'Man A Badman':
An Ethnographic Exploration of Male Juvenile Delinquency in a Low-Achieving School in Jamaica

by

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For *di yutes*

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

APSE	Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education
CAP	Career Advancement Programme
CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Placement Examination
CCPA	Childcare and Protection Act
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
ESTP	Education Sector Transformation Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOILP	Grade One Individual Language Profile
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
GSAT	Grade Six Achievement Test
Heart Trust/NTA	Heart Trust/National Training Agency
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISSA	Inter-Secondary Schools Sports Association
JAMAL	Jamaica Movement for the Advancement of Literacy
JASPEV	Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation Programme
JC	Jamaican Creole
JCF	Jamaica Constabulary Force
JIS	Jamaica Information Service
JLP	Jamaica Labour Party
JMD	Jamaican Dollar
JPY	Japanese Yen
MMS	Macho-metrosexuality
MOE/MOEYI	Ministry of Education and Youth
NCEL	National College for Educational Leadership
NCU	Northern Caribbean University
NDP	National Development Plan
NEI	National Education Inspectorate
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
PATH	Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education
PE	Physical Education
PEI	Public Education Institutions
PEP	Primary Exit Profile
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PNP	People's National Party
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
QSI	Quality Score Index
ROSE	Reform of Secondary Education
SJE	Standard Jamaican English
SLB	Student Loan Bureau
SNS	Social Networking Site
STATIN	Statistical Institute of Jamaica
UCJ	University Council Jamaica

UHS	Upgraded High Schools
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USD	United States Dollar
UTech	University of Technology, Jamaica
UWI	University of the West Indies, Jamaica
WHB	West Hill Boy
WHH	West Hill High

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Context

Juvenile delinquency is a major social problem for many countries worldwide, with adverse implications for sustainable development and human security. It is a social phenomenon that can disrupt national development, especially in under-resourced, developing country contexts, leading to adverse social impacts such as economic stagnation and crime. A correlation between juvenile delinquency and crime exists (Guan, 2012; Kosterman et al., 2001; Loeber & Farrington, 2012; Xu, 2006) but is not precisely understood. However, studies have shown juvenile delinquency to be a stable predictor of delinquency in adulthood (Xu, 2006), and substantial evidence links most adult criminals to delinquency in their youth (Pereira & Da Costa Maia, 2017). Therefore, a deeper understanding of juvenile delinquency will likely positively impact crime-fighting and aid in combating threats to personal safety and security.

A deeper understanding of juvenile delinquency is particularly urgent in Jamaica, a country of fewer than three million people but consistently features at the top of global crime statistics. Homicides are of grave concern in Jamaica, which had a homicide rate per 100,000 population of 56 in 2017 compared to the global average of six (World Bank, 2017a; World Bank, 2017b). Crime in Jamaica is not only severe but also costly and youth dominated. Crime is estimated to cost Jamaica about four percent of its annual GDP, approximately half a billion United States Dollars (USD) in 2017 (Jaitman & Torre, 2017). Of equal concern is the disproportionate involvement of young people, who virtually dominate crime statistics in Jamaica. Youths (ages 15 – 29) accounted for roughly 98 percent of all major crimes, 80 percent

of all violent crimes, and 75 percent of all murders in 2002 (Smith & Green, 2007). New reporting shows that the figure for youth-committed murders has increased to 85 percent (Rodney, 2022). Statistics also show that males commit most of these crimes (Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2018; Jamaica Information Service, 2021).

Bintube (2017) points out that all societies have norms, values, traditions, and beliefs that they hold dear and are shared among their members. Violation of these norms is often frowned upon or met with dissent, social sanctioning, and in some instances, prosecution. The updating, regulation, and policing of these norms is the prerogative of culture. Therefore, culture is a powerful lens through which delinquency and crime can be analyzed and theorized, which is part of the purpose of this study. In their book on the culture and customs of Jamaica, Mordecai and Mordecai (2001) rightly point out the problematic and ambiguous nature of the term "culture," which can refer to anything from behavioral patterns to forms of the performing arts. Nonetheless, they describe culture as "traditions, beliefs, customs, and creative activities [that] characterize a given community (Mordecai & Mordecai, 2001, p. IX)," to which I would add lived experiences and subjectivities. Culture is passed on to children through socialization, a function of multiple social agents, including the family and the school (Ivey, 2020). Culture teaches and reinforces essential values, norms, behaviors, and reactions to social stimuli and can be likened to the software that tells our computers what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. Outside of the family, the school is the most pivotal agent of cultural transmission.

Schooling exposes children and youth to values such as punctuality, respect for authority, dealing with failure, compassion, honesty, and moderation. Therefore, schools reward obedience, diligence, self-control, and respect while punishing carelessness and inattentiveness (Lucia et al., 2012). Schooling promotes values that make for an orderly, productive society. Youth are therefore expected to attend school regularly, follow school rules,

get good grades, and complete each level of the academic ladder with requisite certification or accreditation.

