolando what he knew. James' mother was a hairdresser, and came from a large family of thirteen children. One sister was in law, another did electrical installation, and two were accountants. "The rest are fudging around" (in dead end jobs). James stated that his present economic situation was "hand to mouth" and felt the harder he worked the less he got. James spoke proudly of his father who studied in Germany and was regularly sought after to work on old turbine engines. Active in plumbing, masonry and electrical work, James Senior was trained as a mechanical engineer. He started to work early in life and continued into his late 70s.

### Audrey

Audrey, Rolando's mother, was as tall as her husband, plump, and very active. She owned and operated a certified day care center which she ran out of her home. She said she had aspirations to teach art but her father, who was a contractor for roads and walls, did not support her choice. He wanted her to be a secretary because that was more suited to the role of a woman. Her mother was a general field worker and died when Audrey was fifteen years old. Audrey was born, grew up and lived in Gregory Park. She felt she was influenced by her parents, especially her father. She was from a large family. She said "The boys did welding and worked on automobiles." One sister was a teacher and two were nurses. Most family members had low career aspirations for self and

children. She said she had “a good feel” for Rolando’s friends and thought one was a good study partner

### Marlon

Marlon lived in Portmore with his father and 12 year-old sister. His father was a soldier and owned a shoe store. Marlon’s father claimed he played no part in his son’s career decision. Marlon’s mother and older brother lived in Miami. Marlon said he decided to go into his father's shoe store business after realizing that “good jobs are hard to find now-a-days.” He said good jobs required good skills and the alternative was to “own your own business.” Marlon said he felt “If others could do it (he) could do it too.” He did not want to depend on anyone for a job. He planned to start small and work to improve his business. Marlon said he believed school was the way to economic success and provided the foundation for work opportunities. He reported that his friends thought differently and felt most of them would be successful if they tried. “Some are not trying and are just wasting time,” he said. He was aware that learning a skill could be a necessary part of his planned success. His plans included uniting his scattered family and continuing his education abroad. Marlon’s mother and grand-parents were in low-status jobs but he thought he had a sense of what it meant to be successful and “have a solid future.”

### Kevin

Kevin was 18 years old and graduated from high school in July. He lived with his mother Marcia and sister in Whitfield Town, a crime plagued area of Kingston. Kevin was determined to spend the rest of his life with his mother and young sister who he said were the only other positive influences in his life. School did not offer much help in making a career choice he said, but he took advantage of the computers at school and sought to “find a way out of the ghetto.” He planned to complete a BA degree in computer science, get a job and move on from there. A masters’ degree was also in his future plans.

Kevin, in a meeting with Orhan, said that school definitely taught him that academics was the way to success and he was following that route. When asked about friends who chose otherwise, both young men agreed their friends were either making a big mistake, or knew how they would survive. Both said about half their friends attended school and saw it as a viable means to economic success. They felt the other half who stayed away from school would suffer and live to regret the path they took. The strongest influence in Kevin’s life was his grand mother whom he saw every night. He was not influenced much by his father who lived in the US and whose only influence and contributions were frequent money dispatches. Kevin’s had a girlfriend who had been working as a clerk since 1991.

Marcia, his mother, was a thirty eight year-old secretary. She thought Kevin hung out with the wrong crowd in high school because he did not do well and passed only one subject - accounting - when he sat his exams. She thought he was doing better at Exed.

She had one sister who was a teacher. Her mother was a domestic helper. She said Kevin's father worked as a security guard on a ship in the US and was 48 years old.

Marcia was satisfied with her son's behavior and career plans but said he could be stubborn sometimes. She sounded convinced that it was better to have a skill instead of academics. She said "A skilled person can always earn more money than a person who is trained academically, because an academic person has to depend on someone to employ him or her." She did not believe Kevin's training in computer engineering was a skill but supported him nonetheless. Marcia blamed students for their situation. She stated "Most of them don't want anything to do because they go through the same school system that the few successful ones come through. And they never succeed all because of their own fault. "Most young men dropped out of school" she said, "because they expected an easier way and refused to go through the learning process." She said "the youths just wanted to quickly reach the end where they will get money."

### **Guidance Counselors**

Rose was a guidance counselor for many years. She responded to questions that addressed the plight of the young men in her charge. She said her perception of "the happenings" was that "the youths (had) to struggle too much, especially the poor ones, for what they conceived a man to be." She felt that probably in the struggle they became frustrated. The situation, Rose said, came about because of the competition between males and females in terms of achievement. She said there was a new consciousness in women. Despite talk about gender differences and gender equality Rose said she never grew up feeling deprived as a woman because of the influence of her grandmother and her father who gave her strength. Rose raised her sons to recognize that a man must be a strong individual who may cry if he wanted to cry. Because of the need for a complete family Rose got married very early and lost her father when she was a teenager. Her children lost their father when they were teenagers. In raising her sons she considered herself equal to any man, and instead of competing with a man she "celebrated her femaleness." Rose felt confident that if she were able to assuage a man's loneliness then he should be able to assuage her loneliness in a complementary union instead of a competitive one. Rose feared that because she was strong her sons came to her for just about anything. She worried because her strength could weaken her boys who felt they could not make a decision without her input. Her younger son was twenty two years old and working and her older son was self employed.

As a guidance counselor, fathers came to her with personal and family problems about their children. One father said his wife threatened to put their daughter out because she refused to engage in early sexual activities and when he objected, his wife and her mother accused him of wanting to have sex with his daughter.

Rose said male youths became frustrated because of the dismal job prospects brought about by downsizing and redundancies. They worried about their future because the majority were poor and had to get jobs, even if they wanted to continue their education. Rose said she was also frustrated. The majority of last year's graduates did

not get employed and she encouraged some of them to go the HEART/NTA route and work as apprentices with the opportunity to further their education. But the majority refused to take that route and face their realities. They wanted a job that paid a reasonable salary because many had siblings in school who needed help. Rose said she held regular weekly sessions with the students. Ideally she conducted weekly individual sessions or assembled in large groups.

A second counselor, Mrs. Hoosang, was asked to comment on the students attending KC who were respondents in this investigation. She said that one youth loved the airline and felt eventually he would end up working there. She said he may not be a pilot but certainly was going to do something related to the airline. She said the youth talked about going to university to study arts. She did not know his parents but knew his mother was in America and his father was in Jamaica.

Mrs. Hoosang said Marlon, one of the three youths in the partial cases and who was in her charge, did not work towards what he wanted to be. She did not know if he would do business eventually but said “he is kind of comfortable and he gets everything he wants so he is just gliding through.” She said Marlon wasted the whole morning when he had no class instead of putting in some work and would probably end up in his father’s business. “I know his father” Mrs. Hoosang stated, “and I think they have a good relationship going.” She felt “Marlon (was) sort of protected. His father gave him everything that he wanted.” She said he often avoided school using suspicious excuses that he felt sick and wanted his father to come for him. The counselor said she thought the problem was psychosomatic and spoke to his father about it. Marlon had an asthma problem which he sometimes used as an excuse to avoid school work. He wanted to leave school in third form and found excuses to get out of anything he did not like to do. She sensed that the relationship with his father was a close one. Even though Marcus’ father claimed he had no influence on his son’s career decisions, Mrs. Hoosang said they were close.

Mrs. Hoosang believed young males were being marginalized because they were unmotivated and easily satisfied with the minimum amount of work. They were more concerned with hanging out on the corner and having a good time listening to Buju Banton (a popular DJ). Meanwhile the girls were forging ahead. Mrs. Hoosang believed males dropped out of the school system at the Common Entrance stage. More females than males qualified at the CEE level but the high schools received an equal number of males and females. Mrs. Hoosang felt the male youths populated the streets, joined up with boys on the corner, got into drugs and were lost to the school system. Many of her male students were from the ghetto and they talked with her about the overwhelming pressures they were under from other ghetto youths. The counselor said something needed to be done.

To address the situation, Mrs. Hoosang suggested “a military school like in the old days.” A type of boot camp where young men were kept in line until they overcame problematic stages in their lives and thought clearly. She blamed the mothers for leaving their children to go to America. “Parents are leaving both the young men and women to seek the American dollar abroad.”