Chevannes (2002) notes that schooling equips us with technical skills, knowledge, and "soft skills." He notes that the school's function is to make us more human. However, it is no secret that academic excellence is the universal cultural value that schooling promotes, which complicates the negotiation of schooling for students who underperform academically. Accordingly, young people, or juveniles, who reject or fail to meet normative schooling stipulations are often considered delinquent.

In Jamaica and the wider Caribbean, delinquency is strongly associated with the broader issues of male underachievement, male marginalization, and criminal involvement, which warrants a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics that produce the Caribbean male. As Parry (2000) notes, it is crucial to assess the uniqueness of the experience of Caribbean males to avoid simplistic explanations that may misrepresent Caribbean men, whose attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships are arguably the product of a multiplicity of factors, including "structural and economic constraints, environmental factors, Caribbean images of manhood, and conflicting values and norms of wider society" (Parry, 2000, p. 2).

This ties into Bourdieu's idea of "cultural capital," or fluency in a society's legitimate culture. In the Jamaican context, this encompasses school attendance. In addition, excelling academically and demonstrating social skills that align with the ruling classes are expected – the latter invariably facilitating the former. This has implications for standards of dress, speech, and decorum. To contrast the concept of cultural capital, I borrow Sarah Thornton's (1995) term "subcultural capital," which is subjectively a form of cultural capital within subcultural settings, with its own set of localized standards and social skills that are equally coveted within its ambit. The clash between these two paradigms seems to be at the heart of delinquency, much

of which occurs in schools and often results in a loss for the subcultural faction. This clash is perhaps manifested, or more accurately characterized, as school failure for low-achieving youth from urban backgrounds.

Nonetheless, school failure is a major social issue, especially in a country like Jamaica, plagued by youth-driven crime and ideals of wealth and stature, where failed youth conceivably become fodder for the criminal underworld. Studies have highlighted the correlation between school failure and delinquency (see McEvoy & Welker, 2000). "The evidence is clear that poor school performance, truancy, and leaving school at a young age are connected to juvenile delinquency" (McCord et al., 2000, p. 13). However, the process of negotiation of schooling for low achievers, particularly in the developing world, and their resultant failure remain underexplored in the literature, thereby limiting our understanding of how schooling and delinquency are linked.

Moreover, there is a gap in the ontology of delinquency, which is usually associated with choice or agency, the idea that delinquency is the result, at least partly, of individual actions informed by class-based cultural values and ideologies. In the case of youth who originate from non-dominant classes, such a rejection of education typically results in them remaining at the base of the social pyramid into adulthood – social reproduction. Paul Willis' 1977 book, *Learning to Labor,* is a key proponent of this self-damnation view. Willis promulgated this perspective by infusing what he calls the *cultural level* of schooling into a polarized debate about the supposed reproductive agenda of capitalist schooling. Willis' argument diluted the reproductive notions of schooling, arguing that if youth resist a system intended to subjugate them, they should be better off. However, in the case of the Hammertown "lads" that Willis studied, the opposite was true. Their resistance disqualified them from

acquiring middle-class occupations, which confined them to the base of the social structure as manual labor.

Nevertheless, Willis' thesis raises questions about the influence of cultural ideology on class reproduction. Are we to believe that conformity guarantees class mobility and that it is sheer class-based naivety and ignorance that creates this cultural blind spot that prevents the working-classes from stemming their social reproduction and subjugation? Is the dissonance between working-class and dominant cultures so significant that it results in an inability for class-cultural reconciliation even in the face of constant cultural evolution? In answering these questions, this study explores a niche within a larger cultural context by examining the experience of low-achieving secondary school males and their orientation around various issues, values, and behaviors. The study aims to augment our understanding of delinquent conduct and its connection to broader sociocultural issues, particularly regarding low-achieving youth in Jamaica.

This study is a "macro-ethnography" of schooling, which Ogbu (1981) describes as a method of ethnography that maps local school dynamics to broader sociocultural contexts. Considering this, the ethnographic research data collected in this study presents a more nuanced understanding of delinquency, highlighting its necessity for low achievers from non-dominant social backgrounds. I argue that delinquency affords low-achievers otherwise hard-to-come-by dignity and respect, which are fundamental human values.

Nonetheless, indulgence in delinquency is taking on a new trajectory, which tacitly glamorizes it, emboldened by its enhanced ability to create wealth and enhance stature. To this end, delinquency threatens Jamaica's social order and, in combination with other social and cultural factors, impacts crime. Therefore, the dissertation argues that delinquency does not maintain the status quo, as Willis' study demonstrated, but instead threatens it. In support of

this argument, I draw on the work of Matsoga (2003) whose study of high school violence in Botswana highlighted similar themes of broader negative societal influences and the contagion of society-wide deviance on schools. This developing-country perspective resembles the situation in Jamaica but with notable peculiarities, which will be highlighted alongside a nuanced interpretation of Willis' arguments. Using the West Hill Boys' experiences as a base, I explore issues related to the classist nature of Jamaican schooling, the salience of gender and masculinity in schooling, and the influence of popular culture, wealth, and social stature in the crafting of contemporary Jamaican values. I also discuss how these perspectives become intertwined with crime, deviance, and the evolution of Jamaican culture, theorizing on possible future implications for society. The study also contributes to the ongoing academic discourse on the structure-agency dialectic by infusing the Jamaican perspective, which may provide insight into other Caribbean and post-colonial developing states.

1.2 Overview of Jamaica

Jamaica is an island country in the Caribbean Sea, south of Cuba and east of Hispaniola (island comprising Haiti and the Dominican Republic). With a population of nearly three million, Jamaica is the third-most populous English-speaking country in the Americas, after the United States and Canada. Jamaica's capital, Kingston, and the neighboring parishes of St. Andrew and St. Catherine comprise a large metropolis of over a million residents. Kingston is the financial hub of the island and home to the seventh-largest naturally occurring harbor in the world. Outside of the metropolitan region, Montego Bay, in the parish of St. James, is the most populous city and the epicenter of Jamaica's tourism. Jamaica is renowned for its beautiful landscapes, including white sand beaches, reggae music, and more recently, its dominance of short-distance athletics. However, Jamaica has earned notoriety for its abysmal crime statistics.

1.2.1 History and Demographics

Until the arrival of the Europeans in the 1400s, Jamaica was home to indigenous groups, the Arawaks, who are believed to have come from South America more than 2500 years ago. The Arawaks named the island Xaymaca, which means "Land of Wood and Water" in their local language. Following the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1494, the island was ruled by the Spanish and then by the British. A key feature of colonial rule was the Cross-Atlantic slave trade, wherein Africans were brought to the Americas to work on plantations, which produced sugar, tobacco, cocoa, and other crops for sale in Europe. Slavery was formally abolished in 1838, paving the way for Jamaica's independence from the United Kingdom, which it gained on August 6, 1962.

According to data from the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), Jamaica's population was approximately 2.73 million at the end of 2018. Young people (ages 12 – 29) account for about 25 percent of the population. About 55 percent of the population lives in urban areas. Jamaica is an ethnically diverse country comprising people of African descent, who form the vast majority, Indians, Asians, Caucasians, and other ethnic groups. As a legacy of British colonization, Jamaica's official language is English. However, a local dialect called Patois, or Jamaican Creole, is widely spoken.

Most Jamaicans are religious and subscribe to Christian beliefs. Apart from Christianity, there is a minor presence of Muslims, Jews, and Hindus. Jamaica's homegrown religious movement, Rastafari, is practiced by about five percent of the population. Rastafari is an Afrocentric religio-social movement that originated in the 1930s as an alternative to Eurocentric Christianity. People who practice Rastafari are called *rasta*. Rastas are known for the smoking of marijuana as a religious ritual and the locking of their hair as a religious symbol (dreadlocks).

1.2.2 Government and Economy

Jamaica's government is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy led by a Prime Minister. The head of state is the British monarch, locally represented by a Governor-General, usually recommended by the Prime Minister. Jamaica is widely considered a two-party political state due to the prominence of the two main political parties, the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP). While smaller political parties and political movements exist, only JLP and PNP representatives have ever held seats in parliament. Jamaica's parliament has 63 seats, the majority of which is currently held by the JLP, which forms the government.

Jamaica's primary economic activities are in the tourism (services), mining, agriculture, and trade sectors, comprising more than half of the country's GDP and accounting for more than half of all employment. Tourism is often seen as the most crucial of all sectors and is the primary source of foreign exchange. In 2018, tourism earned Jamaica an estimated USD 3.3 billion (Smith, 2019), or about a quarter of GDP, and directly employed over 160,000 people. Despite recent record-breaking growth in the sector, tourism's contribution has not managed to pull Jamaica's economy out of the stagnation it has experienced since the 1980s. With an average GDP growth of 1% over the last 20 years and high rates of unemployment, especially among youth, the economy has been blamed, in part, for many of the country's social problems, such as poverty, inequality, and crime.

1.2.3 Crime

Crime is a major social issue of growing complexity in Jamaica, which consistently ranks among the world's top ten murderous countries. Crime affects the nation's economic growth and social well-being and has been the subject of attention across multiple domains.

In line with global trends, youths are Jamaica's primary perpetrators and victims of crime. Between 2008 and 2018, crime claimed the lives of over 13,000 Jamaicans and victimized thousands more. In 2009, the year with the highest number of homicides to date, 1,683 people were killed (Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2017). According to the revised National Youth Policy of 2017, recent studies suggest that a large portion of criminal activities are driven by "gangs of youth involved in extortion, contract killing, money laundering and transnational organized crimes such as lottery scamming, identify [sic] theft and fraud" (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2017b, p. 13). The report highlights the emergence of scamming as the new trend in criminal activities, which is believed to be related to recent upsurges in murders.