## **Chapter V**

### **Analysis of the Data**

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected in this study. The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim using a micro tape recording device, headphones, and a Macintosh computer equipped with Microsoft Word. McCracken (1988) suggested the use of stages in the analysis process. In the first stage each idea presented by subjects was examined independently and any relationship to the remainder of the text was ignored. The investigator decided what each statement meant then categorized meaning (with a word, phrase, or sentence; see Appendix A). This was to understand what was meant by what was said. Responses were later re-categorized into the five broad areas that the literature reports impact disadvantaged students aspirations: work opportunities; family (parents); school; siblings; and peers. Other categories considered were church membership and group affiliation. A coding spreadsheet (see Appendix B) was done for each respondent prior to the completion of the first stages of the analysis. Responses were checked within case to determine frequency and themes. A cross case comparison was done to discover patterns followed by an examination of the cases together to get a clear understanding of the investigation.

The research questions were answered based on the analysis of the cases. The six cases were divided into three “comprehensive” and three “partial” cases for the analysis. Frequencies of themes in each case were tabulated and compared against the minor cases. Valence was discussed within and across cases.

### **Response To The Research Questions**

The major questions addressed were: What are the aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican youths and how were these aspirations formed. It was anticipated that within case patterns and similarities would emerge to compare with themes across cases. The five broad areas researchers believe impact disadvantaged students aspirations were treated as specific questions for the analysis.

1. Which themes are attributed to work opportunities?
2. Which of the perceived themes can be attributed to the family?
3. What identified themes can be linked to the impact of the school?
4. Which themes can be interpreted as emanating from peers?
5. What themes relate to siblings?

### **Themes Related to Work Opportunities**

Work related themes occurred the most in the case of Mugabe and second in Orhan’s and Garth’s cases. Mugabe had 43.25% (346) work related themes in contrast

with Orhan's 25.57% (113) and Garth with 22.56% (208). In pondering his future, Orhan said "...I have to look at the financial part. You see...that is kind of stiff. So that is why I say I am to look a little work on the side and gwaan." He considered returning to the country to do electrical work like his father. The females in Orhan's foster home held working-class positions in the home, secretarial and clerical fields, and earned only enough money just to get by on. Orhan's foster-family wanted him to finish school before taking a job, but Orhan accepted temporary employment towards the end of the investigations.

Garth had been working for six months as a truck loader but his parents disliked his job and wanted him to change it. Garth said he quit his clerical job because "The responsibilities were too much, and although I love responsibilities yes, but too much is not good for me." Garth learned carpentry at HEART because of pressure from his family but did not work as a carpenter because carpentry "was too hard" for him. He worked instead, at fast food restaurants. Garth was hopeful as he projected what his future would be. "Maybe by the next three years I will be a successful accountant living on my own." Roy appeared frustrated and confused when talking about his son's career decision. He did not know what Garth wanted to do. "That is a hard one...basically Garth...his decision...I can't tell. Him don't make up his mind as yet what he really want in life." No discussions among father and son were held regarding Garth's career plans. "He never discussed it with me and said I wanted to be this or that. I tried to find out at all times what he really want and I would help him. But I don't know. I was even thinking about the army." Garth's job was berated by Roy. "What he is doing now is not feasible or worthwhile." He said he would feel better if Garth studied accounting or learned a trade. "If him don't settle down now and get a good job and start thinking like a man, I don't know what is going to happen to him." Roy said "work is the only way to survive" even if his present situation was "hand to mouth." He made sacrifices he said because "I know what I want. I am working towards something." Roy was a fireman for over twenty years and received a long service award. He considered his son's meager wages to be "monkey money."

Sharon wanted to teach Garth responsible behavior by putting him out. She said this could be done "when Garth is gainfully employed, rents an apartment and sees what life is all about." Garth's mother had poor work ethics according to Sharon. "She is not working because she cannot keep a job." She said "If you have a child, send him to school, you give him the best you can, you don't expect him to be sitting here. You expect him to hold down a job so that he can handle himself." She had no specific job in mind for her step-son saying "You can't choose for children. You can only tell them you don't want them boxing around." Garth's indecisions were problematic for Sharon. At different times Garth wanted to pursue accounting, computer analysis, programming and business, but did not work towards any of those goals. "First Garth said he wanted to be an accountant, fine with me if that is what he wants...but you can't be jumping from one thing to the other. You have to hold down one thing first. You can't be jack of all trades."

Mugabe's family consistently spoke about him finding employment soon or face imminent consequences. "I am waiting for him (Mugabe) to decide what type of career he

wants to do,” his father said. Mugabe’s sister Lisa, said “The army will give (Mugabe) the training he needs and it’s about time he goes on his own, work, and learn to take care of his responsibilities.” Mugabe was given an ultimatum to make a decision about work or leave home. After two years out of school Mugabe had no job and was not actively seeking one. He had not made a decision on what he wanted to do. His delay was due partly because he wanted his own business and partly because he had no marketable skill to work towards his dream. He was hoping to get a job and save enough money to start a clothing store or a bar business. He said he hoped to go in business with his mother who could get the needed finance and business site. Mugabe started training in electronics but dropped out saying “It never work out up there and my mind changed again.” He considered joining the army and was supported by his older sibling and father. However he changed his mind and wanted training in computers. When asked to make a projection on his future, Mugabe said “I will open my own business and live by myself alone.”

Trevor worked at several jobs. He was an optical technician, a welder, and operated his own bar, wholesale and retail business. He was in the process of becoming a joint partner in an undisclosed business. It seemed Mugabe would like to follow his father’s example and Trevor was willing to help. “When he told me he wanted to learn electronics I took the radio out of my car and gave it to him so that he could dismantle it and learn from the experience.” Trevor wanted his son to better himself and fight the risk of unemployment or manual work. “Years ago, manual labor was the way to make a good living but that is no longer true. People are taught that education is the key now.” Mugabe’s sister tried to help by contacting army officials on her brother’s behalf because “Mugabe’s options are limited and considering what are available to him the army is the best place.” She was in favor of her brother becoming a soldier because the army “trains, disciplines, and pays recruits.” Mugabe seemed to be avoiding that route. Lisa was a university student and part time clerk with plans to become a psychologist. For her, hard work was not an issue, having worked for seven years as a secretary. She accepted her brother’s business intentions but was skeptical because Mugabe did not have any business skills. Mugabe’s friend Shaun wanted to be an architect. His mother was a dress maker and his father was a mechanic. He encouraged Mugabe to “get a job and further his education.” Shaun was ready to “get a little job on the side and work his way through” if his ambitions proved difficult. He had woodworking and carpenting skills which he said he could “fall back on.”

From Table 1 (below) three of the six youths had high aspirations and three indicated they wanted the same careers as their respective fathers. Four had aspirations that were lower than their fathers’. Five said schools provided career foundations. Four had no training in manual skills, three said they appreciated manual skills, and two had low-status jobs. Three wanted self employment and four said they discussed career decisions with family members. Three youths altered their aspirations, five were willing to take low-class jobs, and two worked in low-class jobs.

Table 1

Work Related Themes

	Comprehensive Cases			Partial Cases		
	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marvin	Kevin
following father's footsteps	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
had high career aspirations	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
aspirations higher than father's	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
school provided foundations	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
trained in manual skill	no	yes	no	yes	no	no
had low-status job	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
wanted self employment	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no
appreciated manual skills	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
discussed career with family	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
altered aspirations	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
willing to do low-class job	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
worked in low-class job	yes	yes	no	no	no	no

'Yes' and 'no' frequencies among the youths' twelve work related themes were: Orhan 10/2; Mugabe 2/10; Garth 8/4; Rolando 8/4; Marlon 4/8; Kevin 4/8. Work related themes appeared to have a strong impact on the career decisions of these youths.

### **Themes Linked To The Family**

The literature indicated that the career decisions of disadvantaged youths are affected by family members (MacLeod, 1987). Over thirty five percent (156) of the themes in Orhan's case; 38.83% (358) in the case of Garth; and 12.25% (98) of the themes in Mugabe's case were attributed to family impact. Of all the cases, Garth's case had the highest percentage (38.83%) and number (358) of family themes. Mugabe's family pressured him to act quickly. Despite the pressure, Mugabe seemed unconcerned. Under similar pressure Garth seemed more anxious about his situation. Although Mugabe's totals were low they did not reflect the strong support he got from his family. Even though Orhan did not live with his biological parents and siblings, family themes occurred more often than other themes. Orhan wanted to follow in his father's profession "but at a higher level" than his father. Orhan's biological parents and those in his

extended family had working-class jobs. Orhan did not have a close relationship with his father. He reported “Me and him no move too good” but they met about twice monthly. He had a special relationship with the women in his foster-home. Pat said the relationship he had with her daughters was “quite all right.” Some neighbors even thought they were mother and son. Pat was pleased with Orhan. “He is a nice young man. Very obedient, very ambitious, willing and honest.” He was very busy helping in the house. There was no other male figure in Orhan’s foster-home and his friend Kevin also had no other male figure living at home.