Not only is youth crime a social nuisance, but it is also quite costly, robbing the country of valuable economic resources. A 2012 UNDP report estimated that youth crime was costing Jamaica approximately half a billion United States Dollars (USD) per year (based on 2005 figures) when diverted investments and direct crime-fighting costs are tabulated (United Nations Development Programme, 2012). The report notes, "with the highest numbers of youth convicted, Jamaica incurs more than 529 million USD yearly as direct public and private costs linked to fighting youth crime" (United Nations Development Programme, 2012, p. 49). In a country where approximately 15% of citizens live in poverty, crime-fighting severely limits the government's ability to improve the social well-being of its most vulnerable residents and is, as such, a severe socioeconomic issue. Youth crime is even more costly when the costs incurred by victims (such as medical bills and future earnings loss) are included (Miller et al., 2001). Though nearly impossible to quantify financially, the emotional costs to victims are also immense. Moreover, Alleyne and Boxill (2003) have found that crime has adversely affected

tourism arrivals to Jamaica over time, further threatening the country's economic prospects. Crime, therefore, presents a sizable threat to Jamaica's development in the long term.

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

The study's overarching objective is to understand low-achieving boys' affinity with non-dominant behaviors as a tool of survival, empowerment, and inclusion in the Jamaican social structure. The study captures and explains delinquency (and its attendant academic underachievement) from the boys' perspective. It details how schooling policies, subcultural adaptations, and normative expectations influence the boys' navigation of schooling and the perception of their behaviors and abilities. The analysis of the boys' experiences highlights class tension, struggle, conflict, and harmony between dominant and sub-cultural spheres. Against this backdrop, the salience of delinquency from the boys' perspective is theorized.

The main research question and sub-questions are as follows:

Main Research Question:

Why are low-achieving boys attracted to delinquent behavior?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the characteristics of low-achieving delinquent boys?
2. How do low-achieving boys experience schooling?
3. How does male juvenile delinquency intersect with wider social and cultural dynamics?

1.4 Research Significance

The academic significance of this study lies in its contribution to the ongoing academic discourse on the structure-agency dialectic and its influence on delinquency. Structure pertains to the core principles of modern education, which constrains students' autonomy while

inculcating skills that are considered vital for society's smooth functioning. Agency represents individual and cultural actions and orientations that conflict with or undermine the structure's influence. Post-reproductionist scholars have emphasized the role of agency and subcultural values in deviance, moving further away from the view of schooling as subjugating, especially for the marginalized. However, this study pivots back to a more neutral stance by highlighting the persistence of structural and cultural factors in delinquent behavior. Therefore, the study shows how schooling tries to constrain the expression of non-dominant behaviors and how the low-achiever's response, partly informed by his subculture and seen as vital to his survival, interferes with this process. The study also shows how subcultural values are "structured" by complex processes that resonate with macro cultural values, such as the desirability of wealth as a marker of social success. Despite being a case study, which limits the generalizability of its findings, this Jamaican perspective of delinquency may provide insights into the situation of other Caribbean and broader post-colonial developing states.

Apart from its academic significance, the study is significant in at least three other ways. First, it amplifies the voices of urban male youth, who are often judged harshly for their "bad" behavior, adherence to non-dominant values, and weak academic abilities. Second, it takes on the issue of crime and deviance and their roles in framing the story of Jamaica's development, which has been characterized by struggle and a fight for economic justice, better quality of life, and the pursuit of happiness. Third, it helps us reconcile the diversity of cultural influences that comprises "Jamaicaness" in the twenty-first century.

Jamaica's poverty rates have been in steady decline, as has the number of uneducated, unattached[1] citizens. Over the years since Jamaica's independence in 1962, Jamaica has witnessed improvements in educational capacity and delivery, human development, and general

[1] Often used in reference to youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

standards of living. However, these improvements have coincided with an increase in crime and an outright disregard for conservative Jamaican values such as humility, honesty, and politeness. While Jamaica's crime problem is largely concentrated within the criminal underworld, it affects many Jamaicans directly and indirectly. Crime is most prevalent among criminal gangs within volatile communities. Gang violence accounted for more than 70% of all murders in 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 (Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2022). However, there has been a gradual blurring of the lines between incidents in the criminal underworld and the general society, resulting in more ordinary citizens falling victim to criminality.

Given the known influences of male underachievement and marginalization on crime and delinquency, coupled with the domination of the criminal underworld by young Jamaican males and the fact that males are being outnumbered and outperformed by their female counterparts at every level of the Jamaican education system, a deeper understanding of the Jamaican male experience of schooling is crucial. This is particularly urgent in schools with high numbers of boys from marginalized backgrounds. Yet, few such studies exist. There are studies that examine the Jamaican education system as a whole (see Evans, 2001), ones that look at male marginalization and underachievement in Jamaica (Figueroa, 2000; Parry, 2000), and ones that look at youth crime and criminal gangs in Jamaica (see Jackson, 2016; Levy, 2012). However, no study combines these three perspectives in the Jamaican context. This combination of perspectives is one of the contributions of this study.

Previous studies have helped us understand how improvements in students' schooling boost outcomes, how male academic underperformance is tied to notions of gender, masculinity, and subculture, and how school attachment positively impacts crime. This study investigates how these themes are intertwined with one another. By exploring these interconnections, we can avoid overly simplistic explanations of delinquency that emphasize factors like inferior

family structures and community values, which, while important, overlook structural elements such as classism in education or the tacit undermining of educational values through systemic exclusion and cultural change in Jamaica.

Therefore, this study expands the idea of delinquency as belonging to the realm of self, the family, and subcultural identity and highlights the influence of schooling against the backdrop of a modern meritocratic education system that promises inclusivity regardless of class or social background. This approach and the resulting perspectives are significant as they re-examine structural explanations of delinquency in a post-reproductionist era, which has overemphasized the role of agency in deviance and criminal ideation.

The study also contributes to our understanding of class-cultural dynamics in Jamaica. While highlighting the divide that has consistently demarcated social mobility in Jamaica, the study also builds a framework that demonstrates the class similarities around conceptions of wealth and its dignifying power, which can act as unifying forces in the rationalization of Jamaican values.

Methodologically, the study is also significant as there have been very few ethnographies of schools in Jamaica, and none that I could find focuses explicitly on male delinquency. Most studies on delinquency tend to be quantitative analyses, and in Jamaica, most studies of crime and deviance (both quantitative and qualitative) focus on criminal gangs. Smith (2000, p. 300) criticized the quantitative paradigm, noting that "quantitative researchers usually do not critically interpret school objectives, social interactions, or students' perspectives and agency." Smith called for more qualitative research on disadvantaged schools with large numbers of marginalized students as a rebalancing of positivism in juvenile delinquency research. Ilan (2007) also noted the importance of investigating, recognizing, and rationalizing the lived experiences of delinquents.

This study's insights should be valuable to educational practitioners and policymakers. Moreover, the analysis can provide a framework for further scholarship on delinquency in Jamaica.

1.5 Outline of this Dissertation

The dissertation comprises eight chapters. Following the introductory chapter, **Chapter Two** grounds the study in the existing academic discourse on delinquency, youth crime, and culture. The chapter starts by defining delinquency from a sociological perspective, making distinctions from criminological definitions that are based on criminal conduct by non-adults. Sociological explanations of juvenile delinquency encompass both criminal and sociocultural violations. The literature review also incorporates critical sociological theories and concepts such as structural-functionalism, conflict theory, and social reproduction. Legacy theories such as Strain theory, Subcultural theory, and Labeling theory are also explored, given their relevance to contemporary explanations of juvenile delinquency. Based on the preceding discourse, the limitations of quantitative approaches are highlighted, paving the way for the study's adoption of qualitative ethnographic methods. Other concepts of relevance to the study's analysis, such as Jamaican masculinity and criminality, are also discussed. The chapter ends by summarizing and critiquing the existing studies on juvenile delinquency in Jamaica.

Chapter Three supplements the literature review presented in Chapter Two by looking at schooling in Jamaica from an official standpoint. The chapter then uses labeling theory to explain how success and failure are socially constructed in the Jamaican context. Based on social constructivism, the chapter describes how achievement and underachievement are understood and reinforced in the Jamaican consciousness. This analysis is essential to understanding the perceived underachievement of the West Hill Boys. The chapter starts by giving an overview of the Jamaican education system, including the government's expectations

for students. The chapter then shows how these expectations, combined with other factors such as the feminine nature of schooling and the social stratification of secondary education, set a relatively "high bar" for students. To elucidate this "bar," the chapter discusses dominant policies and standards used in schools, such as testing, ranking, streaming, and dress codes, arguing that they inadvertently marginalize low-achieving students. These elements allow for the elucidation of a class-based "divide" among secondary students.

Chapter Four, Methodology and Analytical Framework, builds on the discussion from Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Four discusses the ethnographic method broadly before outlining its use in the study. Next, the chapter describes the study site, West Hill High, in detail. A description of how access to the study site and participants was gained follows. The second major section of the chapter is dedicated to describing the study's analytical framework, which is based on the concept of *moral fluidity* in the Jamaican context. The framework's basic idea elaborates Merton's strain theory, which outlines how differences in societal goals and available means to attain them lead to varying behavioral outcomes, of which delinquency is one. I clarify Merton's framework to show the peculiarities of the Jamaican context, such as the overcommitment to capitalist conceptions of success, dignity, and respect, explaining how overzealousness to meet these cultural goals warps previously rigid moral ideals, which nurtures delinquency.