Like Mugabe, Garth felt family pressures to act promptly and was given an ultimatum to make a decision. But unlike Mugabe, Garth seemed to be unwanted. His step-mother wanted him out of the house, his grand-parents did not like him, his real mother lived abroad and he lost contact with his brothers. He said he stopped writing his mother because “...she has changed and sometimes she is making promises that she is not able to fulfill.” He sounded frustrated with his mother whom he said “turned him off.” Garth did not seem to have a good relationship with his grand-parents. “They don’t want me to come back into their house because of my behavior.” This behavior was mostly “back-chat” he gave to his grand parents. “When I ready I argue, but most of the time I don't say anything...” Roy was impatient with his son’s attitude and to correct it Garth said he “was going to make his actions speak for themselves” because he “did not believe in a quick changing thing.” He believed however that some of his troubles were because “the person who should be wearing the pants is not doing so.”

Roy said his son was lazy. “He does not believe in hard work. Him want everything easy. I keep showing him that anything he wants in life he has to work for it.” To that end Roy said he set some rules “because when you have your home you have to set certain rules and if Garth does not abide by them he would have to get out or be willing to take what he gets.”

Garth’s secrecy about his work seemed to have angered and annoyed his parents. His father said the “cold shoulder” resulted from the breakdown in communication between them. “Garth in here a work and me never know say him a work you know. All now me don’t even know the phone number for (his work-place).” Roy said his concern was that his son “take a turn in his life.” Garth did not have long to make that turn. Garth’s step-mother said “Garth is lackadaisical and have to be constantly pushed to attend school.” She said he was fired from one job because “his attire was wanting and he moved too slowly.” Talks she had with Garth to improve his deportment did not help. She decided that “the biggest fool is the man who fools himself” and left Garth to his own decisions. Sharon waited for Garth to “not (be) around me to be annoying me and begging me for anything.” She said Garth “should be making some contributions” in the home but could not do so because of his poor academic performance resulting in a low-paying job. She said she would conditionally support Garth because “...when it comes to education, I am behind you all the way if I see you are interested. I never got all those opportunities like Garth so I would push (him) if I see he is willing to work. I realize that you have to have a ‘backitive’ (support) these days.” According to her, Garth has an “I don’t care attitude” which she attributed to his mother. Sounding vulnerable she said Garth was

treated well. “Garth is not really my birth child so I don’t want anybody to talk about step-mother and what have you but what I did for Garth is way more than what Ena (Garth’s mother) did for Garth.” Sharon said she willingly supported Garth until he “started to make a fool of himself” at school. Her patience with Garth ran out. “Garth has to get rid of his laziness and turn his life around. My tolerance run out long time. Garth should ruffle up him feathers and take little pride in himself.” She thought Garth was on good terms with her parents and said the relationship with his father’s family was “all right.”

Mugabe was reticent about his career plans and kept them from his father. He said “We don’t really talk about it, but he asked me if I am not going to get a work.” He remained reluctant to do anything. His father issued an ultimatum but tempered it by stating, “I am waiting until September. My daughter asked me to wait.” Mugabe had a supporting family who wanted him to do well in school. The family was disappointed when Mugabe decided “his head cannot take the book.” Trevor said he was willing to give Mugabe until September to make a decision and discussed it only with Lisa. But Mugabe was aware of the ultimatum his father issued and appeared unconcerned about the consequences. Trevor said his children “will have to decide for themselves what they want to do and how they want to go about their lives. I can only advice them about certain things.” He saw a bright future for his children because “there are more opportunities now than there were twenty years ago.”

An analysis of Table 2 (below) revealed the following: Four youths lived with their fathers and three lived with their mothers. Four had parents who were separated. Only two youths lived with their fathers and mothers. Two were issued ultimatums. Three said they were influenced by their respective father’s careers. All youths had working parents. All families had histories of working-class jobs. Three had at least one parent living abroad. Three had parents who were self employed. Five families rated manual skills over mental skills.

Table 2 Family Related Themes

	Comprehensive Cases			Partial Cases		
	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marlon	Kevin
father lived at home	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
mother lived at home	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes
given ultimatum	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
influenced by father's career	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
parents worked	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
parents were separated	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes
history of working class jobs	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
parent lived abroad	no	yes	no	no	yes	yes
parents self employed	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no
family approved manual skills	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes

It appeared that the influence of the family on the youth's aspirations was strong. "Yes" and "No" frequencies among the youths' ten family related themes were: Orhan 5/5; Garth 7/3; Mugabe 7/3; Rolando 7/3; Marlon 7/3; Kevin 6/4. Family themes appeared to have a reasonably strong impact on the youths' career aspirations.

### Themes Linked to the School

The school is crucial to the reproduction and legitimization of social inequality. It's structure promotes a belief among working-class students that they are unlikely to achieve academic success (MacLeod, 1987). The aspirations of the respondents reflected personal views of their own chances of getting ahead and are an internalization of objective possibilities. Schools provide employers with trained workers, and promote the attitude and values required by a capitalist economy (Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

According to the literature (MacLeod, 1987; 1995; Willis, 1977) disadvantaged youths' career decisions are affected by the school. Youths who buy into the achievement ideology (MacLeod, 1987) want to excel in school and do better than their parents. Themes relating to the school accounted for 25% (112) of Orhan's themes. Orhan indicated he wanted to do better than his father and was getting an education to improve his economic condition. He reported that early in his education, "I was afraid of the grade six teacher and did not want to be promoted." But that did not seem to deter

him for long. He said “I can manage the book part but at a slow pace.” In a group discussion with Kevin and Rolando, Orhan said “School is not one of the best way to get ahead, it is the best way.” He planned to train as an engineer and access the world of work. Orhan said he liked school, his reports were favorable and his foster family supported him in his preparation for an engineering career. His foster mother said “The courses he is taking at school are in line with what he wants to do.” She complimented him on his school reports and offered encouragement when improvements were needed. Orhan approached his school work seriously. Pat said “When he is doing his school work he sets up a time-table, locks himself in his room and refuses to come out for anything. He sets up a barrel with a piece of board to use as a desk for drawing and writing, and he won’t move until he is finished.” One teacher said Orhan was a good student who was expected to excel. “There are areas that he needs to work on but he is doing well.” The female students in the foster-home were not as dedicated. They did school work with the tape or radio on and used the telephone often.

Approximately 24% (225) of Garth’s thematic responses were attributed to the impact of the school. Garth placed a high value on education. Garth believed that “...If you don’t have the educational qualification you are not saying anything!” Both his father and step-mother placed high values on education. Roy wanted Garth to “get serious and return to school and finish his studies so that he can succeed.” He refused to accept his son’s mediocre academic performance. Sharon wanted Garth to “study relevant subjects” to enter the accounting field. Since he was arrested Garth decided to put more effort into studying accounting. He agreed that an education was the best way to economic success. Garth said he decided to become an accountant after he studied the subject in school. But he lamented “My performance wasn’t good...wasn’t good...for when I did exams I ended up getting low grades.” His poor performance in English, which was vital for further study was holding him back and he was aware of the problems he faced without passing English. “Right now I need English. I need to get the English before I can go any further. If you don’t have the qualification and the experience you are not saying anything.” He was fearful of his teachers but loved his math teacher. He said the teachers were “not too bad, but I miss my math teacher,” and he spoke proudly of his school days. He said he was “a good student” but his school report showed he was ranked in the fiftieth percentile in his class of 45 students. Garth sometimes caused trouble in class. Teachers reported that Garth’s “actions and behavior, and the way he carried himself, gave the impression that he lived nowhere.” The teachers said sometimes he “got rough with the other students and wanted to use chairs to hit them.” They said he could do much better academically but was too lazy to put in the effort. His step-mother recognized his strength in math but cautioned “math alone cannot carry you around the world. When you have English you have a better chance of getting a proper job.” She believed if Garth had done well in school and was willing to try she would be willing to support him.

Twenty seven percent (216) of Mugabe’s themes were attributed to the impact of the school. Mugabe did not do well in high school and left after only two years because his “...head could not take the books.” But his family valued education and was willing to

support him in any work related decision he made. His father was satisfied with the school's curriculum saying "the quality of education is good and up-to-date. Students get good teaching." Mugabe's sister said "Without an education, Mugabe would have a difficult time gaining employment." Mugabe's friend Shaun, reported he had a "good experience" in high school and was planning to attend college in order to realize his ambition to be an architect.

An analysis of the comprehensive cases in Table 3 (below) showed that two of the three youths loved school and one did not. Two participated in school activities, only one earned good grades, two believed school was the route to achieve their aspirations. None of the youth's fathers graduated from high school. Two believed the achievement ideology. All family members believed the achievement ideology. Two youths placed a high value on education, two youths' aspirations were impacted by the school. One received good teacher and counselor ratings.

In the partial cases, two youths did not love school, none was involved in school activities, all made good grades, two believed the school was the route to achieve their aspirations. None of the youth's fathers graduated from high school, but all three youths and their families believed the achievement ideology. All three placed a high value on education, and had their aspirations impacted by the school. Two received good teacher rating and one got a good counselor rating.

Table 3 School Related Themes

	Comprehensive Cases			Partial Cases		
	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marvin	Kevin
loved school	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
involved in school activities	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
made good grades	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
used school to achieve aspiration	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
siblings did well in school	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes
father graduated from high school	no	no	no	no	no	no
believed achievement ideology	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
family believed achievement ideology	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
had high educational value	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
school impacted aspirations	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
got good teacher rating	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
got good counselor rating	yes	no	no	yes	no	no

The above table reported themes related to the school. Respondents were checked ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for each theme. For each table, horizontal comparisons across cases, and vertical comparisons of individual cases were done. ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ frequencies among the youths’ twelve school related themes were: Orhan 10/2; Garth 8/4; Mugabe 2/10; Rolando 9/3; Marlon 6/6; Kevin 6/6. It appeared reasonable to conclude that Orhan’s school experiences were the most favorable in work preparation. Garth and Rolando seemed to have had a favorable experience. Marlon and Kevin seemed to have had equally favorable and unfavorable school experiences, and Mugabe appeared to have had the least favorable school experience.

### **Themes Related to Peers**

Peers accounted for a small number of themes in all three cases. Orhan’s case had only 6.25% (29), Garth’s case had 9.98% (92) and Mugabe’s case had 13.25% (106). Despite the low numbers, the impact of peers seemed to be significant. Mugabe claimed

to have many friends who “frequently attended movies and clubs.” He said his friends encouraged him to make a success of himself. Garth met his friends at church and Orhan saw his friends “once in a while.” Orhan first reported having “about twenty friends” but said they did not have much influence on his decisions because he “did not see them very often.” In a later interview he said “I only have couple friends right now but only some of them (are) thinking of going on to further studies.” His two close friends did not attend the same school and did not engage in much activities with Orhan, which may have impacted his decisions.

Garth said he had few friends and did not interact much with them. “Most of my friends are Christians” Garth said, and when they talked, discussions were “about movies and general happenings.” Some were studying nursing and engineering at UTech. His closest friend worked as a sales clerk. Garth believed some of his peers were becoming criminals because they “did not care” and his advise for them was to “look into themselves.” His father said he did not know any of his son’s friends. “I don’t know anything about them to tell you the truth. He has church friends but I don’t know anything about any of them.” Roy rated his son above his peers. “Well, comparing him with other boys, he is above them. The friend and company business like drugs and things like that, me no have nothing to say about that. Him no mix up in that...” Garth’s stepmother said she knew only one of his friends. “Mark used to live next door and he was a stable child more than Garth.” She said “Mark and Garth were (studying) the same thing and Mark has one year left at UTech. Many of his peers have passed through.” She felt Garth did not do as well as his friends because he made too many mistakes.

Mugabe said his friend Shaun did not have much to do with his plans or why he was not in school because “he knew the situation well.” He said he met with his male friends to “talk about girls, clothes, cars and getting rich.” Mugabe stated his friend’s future “will be filled with work and college activities.” He grew up with his friend next door who was a radio technician but said he did not learn much from him. But Mugabe’s father hoped “something would rub off” on his son. Lisa observed that most of her brother’s friends were “well off and live in upper-class neighborhoods up town with parents who take care of their financial needs.” They also attended prestigious school. Both Mugabe and Shaun said they loved sports and played for community teams. They lived in the same neighborhood but attended different schools. Shaun said his friends discussed girls, the future, getting a good job, and becoming famous. Both friends felt that the job prospects for youths would improve with recent changes at UTech.

Table 4 (below) showed that five youths said they had peers who lived with at least one parent. All had peers with high aspirations. Four said their peers offered encouragements. Five had peers who attended the same school and five had peers who differed their aspirations. Three had peers who worked and three had peers with better academic performances. Four said they had peers who were known to their parents.

Table 4 Peer Related Themes

	Comprehensive Cases			Partial Cases		
	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marvin	Kevin
peers lived with parents	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
peers had high aspirations	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
peers offered encouragements	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes
peers attended same school	no	no	no	no	yes	no
had working friends	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
postponed aspirations	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
peers did better in school	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no
parents knew friends	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes

“Yes” and “No” frequencies among the youths’ eight peer related themes were: Orhan 5/3; Garth 5/3; Mugabe 7/1; Rolando 5/3; Marlon 4/4; Kevin 5/3. Peers appeared to have the strongest impact on Mugabe. The other youth appeared to have been impacted equally by their peers.

### **Themes Related to Siblings**

Sibling related themes occurred the least. They played little role in Orhan’s aspirations accounting for only 7.24% (32) of the total. Orhan lived in a foster home and his siblings lived elsewhere. This could account for the small number of themes. Orhan’s foster siblings were less serious about school than he was but aspired to careers at least as good as their mother’s. In a group discussion (with Orhan, Rolando and foster sisters Tisha and Neisha) the sisters said they welcome Orhan to their home. They felt he was more cooperative than most of the other foster-sons and daughters who lived with them.

Siblings were also not a strong factor in Garth’s decision making accounting for 4.23% (39) of the total themes. Garth’s three brothers lived abroad and they no longer kept in touch. Roy said “all of them are doing well in productive jobs and educating themselves.” Sharon said Garth’s brothers were the opposite of Garth and did what they had to do to get ahead. Garth was perhaps too young to learn much from their examples. They separated when Garth was six years old.

Mugabe also had a low number of siblings related themes with 4.25% (34). He had two sisters at home and a brother he knew little about. His bigger sister was a university student and his teenage sister was “doing well” in school. Neither was

involved in Mugabe’s personal affairs. Lisa said “He doesn’t discuss his personal life with me” but she considered him “lazy and unwilling to do anything for himself.” Lisa was taking steps to set Mugabe straight and said she had only seen her step-brother “once or twice.” Lisa was concerned about her brother’s future and felt he was running out of time. She said Mugabe “did not have any time to waste” so she was taking some action to see that he got on the right track and beat her father’s deadline. Lisa stated that her brother “needs to win himself from here, from the family, and actually go out and make it on his own.”

From Table 5 (below) four youths lived with siblings. Five youths had siblings with low career aspirations. Three had siblings who graduated from high school and all six had siblings in school. Five said siblings did not impact their career decisions and exerted no pressure to make a career decision.

Table 5 Sibling Related Themes

	Comprehensive Cases			Partial Cases		
	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marvin	Kevin
siblings lived at home	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
siblings had high aspiration	no	no	yes	no	no	no
siblings graduated high school	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
siblings impacted career decisions	no	no	no	no	no	no
siblings in school	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
siblings exerted pressure	no	no	yes	no	no	no

“Yes” and “No” frequencies among the youths’ six sibling related themes were: Orhan 2/4; Garth 2/4; Mugabe 5/1; Rolando 2/4; Marlon 2/4; Kevin 2/4. Mugabe had the strongest sibling impact. Most of his related themes were scored “yes.” The other youths all seemed to be evenly impacted by siblings in their decision making.

## Discussions of Comprehensive Cases

Generally, Orhan and Garth appeared to have similar experiences and decisions but Mugabe differed in several ways.

### Work related themes

Work related themes appeared to have had a strong impact on the youth's aspirations. They accounted for 26% (113) of Orhan's themes; 23% (208) of Garth's themes; and 43% (346) of Mugabe's themes. Orhan and Garth who had similar percentages also had low-wage positions. Pressure to find employment could account for the strong impact work related themes had on Mugabe.

### Family related themes

Thirty five percent (156); 39% (358); and 12% (98) of the themes of Orhan, Garth and Mugabe respectively related to the family. Family had the strongest impact on Garth's career decisions, a strong impact on Orhan's, and a weak impact on Mugabe's career decisions. Mugabe lived with both biological parents, Garth lived with one, and Orhan lived with none. The numbers reflected some valence in the impact of family themes and did not reflect the strong support Mugabe had from his family. Even though Orhan did not live with his biological family, the impact of his foster family was strong. Like Mugabe, Garth felt family pressure which appeared to have had a strong impact on the youths' career aspirations.