Chapter Five describes and analyzes the 13 West Hill Boys (WHBs). Set against a backdrop of the Jamaican urban subculture – *dancehall*, the chapter offers thick descriptions of the boys' interactions within their preferred domain, The Courtyard. Embedded within these descriptions are accounts of the boys' beliefs, tendencies and behaviors, and dreams. The chapter contrasts the 13 boys' behaviors to their non-delinquent counterparts by describing the

boys' nemeses, "good boys, bright boys, nerds and *likkle bwoys*[2]". Unlike mature deviant peer groups, which have rigid structures, ardent following of, and subscription to group-defined values, the West Hill Boys lacked such rigidity. This "fluidity of relations" is explained and theorized in this chapter. Subsequently, the boys' protective alter ego, "badman," is described. The chapter ends by arguing that delinquency is dignifying for the boys.

Following the exclusive focus on the boys in Chapter 5, **Chapter Six** broadens the discussion to include the boys' interaction with the broader school system. The chapter begins with thick descriptions of teachers' perceptions of delinquency and pedagogy. This is followed by thick descriptions of the boys' navigation of dominant schooling, giving accounts of their interactions with testing and other academic obligations. The chapter also offers thematic descriptions of conflicts between teachers and the boys, followed by accounts of harmonious relations and the conditions that facilitate them.

As the last empirical chapter, **Chapter Seven** explains delinquency in a broadened societal context. First, the chapter discusses how the interactions discussed in previous chapters necessitate rethinking the resistance thesis, making the argument for "protective" delinquency. Next, the influence of changing familial and community contexts regarding financial endowment and cultural values is discussed. The influence of dancehall culture on deviance is expounded on, as well as a discussion of the ambivalence of cultural values, which signals a transition toward the neutralization of morality as elaborated by the study's analytical framework. In contrast to Willis' findings, I argue that the tacit normalization of delinquency threatens the Jamaican social order.

Chapter Eight summarizes the study's findings, arguments, and analysis and offers recommendations for policy and future research.

[2] A label for boys who the WHBs consider inferior and unworthy (see page 164)

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Juvenile delinquency is a widely researched issue covered by several disciplines, including criminology, sociology, and cultural studies, with literature dating back to the 1700s. However, given the context of my investigation of delinquency (and crime by extension) in Jamaica, I have primarily focused on recent research. This literature review begins by defining the concept and locating it within the field of sociology. I will then look at methodological trends within recent scholarship, discussing the variance in their outcomes, explore critical bodies of research on the topic, and highlight the gaps in our current understanding of delinquency, which this research will help to fill.

2.1 Defining Delinquency

Part of the challenge of thoroughly understanding delinquency is the complexity of the concept and difficulty defining it concretely. As Wilkins (1963, p. 106) notes, "juvenile delinquency is not itself a satisfactory concept for the application of the scientific method [as] different nations and different cultures at different times define it in different ways." He cautions that while a definition is crucial to our discussion of delinquency, one that fits all cultures and times becomes valueless. The most conventional definitions of juvenile delinquency are based on law and seem centered around two variables: the offender's age and the offense's nature.

However, there are problems with these criminological variables, too. Wilkins (1963), for instance, points to the fact that regarding age, someone can be a juvenile offender up to the minute before a particular birthday but not after that. This poses a moral dilemma if an "egregious" act loses such a status based solely on the passage of a considerably short period

of time. The second pillar of legal definitions, the nature of the offense, also suffers from issues as what is considered offensive is highly subjective and varies widely even with the same culture. Therefore, what becomes shortlisted as offensive is likely to be hegemonic or merely representative of dominant perspectives. Nonetheless, in the absence of a utopian solution comes a compromise. Wilkins settles on the definition: "any behavior on the part of the younger age groups of the population such that the senior age groups object to it" (Wilkins, 1963, p. 107). This definition is, of course, also problematic but provides enough scope to probe the complexity of cultural factors that are interwoven into delinquent conduct.

Persistence of the behavior is another dimension of the definition of delinquency. Smoking or getting drunk, for instance, are reprehensible if performed by children and adolescents but only to the extent that they persist. Teens "trying out" smoking is still unacceptable but would hardly be considered "delinquent." In addition, juvenile delinquency covers infractions only minors can commit, called status offenses. These offenses only apply to non-adults, such as smoking, drinking, gambling, skipping school, and running away from home.

This study emphasizes the sociological definition of delinquency, which includes violations of social and cultural norms, not merely criminal ones. Therefore, the study defines delinquency as *persistent behaviors among young people that violate widely accepted social norms and laws*. While the study focuses on school-based delinquency as the source of its primary data, this definition of delinquency extends to the violations of social norms and laws that occur in the broader Jamaican society.