### School related themes

School related themes accounted for 25% (112) of Orhan's themes; 24% (225) of Garth's themes; and 27% (216) of Mugabe's themes. Despite the similar percentages, the school seemed to have had a positive impact on Orhan's and Garth's aspirations and a negative impact on Mugabe's. Orhan and Garth had better academic qualification than Mugabe. All three youths started pursuing their respective dreams in the schools, but Orhan, the most disadvantaged, made the strongest academic progress. School related themes seemed to have had a negative impact on Mugabe, and a positive impact on Orhan and Garth.

### Peer related themes

Peers accounted for a small number of themes in all three cases. There appeared to be some valence in the impact they had on Mugabe. Six per cent of Orhan's themes, 10% of Garth's themes, and 13% of Mugabe's themes were related to the impact of peers. Despite the low numbers, their impact seemed to be significant, and had the strongest impact on Mugabe. Mugabe's peers were from a higher social-class than Garth's or Orhan's working-class peers.

### Sibling related themes

Siblings related themes occurred the least. Less than 10% of each youth's themes were related to siblings and appeared to have had little impact on the youths' aspirations. Only Mugabe lived with siblings. Garth's three brothers lived abroad and Orhan lived in a foster home.

## **Summary of Comprehensive Cases**

Family related themes seemed to have had a strong impact on Orhan and Garth and a weak impact on Mugabe. This is surprising since Mugabe lived with both parents and siblings, while Orhan and Garth did not. Orhan and Garth postponed their respective ambitions and accepted low-class jobs. Mugabe was unemployed. Orhan and Garth hoped to return to school and pursue their respective dreams. Some experiences were case specific (the impact of Garth's step-mother) and others transcend cases (ultimatums and work attitudes of Orhan and Garth). School and work opportunities also impacted strongly on Garth's and Orhan's decision making, and seem to follow the pattern of working class youths as they make a decision about work and their own lives. Both Orhan and Garth had high aspirations and wanted to perform well. Because of limitations due to their disadvantaged status, they deferred pursuing their goals and accepted low-paying manual jobs.

## **Discussions of Partial Cases**

### **Work Related Themes**

Work themes appeared to have had a strong impact on the youth's aspirations. None worked, all were willing to do manual work, all postponed their aspirations, all said school provided career foundations, and two were following father's footsteps.

### **Family Related Themes**

Family related themes seemed to have a strong impact on the youths. Rolando lived with both parents, Marlon lived with his father and Kevin lived with his mother. All had parents with a history of working-class jobs. Only Kevin's parent pressured him to make a decision about school and work.

### **School Related Themes**

The impact of the school was stronger on Rolando than on Marlon and Kevin. Rolando and Marlon had stronger academic achievements than Kevin who stopped attending school.

### **Peer Related Themes**

Peers had little impact on the youth's aspirations. None worked, all had high aspirations and lived with at least one parent.

### **Sibling Related Themes**

Sibling related themes appeared to have played little role in the youth's aspirations. All lived with one sibling. Each sibling had high aspirations, did not impact their brother's decisions and attended school.

## **Summary of Partial Cases**

From the data, a pattern of aspirations formation is evident and appears to match with that proposed by MacLeod (1987) which stipulated that young men from low-class backgrounds will follow the same career path taken by parents and reinforced by friends

and siblings. Operational links in Rolando's aspirations were laid by James Senior, followed by James Junior and in turn by Rolando. The result was three generations of men who decided to pursue careers in the electrical field.

### **Differences and Comparisons Between Youths**

Most of the youths appeared to have similar thematic experiences but Mugabe differed from the other youths in several ways. He had both parents and siblings living at home. He associated with friends from a higher social-class than himself. Like Kevin, he dropped out of school and did not seek training or employment. His only academic success was passing the CEE, and he is the oldest youth at 23 years old. School seemed to have had a negative effect on Mugabe, a positive effect on Orhan and a reasonably positive effect on the other youths. Family related themes were the only themes with equal impact on Mugabe and the rest of the youths. None of the sibling themes appeared to have had a positive impact on Mugabe but seemed to have had a low positive impact on the rest of the youths. Mugabe's work related themes were the opposite of Orhan's. Garth and Rolando were impacted in a positive direction while Marlon and Kevin were impacted in a negative direction.

The partial cases supported the comprehensive cases. The parents and siblings of most youths were separated. Many lived abroad. Rolando and Mugabe lived with both parents and all siblings. Five youths lived with at least one biological parent. The other youths were without at least one parent and sibling, and only one had all siblings living at home. The peers of these youths were all from working-class backgrounds, except Mugabe who had affluent friends. All had supportive families, and except Kevin and Garth, had no grand-parents. Two of the youths were working, one had job related experiences, and two never worked. The working youths had only eight months experience. Only one youth, Orhan, had GCE level qualification. Orhan, the most disadvantaged youth, made better academic progress than the others.

From the data, the youths appeared to begin forming their aspirations from exposure to related subjects in school, from watching fathers at work, or after working themselves. Orhan, Garth, and Mugabe stated pursuing their respective dreams in the schools but due to economic reasons changed focus. Orhan and Garth postponed their ambitions and accepted low-class jobs, and Mugabe seemed to have given up altogether. Orhan, Marlon and Rolando decided to follow their father's example and take working class jobs. Orhan and Garth hoped to return to the pursuit of their respective dreams.

## **Chapter VI**

### **Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Speculations**

#### **Summary for the Literature**

The findings of this investigation related closely to the literature. There was no clear direction in the case studies and no clear pattern in the findings. These youths from working-class backgrounds tended to perpetuate parents' social class ranking and made minimum gains despite their aspirations. None of the youths appeared ready to move up in social class, and only one, Marlon, had the economic support for a successful future. Most youths aspired to their own proprietorships, a growing trend in Jamaica.

MacLeod (1987) contended that disadvantaged youths ostensibly occupy positions in the class structure not much different from those held by their parents. This is evident among the Jamaican youths in this study. The chances of mobility (MacLeod, 1987) may have been considered by Mugabe to be static and remote, and could be his reason for losing hope. The strong relationship between aspirations and occupational outcomes (MacLeod, 1987) was not evident in the youth's cases. Although the youths said they wanted highly remunerative occupations leading to social mobility, they encountered obstacles along the way that apparently caused them to put their dreams on hold. Research suggests that the social class into which one is born is indicative of where one will end up (MacLeod, 1987). It is therefore not surprising that these disadvantaged Jamaican youths, despite their aspirations, seemed destined to remain in the same social class as their parents. This pattern of leveled aspirations is an identifiable mechanism by which class inequalities are reproduced. It seemed that Bowles and Gintis' (1976) suggestion that the educational system's stratification of workers into status groups, and the accustoming of youths to the social relationships of dominance and subordinancy in the economic system, is evident in Jamaica.

Eskstrom et al., (1986) reported that working-class parents tend to have low educational expectations for their children but this was not evident among the families in this study. In fact, findings were to the contrary. Parents were neither present-oriented nor failed to maintain a vision of what education could do for their children (De-Pauw, 1987). Mugabe's rejection of the school as a means of getting ahead, his statement that "my head cannot take the book," and his willingness to go into his own business appeared similar to Willis' (1977) lads' embrace of manual labor.

Conclusions that the disadvantaged do not have a reasonable chance of improving their economic status (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1977; Willis, 1977; MacLeod, 1987) seemed applicable to Jamaica's disadvantaged youths. Most youths felt that an education would help improve their economic condition, but they did not appear to be giving that possibility serious consideration.

#### **Summary for Jamaican Educational Policy**

Jamaican male youths seem to face a dismal future. Gray (1991) stated that thirty years ago Jamaican youths exhibited open disregard for respectable behavior by becoming "rude boys." Today's Jamaican youths' approximation of this disrespect for moral codes

is to become a “gallist” by having many women. Respectable behaviors that include traditional male roles and responsibilities were missing in these six Jamaican youths.

The ways that gender roles in Jamaica are perpetuated or changed have only now begun to become part of the social consciousness. Although Jamaican women have for years been exploring publicly and privately the implications of worldwide and local challenges to patriarchy, Jamaican men have rarely been brought into the process of examining for themselves these implications, or the multiple meanings implicit in the concept of gender equality. Individuals, couples, families, communities, program providers and policy makers all need to explore the confusions and contradictions that continue to shape Jamaica’s future as children are socialized into the roles they are expected to play in adult relationships.

The cry “Nutten naah gwaan fe de youths” (nothing is happening in the youths’ favor), is frequently heard in today’s Jamaica (The Daily Gleaner July 22, 1996. p. 9). About 75 per cent of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are not enrolled in schools according to the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIJ). This age group makes up the largest percentage of the unemployed. In many cases it seems these young people are “unemployable” as statistics reveal that nearly 67 per cent of all first time job seekers do not have any school-leaving certificate. It appears that the education system is unable to guarantee education after grade 9, especially to children from poorer families. More than half the children in The Daily Gleaner’s survey left school at the lower end of the secondary education, that is in grades 7 to 9. On the other hand, more than 80 per cent of children from wealthy families complete grade 10 or 11. The all-age and new secondary schools to which the majority of children from the lower strata of the society go, do not offer much guarantee of future success. These schools cater to the poorest children, offer low status secondary education and have low social currency. Children here are prepared for the world of work, rather than for further education. The Survey of Living Conditions (SLC) in Jamaica revealed that from all indications this preparation is not entirely adequate.

Although one of the aims of the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) is to give children from poorer backgrounds greater access to free high school education, more of the wealthier children are in the so-called traditional high schools than those from poorer groups. The SLC found that only 2.8 per cent of the poorest group were enrolled in more traditional high schools, compared with 65.8 per cent of the wealthier groups. Only a small number of school leavers go on to pursue tertiary education, with many taking their chances in the job market on leaving school. Semaj of The Job Bank (The Daily Gleaner. July 22, 1996) feels that young school leavers are at a disadvantage in today’s new job order. According to Semaj “In today’s present job climate it is knowledge-based workers that are in demand, workers who have specialized knowledge in the field. In this case young school leavers are not even in the race to enter the job market” (Page 14). Semaj recommends greater rationalization of the education system and more links between the system and the world of work.

The Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) program currently being implemented by the Ministry of Education aims at establishing a common and “more

relevant” curriculum in all-age, secondary and high schools. It has set out to better prepare the students to enter the world of work. For now, however, many students complain of a lack of practical training and “hands-on” experience in the schools. They feel the lack of such skills make it difficult for school leavers to enter the job market. While admitting to shortcomings in the present system, the government feels that young people do not know enough about the vocational, educational and training opportunities available to them. Recently (July - September) the government launched Opportunity Expo with assistance from the private sector in an attempt to get information across to the youths. More than 20 organizations participated and hundreds of people, young and old, turned out to see what was available. Students who attended the exposition said they learned a lot about the opportunities available to school leavers. Comments include “I heard about HEART before but I didn’t know a lot of things - like how to go about entering the program or even the types of courses they offer” (The Daily Gleaner. June 22, 1996. p. 14). One young man said that there were various factors contributing to the problems facing the young but felt the government is really responsible for the welfare of the youth.

Some educators argue that men are scarce but others think the men are busy taking the course of least resistance. One mother told this investigator that the young men see how hard their parents try to make ends meet to no avail, so they are in turn discouraged from seeking economic gains through the school system. “They give up early,” she said.

Popularly known as the YESS program, Youth Educational Support Systems, is a scholarship and leadership development program which has reportedly been making a difference for inner city youths. Developed by the Kingston Restoration Company (KRC) in 1991 the program now has an enrollment of 170 students from the central Kingston communities of Southside and Tel-Aviv. In the first five years of existence YESS has achieved its primary objective which was to ensure that high school students from these communities graduate. When the program started the dropout rate among students from these areas was 40 percent. These bright students who had all passed the Common Entrance Examination and were enrolled in leading Corporate Area high schools often could not afford to pay tuition, buy books and uniforms. A number of them resorted to drugs to obtain easy money. Today the students are high achievers. An average of 30 students graduate each year after sitting the CXC exams. Of these 25 per cent go on to college or university. The YESS program, with all its facets, supports the development of these young people. In addition to their academic studies, the students are involved in club activities, a cultural performing group, community service, and environmental protection. Through the YESS program KRC expects to create a cadre of educated, disciplined and committed young people to provide leadership and usher in a new era for downtown communities.

Maybe part of the solution lies in what Semaj titled “The Minister of Education is Wrong” (The Weekend Observer. August 2, 1996). Semaj said that Jamaica must prepare numerate and literate persons, which is the minimum requirement for the industrial age or face a crisis in the New Work Order. With the increased cost being imposed on parents, government is abdicating its responsibility to educate the nation. Education through high

school should not be based on parent's ability to pay, or to beg the government for a handout. Semaj felt society is at the end of the Industrial age and is presently making the transition to the Service and Information age which defines the New Work Order. The Jamaican education system failed in the preparation of our society for the old work order.

### General Summary

In his recent book "The Future of Capitalism" Thurow (1996) pointed out that the rules have changed. It is brainpower that now run things. If one looks at America's twelve largest companies on January 1, 1900, ten were involved with natural resources and hired many unskilled and semi-skilled people: American Cotton Oil, American Steel, American Sugar Refining, Continental Tobacco, Federal Steel, National Lead, People's Gas, Tennessee Coal and Iron, US Leather, and UDS Rubber. By contrast, today's most rapidly growing industries are micro electronics, biotechnology, telecommunications, new material science industries, civilian aircraft manufacturing, machine tools and robots, and computers. These are all brainpower industries. The question asked is: How will the policy of the ministry of education equip Jamaica to compete in this new order? Thurow (1996) demonstrated that today the strategic assets of a company are the brains of its employees. Human capital, not money, equipment or natural resources is what gives a company or country its competitive edge. A major factor where Jamaica is concerned, is the fact that knowledge investments are societal in nature. An educated workforce is needed to attract and keep brainpower industries in any country. Thurow (1996) pointed out that this means compulsory education. History shows that without compulsory, state financed, public education the majority of the people will remain uneducated.

Many people offer a conspiracy theory that it is the will of the politicians to keep the people ignorant so as to keep themselves in power. But Semaj contends that these policies will do much more damage than that. The current policies of the Ministry of Education will serve to make the nation poorer. The majority of the people will not be able to function in the New Work Order. The choice is between education and job training programs on one hand, and the building of bigger prisons and the hiring of more police on the other. Only 25 years ago, Jamaica ranked first among all developing countries using development indicators initiated by the United Nations Development Program (The Daily Observer, August 3, 1996). This index examined life expectancy, per capita income and educational attainment. The countries of Singapore, Costa Rica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago were all behind Jamaica. But this ranking has reversed dramatically over the years, according to a recent World Bank report. Singapore now has a per capita income of US \$20,470, Barbados has US \$10,940, with Jamaica trailing even the lesser developing countries of the area with a per capita income of only US \$3,000. Today, Jamaica has also plummeted in the mire of crime and violence, becoming in the process, one of the most violent countries in these part of the world. In 1962 Jamaica had 63 murders compared to 514 in only seven months of this year. This figure is 80 less than the number of persons who died violently in the same period last year.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine how working-class Jamaican male youths develop their aspirations. The related literature presented in Chapter II examined five broad factors researchers report impact the decision making process of these youths. Chapter III described the design of the study, Chapter IV presented the informants in biographical vignettes synthesized from the data, and chapter V provided an analysis of the data. This chapter provides a summary of the findings and recommendations for further study.

In the first part of the discussion the youths were compared to the generalized issues in economic and social mobility for working class people. Next, economic theories, schooling and social barriers to disadvantaged youths' aspirations were compared to the data from this study. Variables in the formation of disadvantaged youths' aspirations were used to interpret respondents' aspirations formation. The literature based response of disadvantaged youths to formal education was evaluated against the data collected from the cases. The unity among disadvantaged youths, schools, and the goal of education, was compared against data from the study's informants. Finally, general observations, speculations and recommendations are presented.

### Issues in Economic and Social Mobility for Working-class People

While the rhetoric of development has stressed equality, its observable consequence has been the production of inequality (Rahnema, in Hall and Kidd, 1978). The high rate of unemployment among Jamaican male youths supports this fact. Informants frequently chanted the phrase "Nutten naah gwaan fe de youths" in interviews, and as much as 67 per cent of Jamaican youths were judged unemployable (The Daily Gleaner, July 22, 1996). Only two of the six informants were actually working. Despite attempts to make the formal system more relevant to individual needs, its rigidity pushed out Mugabe who wanted to learn a trade instead of academics. Willis' (1977) lads who reported "I ain't going to college. I'd end up getting a shitty job anyway" are reminiscent of Mugabe's attitude about an education. Garth and Orhan, while aspiring to social mobility, gave up and accepted low-wage jobs. MacLeod (1987) stated that the dominant ideology holds that anyone can become successful if he works hard enough. But Orhan who worked the hardest among the informants was not successful. MacLeod (1987) wrote about the static element in the working class whose members consider the chances for mobility remote and therefore lose all hope. Mugabe was a prime candidate to request membership in this group and Kevin appeared to be a willing recruit. The youths seemed ready to disqualify themselves from attaining even a modicum of social mobility, a mechanism sociologists say is determined by the social class into which one is born. Although a few of the youths could overcome these economic and social barriers that cause leveled aspirations (MacLeod, 1987), their chances are remote.