2.2 Explaining Delinquency

2.2.1 Theoretical Explanations

2.2.1.1 Structural Theories

Strain theory is one of the earlier ideas that comprises the structural paradigm. Developed by the American sociologist Robert Merton, the theory argues that "some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in nonconformist rather than conformist conduct" (Merton, 1938, p. 672). Merton proposed five ways people respond to this societal pressure: *conformity*, *innovation*, *ritualism*, *retreatism*, and *rebellion*. *Innovation* and *rebellion* are of particular importance to the issue of delinquency as *innovation* involves the use of socially unapproved means to achieve the "established" goals, and *rebellion* involves a rejection of the goals altogether.

Cohen's (1955) work on status frustration expands on Merton's strain theory with a particular focus on youth. Cohen suggests that lower-class youth are desirous of fulfilling society's goals but cannot do so due to their class subjugation, which results in resistance and crime. Cohen believes that youth who perceived that they would not be able to achieve the social status set by the upper classes resorted to adopting values that run counter to upper-class values. Such social status is validated by "academic achievement, delayed gratification, and financial success" (McNeeley & Wilcox, 2015, p. 255).

2.2.1.2 Subcultural Theories.

Subcultural theories largely associate deviance with the differing values and norms that some lower-class segments of society hold, which, in addition to countering society's dominant teachings and values, make such groups more prone to anti-social behavior.

Miller (1958) extends Cohen's assertion, arguing that anti-school values are subcultural expressions of cultural themes of the lower class, which makes school deviance primarily a

lower-class youth phenomenon. Miller's idea of subculture revolves around the normalization of criminal behaviors to a point where one receives praise for deviance and reprimand or relegation for the failure or inability to display deviant behavior.

Subcultural theories have received a fair amount of criticism. They have been problematized for emphasizing lower-class status as a sort of prerequisite for deviant behavior. Coleman (1961), for example, argued that despite evident differences in socioeconomic status, youth culture is characterized by the need to be popular among peers. This, he believes, provided an impetus for deviant behavior. For him, deviance among youth was more age-related than class-based. Since young people's lives revolve around school, many opportunities for praise and popularity originate in school. Therefore, where there is an absence of academic accolades among delinquent youth, Coleman's assertion of why they offend is quite convincing. In other words, it is easy to believe that youth offend because they are not doing well academically. Stinchcombe (1964) supports Coleman's assertion, adding that rebellion is a natural response to school failure, irrespective of class. However, he points out that not all cultures promote the importance of education as a means of upward social mobility. He argues that in cultures where the need for upward mobility is not strongly ingrained, students are not motivated to gain social status. As a result, students use deviance not to achieve normative societal status (as perhaps Merton's theory would suggest) but merely as an outlet for excitement.

Subcultural theories have also been accused of exaggerating the differences between deviant and compliant students, with Matza (1990) adding that most delinquent and conformist youth share similar values. Moreover, while many delinquent youths are from lower-class backgrounds, many lower-class youths are compliant.

It appears that a central component of the subcultural argument, though not particularly emphasized, is that deviance is the result of a quest for "status" or "respect," which somehow proves evasive because of reasons related to social class. Cohen (1955), for example, believed that even though the adopted (oppositional) values of lower-class youth contrasted those of their upper-class counterparts, the social status they (all) sought remained the same. While there is evidence to corroborate the assertion that deviant youth seek respect and social status, support for the claims that deviant behavior is class-related is contested in the literature.

In sum, subcultural theorists regard deviance as, essentially, a lower-class phenomenon and the result of a subjugated culture providing a more accessible alternative to the attainment of social status for its adherents. Criticisms of subcultural theories have problematized its insistence on socioeconomic class, pointing out that failure and under-attainment are likely to produce rebellion regardless of class. Moreover, while some students do deviant deeds, unless it amounts to using alternative cultural values to attain normative social status, it might not be genuinely "subcultural."

2.2.1.3 Conflict-based theories

Conflict-based theories[3], and notably, the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976), sought to criticize the view of Western education as *functional* - meeting the needs of modern society. The *functionalism* thesis asserts that in modern Western society, characterized by constant technological change, the education system functions to supply the constantly needed stream of skilled labor. It, therefore, serves a significant and indispensable role in maintaining society.

Collins (1971) notes the emergence of the *technical-function theor*y in the 1960s, citing the work of Clark (1962) and Kerr et al. (1960). These authors' work suggests that (1) society constantly needs skilled people, (2) education provides the skills and capacities needed by these

[3] Conflict-based theories refers to the work of neo-Marxist

skilled people, and (3) to create a constant supply of such skilled people, schooling for increasingly more extended periods becomes a requirement for more and more of the population. As stated earlier, conflict-based theories reject this view, insisting that the education system merely works to sustain society's unequal class-based structure at the behest of capitalism.