## **Economic Theories, Schooling, and Social Barriers to Disadvantaged Youths' Aspirations**

The literature reports that the world of students is defined by the physical boundaries of their neighborhoods. Most of the youths were from depressed environments. Only Mugabe and Garth lived in so-called safe neighborhoods. Bowles and Gintis (1976) suggested that educational systems reflect the production process and structure of class relations, and that schools are used to produce reserved armies of skilled labor which accustom youths to the social relationships of dominance and subordinancy in the economic system. All the youths sought mobility through the schools and inadvertently gave legitimacy to the technocratic and meritocratic perspectives. One hurdle in the youths' path to social mobility is their inability to continue investing in their future. All six youths made initial long term investments in their future. Orhan, Garth, Mugabe and Marlon decided to change the investment to a short term one. Their aspirations became immediate and limited.

Ekstrom et al, (1986) reported that disadvantaged homes are weak in supplementing or reinforcing learning. Parents tend to have lower levels of formal education and expectations. Most youths had verbal home support but no tangible guide to academic upliftment, and parents' expectations of the youths were high. Although few parents attended high school they expected the youths to do better than themselves. Gadwa and Griggs (1985) pointed to economic dependence that could affect youths' aspirations. The shortage of money in five of the youth's cases was a primary reason to forgo school and seek employment. Orhan, Garth and Rolando actively sought employment. De-Pauw's (1987) suggestion that parents of disadvantaged youths become present-oriented and fail to maintain a vision of what education can do for their children was not apparent in these cases. To the contrary, parents were sure an education was the way up for their children.

### **Variables in the Formation of Youths' Aspirations**

Dunlap and Canale (1988) showed that youths' gender, parental occupation and educational level contributed to their aspirations. A father's job had a strong impact on his sons' career aspirations. In this investigation, none of the fathers graduated from high school and none had a white collar job. Aronowitz and Giroux (1977) contended that some working class youths either resist or reject the notion of book learning. Outright rejection of the school was done by Mugabe and Kevin, and resistance was seen from Garth and Marlon. Only Orhan and Rolando were conformers. Like "the lads," Mugabe and Kevin thought it possible to become successful without academic qualification. Bernstein (1975) stated that the schools transform the identities of students, the nature of allegiances to their families and communities, and give them other styles of life and modes of social relationship. The youths' response to the school is likely to change the way they think and feel about their friends, community and society. This transformation was strongest in Mugabe who alienated himself from his family and clung to his peers. Foner

(1973) reported that Jamaica's poor had goals which are structured in the national system of stratification: They desired prestigious well-paid occupations, and they wanted to live, as closely as possible, in the style of the elite. This orientation for prestigious jobs is missing among the youths in this investigation but the need for a well paying job is real.

### **Youths' Response to Formal Education**

Ogbu's (1987) model of resistance asserted that disadvantaged youths develop a new sense of social identity in opposition to the dominant group. Only Mugabe and Kevin showed resistance but not in ways subversive to the dominant culture. It was common for Jamaican male youths to simultaneously disrespect and keep many girl friends, but none of the youths in this study showed such attitude. Gray (1991) stated that the culture of resistance among unemployed male youths in Jamaica included exhibitionistic forms of behavior, but none of the six youths exhibited anti social behaviors. Instead of resisting the youths resorted to their own forms of response to their situation. Mugabe wanted his own business, Kevin's manual skill would better prepare him for the future, and Marlon decided to enter his father's shoe business. Some of the youths spoke about entering proprietorships to solve their employment problems and others took low-paying jobs.

### **School and Student Compatibility and the goal of Education**

Because the school selects its students it is easy to avoid disadvantaged students. In Jamaica the CEE is the first selection of students who will move through the education system and disadvantaged students are easy to identify and exclude. Good schools enroll mostly students whose traits will be compatible with their programs and purposes. Only Garth attended a 'good school' (Exed) and his attitudes and behaviors showed that he was not compatible with the school's programs. His performance was less than desirable. Dewey's (1974) statement that a wise parent and a community want the same thing for the children is suspect in the Jamaican setting. Sanford (1969) expressed the view that the challenge of a universal education includes the poor and the culturally deprived. All of the youths are likely to be deprived of an education beyond high school since the Jamaican system only guarantees a grade nine education. The goal to improve the values and aspirations of Jamaican youths was not realized among the six youths in this study.

### **Recommendations and Speculations**

There is a new problem facing Jamaican youths - the marginalization of Jamaican men. Many Jamaican men are in prisons and represented the majority of the more than 410 Jamaicans killed violently in 1996 (Sunday Observer, June 2, 1996. Vol. 2 No. 26). Women have turned the tables on men in the university, in CXC passes, and in winning places in the CEE and are believed to be pushing men towards the margins of the society.

Today's teenage boys do not intend to emulate Jamaican men, because they are convinced the men were failing, had bad social attitudes and were not worthy of emulation.

Less than four percent of the Jamaican population gets a university education (The Mono News, October-November, 1995), and many Jamaicans feel Jamaican men are being marginalized by a more assertive Jamaican woman who is also better educated, more focused, and more independent minded than before. The marginalization is believed to be particularly noteworthy in the inner city communities but spans all social classes. It is evident in the overturning of male dominance in the population at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies (see Table 6), in the rise of women in middle management in the corporate world and in the preponderance of women leading professional and civic organizations. Where are the men? Everywhere one looks in the Jamaican society one sees an abundance of women. In the busses going to work, in the work places, in the classrooms. The men are mostly seen on the streets idling or in a bar drinking. For the 95/96 academic year, of a total of 9,659 registered students, females accounted for 67% (6,472), and male accounted for 33% (3,187), (The Mono News, Oct.-Nov. 1995).

Table 6 1995/1996 Enrollment figures at UWI

Mona (UWI) Enrollment 1995/96		
Faculties	Men	Women
Arts & General Studies	252	1,092
Education	63	250
Medical science	245	265
Natural Science	734	712
Social Science	746	1,711

Jamaican youths don't see why they have to come to school for as long as they do with no real promise for success. In almost every secondary level institution in Jamaica, girls are in the vast majority. In one grade 11 class there were 135 boys and 202 girls. At the entry level, Grade 7, 80 boys were enrolled and 149 girls. Education is less of a priority because young males are focusing on the materialism around them and finding that school may not after all be the way to get rich quick. Many feel that one of the requirements to be a man is to have several women, use or sell drugs and have a lot of cash to show they were men. If the distance keeps opening up between young men and women then the men are going to have difficulties relating to the women of tomorrow.

Further research is needed to examine the reasons for this apparent apathy in male youths and the possible consequences. The men have fewer skills than the women and are not advancing as much. The level of consciousness among Jamaican men, undermined by years of colonialism and slavery, and the absence of opportunity, continue to make many of Jamaica's youth take futile action and try to seek recognition through ephemeral material.

### Summary

In forming aspirations and making career decisions, disadvantaged Jamaican male youths contend with many variables. They are forced to ask questions about what they can become. The youths in Kingston Jamaica had strong desires to make something worthwhile of their lives, and their aspirations were guided by what they learned in school, how they prepared for adult life, and their experiences in the process (Walberg, 1989). Toni Haas (1992) reported that the educational aspirations of some youths were different from others, and suggested ways that communities can work together to raise the aspirations of their young people. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), aspirations reflect individuals' ideas about their realistic possibilities. Sherwood (1989) said aspirations require the investment of time, energy, and resources of concerned parties. Conditions in the community interact with the imaginations of youths as they try to realize their aspirations.

The current aspirations of disadvantaged Jamaican youths tend to differ from the expectations of the Jamaican society. Walberg (1989) reported that there were changes in the aspirations of American youths during the last two decades. About half intended to go to college, a quarter intended to work and attend college part-time, and about 10 percent intended to work full-time. Eighty one percent thought it was important to have a successful career; 76 percent thought having strong relationships with peers was important; 68 percent thought it was important to provide students with opportunities; and 23 percent thought it was important to have lots of money. The findings from Walberg's (1989) study are comparable to the data from this study. The Jamaican youths felt the school provided some support in their efforts to make lots of money.

In analyzing data from the longitudinal survey, *High School and Beyond* (HSB), Cobb, McIntire, and Pratt (1989) reported that, in comparison to urban young people, rural young people felt their parents were much more supportive of their taking full-time jobs, attending trade schools, or entering the military rather than attending college. These lower educational aspirations accompanied lower values for making a lot of money, and higher values for simply making good incomes, having secure jobs, and maintaining friendships. A study that investigated the aspirations of Jamaican youths in urban and rural settings could help inform the policy making process of the Ministry of Education in Jamaica.

It is believed that wherever they live or go to school, students who come from low-income circumstances have lower educational aspirations than do their economically advantaged peers, and the poverty rate is higher in rural areas than it is in urban cities. O'Hare (1988) reported that families with two people working were falling into poverty

at a high rate. In this study on Jamaican youths, there was no apparent differences in the aspirations of the youths with two working family members and those with one or none. A study that examines this phenomenon could be beneficial to Jamaica's educational and economic future.

If Jamaicans are willing to raise youths aspirations and capitalize on the resources of disadvantaged youths, then the schools, the community, and the nation must work together to raise aspirations. Haas (1992) suggested that elementary schools need to provide all students with the tools necessary for success. These include a firm grounding in basic content, in learning to learn, and in higher-order thinking strategies. Secondary schools need more relevant curricula so that students answer for themselves the question, "Why do I have to know this?" The secondary school curriculum should stress the kind of skills adults need. Schools should organize to address the social and emotional needs of students. Matching students with caring adults can provide students the coaching they need to jump the hurdles that lie between them and success.

Parents can raise their own expectations of their children's academic achievements. They should insist that the teachers and students raise their expectations as well. Parents can also express their support for the value of education and help the schools celebrate successes. The community can signal its commitment to education by providing scholarships, recognizing academic as well as athletic prowess, helping to improve local schools, creating apprenticeship and work/study opportunities, and developing venture capital for young entrepreneurs. School board members can revise the mission of the district so that the school's goal is not only to prepare students to for graduation, but also to empower them to stay in Jamaica and make meaningful contributions. Employers can support part-time employees in their efforts to finish school.

A variety of factors appear to affect the aspirations of Jamaica's disadvantaged youths and particularly those from a working class background. Dominant factors in someone's aspirations formation apparently include the individual's expectations of work opportunities, and his or her experiences with family members, school, and peers. The effect of these factors seem to play different roles in the process an individual uses to shape his or her aspirations. The evidence suggests that aspirations and social class are strongly related, and both are grounded on economic principles. Consequently, the individual's professional path becomes a measure of his or her social status. The absence of work opportunities appeared to be dominant factors in the youths' aspirations formation. They seemed satisfied with their own status quo. None of the informants faced desperate situations. Maybe they felt their prevailing condition was better than the alternatives.

Raising the aspirations of disadvantaged youths in a capitalist society mean increased employment and other opportunities. In effect, creating a new society, and essentially, equalizing everything. Working class people, at least for the near future, seem to be caught in a hopeless situation. Policy makers continue to give lip service to efforts to bring about change and do nothing to change the status quo. Working class people need to reclaim their power to make things happen instead of waiting for something to happen.

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## Appendix A Coding

THEMES (General themes are in brackets) Responses were coded. Long responses were treated as separate ideas, and their derived meanings coded. Short responses relating to a previous phrase or sentence were not coded, but when standing alone, were coded. The coding sequence follows: S = school related; W = work related; P = peer related; F = family related; Sib = siblings related. The responses are not reported in positive or negative ways so if family impacted heavily on youths career decisions, it is not known whether the impact was positive or negative.

Q: What can you tell me about Orhan?

A: That he is a nice young man. "F" Very obedient. "F" Very ambitious, willing, and honest. "F" Just nice. "F" If that is any way to describe him...he is just nice. "F" I can see that there is a lot of interests in his schooling. "S" He takes his school work serious. "S" He does his home work and he studies. "S" He gets good grades. "S" His conduct is also good. "S" He even got a letter saying he could return to do some maintenance work at the school. "W" That could help him continue his academic work at St. Andrew Tech. "S" But he won't be able to start for some unknown reasons. "W" He did not take up the offer. "W"

Q: Was this a mistake?

A: I think he should go back and continue in the school thing. "S" But he said he need the work experience. "W" He wanted to go further at UTech. "S"

Q: When is he applying to go to UTech?

A: If he gets through it will be September or October. "S"

Q: What courses will he do?

A: Those that he did already...electrical..."S" He did the basic ones already "S" (mostly theory). Now he wants to do the practical part. "S"

Q: How long will he be at public works?

A: Just for the summer. "W"

Q: What is he doing there?

A: Filing, and working at the registry until August. "W" Then he will be back home to enjoy his summer holidays. "F"

Q: Why can't he do the HEART thing that you talk about?

A: He will have to be accepted first. "S" You send in your application and you have to wait for a response. "S" And then you begin a course that lasts for two or three years. "S" And then they assign you to do some work somewhere. "W"

## Appendix B

### Related Themes

	Major Cases			Minor Cases		
	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marvin	Kevin
School related themes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
Family related themes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Sibling related themes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
Peer related themes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Work related themes	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes
father graduated from high school	no	no	no	no	no	no
believed achievement ideology	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
family believed achievement ideology	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
had high educational value	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
school impacted aspirations	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
got good teacher rating	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
got good counselor rating	yes	no	no	yes	no	no

## Appendix C

### Demographic Spreadsheets

#### Thematic Categories of Comprehensive Cases

Thematic Categories	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe
School	graduated	graduated	graduated
Family	live in foster home female head only male no grand parents supportive	one parent at home step-mother at home mother lives abroad 2 grand-parents combative	both parents at home step brother no grand parents  combative
Peers	working-class	working-class	upper-class
Siblings	3 brothers; 1 sister	4 brothers	2 sisters
Work	2 months (1st)	6 months (3rd)	none

## Appendix D

### Demographic Spreadsheets

#### Thematic Categories of Partial Cases

Thematic Categories	Rolando	Marlon	Kevin
School	graduated	graduated	graduated
Family	both parents at home father is head male dominated no grand parents  supportive	one parent at home father is head mother lives abroad no grand-parents  supportive	one parent at home mother is head father lives abroad strong grand mother  supportive
Peers	working-class	working-class	working-class
Siblings	1 brother	1 sister	1 sister
Work	work experience	none	none

## Appendix E

### Demographic Spreadsheet

#### Survey of Main Categories and Names of Youths

Categories	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marlon	Kevin
School	STATHS	Excelsior	STATHS	Bridgeport	KC	KC
Family	separated	separated	united	united	separated	separated
Peers	students	Christians	affluent	students	students	students
Siblings	separated	separated	united	united	separated	separated
Work	low-wage	low-wage	none	internship	none	none

KC = Kingston College; STATHS = St. Andrew Technical High School

## Appendix F

### Demographic Spreadsheet

#### Academic Profile (High School Preparation)

Examination	Orhan	Garth	Mugabe	Rolando	Marlon	Kevin
CEE	failed	passed	passed	passed	passed	passed
CXC	4 subjects	4 subjects	0 subject	3 subjects	2 subjects	1 subject
SSC	3 subjects	did not take	0 subjects	not taken	not taken	not taken
GCE	1	0	0	0	0	0

CEE = Common Entrance Examination; CXC = Caribbean Examination Council;  
SSC = Secondary School Certificate; GCE = General Certificate of Education.

## VITA

**Kenroy A. Walker**  
**167-26, 109th. Road**  
**Jamaica, New York. NY 11433**  
**Telephone (718) 657-1073**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1993 - 1996** Graduate Assistant. Academic Enrichment, Black Studies Department, Virginia Tech. Duties included teaching, research, student advising and counseling.
- 1988 - 1993** Instructor of College Composition. Hudson County Community College and St. Peter's College. Academic Advisor/Tutorial Coordinator/Counselor. Recruited, interviewed, advised and counseled students in Farleigh Dickinson University's EOF Program.
- 1981 - 1988** X-ray Tech. New York University Medical and Dental Schools.
- 1971 - 1981** Principal and General Science Teacher. Ministry of Education. Jamaica.

### EDUCATION

- 1993 - 1997** Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. Virginia Tech.
- 1986 - 1988** M.A. in English Education. New York University.
- 1981 - 1985** B.A. in English Language Arts. Hunter College.
- 1968 - 1971** Teachers Diploma (Mico College) University of the West Indies. Jamaica.

**Date of Birth:** **June 4, 1949**