Bowles and Gintis (1976), as cited in Hurn (1993), believe that schools replicate the values and attitudes that capitalist societies need. They noted that schools catering to students from lower socioeconomic classes tended to be strict about being on time, respecting those in charge, and following instructions. However, schools geared at producing corporate executives, for instance, would be geared toward flexibility, an ability to tolerate uncertainty, and positive attitudes toward innovation and change.

As outlined by Collins (2009), several studies have provided structuralist accounts of social reproduction in the education system. These studies have highlighted features of language and culture exhibited in classrooms, which can be associated with perpetuating social and economic inequalities. Social and cultural reproduction theories can be considered "conflict-based theories" as they argue against the perceived egalitarian nature of society and the education system. Collins (2009, p. 34) notes that "the basic reproductionist argument was that schools were not exceptional institutions promoting equality of opportunity; instead, they reinforced the inequalities of social structure and cultural order found in a given country." Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) description of "cultural reproduction" as the primary role of the education system bolsters this negative image of schooling as an agent of class-oppression. Cultural reproduction involves reproducing the culture of the dominant classes, which have the power to legitimize their own culture and invoke a sense of superiority over other cultures with the assistance of the education system. The social reproduction thesis, or the idea that schooling is not meritocratic nor socially uplifting, goes against our normative understanding of the

education system, which is widely perceived as the bedrock of an equal society in the post-WWII era (Themelis, 2008).

Conflict-based theories have a seemingly fatalistic view of the education system. They believe the only hope for education reform is the abolition of the capitalist model upon which Western education is premised. This view expresses a view of capitalist society as an oppressor of the dreams of lower-status people, tricking them into extending their class subjugation under the guise of a "meritocratic education" to propel their hidden agendas.

2.2.1.4 Resistance Theories[4]

Unlike subcultural theories, where oppositional (subcultural) values provide an alternative mechanism for achieving social status, resistance theories emphasize an awareness of the unequal distribution of opportunity in society and a deliberate attempt (by the oppressed group) to subvert this dominant system. As described earlier, conflict-based theories frame the school system as an agent of capitalist society, which aims to maintain society's unequal class-based system. Resistance theories add another component to this argument.

Willis' 1977 book, *Learning to Labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*, is widely recognized as the gold standard of the resistance argument. Willis' arguments are based on ethnographic research he conducted with a group of final-year high school boys from working-class backgrounds in the British Midlands. Willis' central thesis can be considered akin to conflict-based theories, but it differs in a key way; that is, it introduces human agency into the equation. Previous work emphasized the unfairness of society's capitalist structure, which, through the school system, was helping to maintain the subjugation of the lower classes. However, Willis' work attributes some of the subjugation of the working-class to its own

[4] "Resistance theories" is a term coined by Davies (1999).

actions, including the resistance to schooling that the boys ("lads") he investigated so vividly demonstrated.

Willis' thesis revolved around what he described as a *school counterculture*, which the lads embodied. He described this counterculture in rich ethnographic detail, highlighting the following as key components: (1) Opposition to authority and rejection of conformist attitudes, (2) Rejection of school - embodied by high rates of truancy, (3) Provocation of students and teachers for self-entertainment, (4) Embodiment of sexist, racist and homophobic sentiments. For Willis, a school counterculture is a muted form of political resistance to the dominant social values, informed by what he calls "penetrations" or culture-baked insights into the unequal power relations which envelop society. This resistance ends up accelerating the working-class' entrapment in class-based subjugation.

Gordon (1984) elucidates Willis' theory of cultural production, suggesting that the school system is not the only agent of social reproduction. She notes that culture is also being reproduced at the student level. In other words, the school system does not unilaterally maintain class status but is assisted by the exchange of deviant culture among students.

We may wonder the extent to which Willis' boys understood their behavior as political acts of rebellion. Willis' thesis encompasses three types of resistance: conscious, unconscious, and relative autonomy. The first two are self-explanatory, but the last suggests that the lads' rebellion is, effectively, a product of the backgrounds from which they originate, not theirs. This raises questions about whether we can infer political activism on the part of the lads if their rebellion is either unconscious or relatively autonomous.

However, Kipnis (2001) argues that there can be resistance without a counterculture. For resistance to amount to a school counterculture, Kipnis lists the following three indispensable characteristics: (1) loud and explicit, (2) oppose the status quo (politically

meaningful/expressive), and (3) representative of the perpetrator's cultural background/environment. Kipnis agrees that Willis' lads' actions embodied a school counterculture but emphasizes the possibility of demonstrably rebellious behavior not amounting to a school counterculture.

Although there have been several criticisms of Willis' study, which has been accused of methodological malpractice (using too few students), overstating the reach of its data, and ignoring patriarchal relations (McRobbie, 1991), Willis' thesis defines a strong enough concept of resistance that emphasizes the indispensability of free will when theorizing about class reproduction and deviance.

2.2.1.5 Merit Theories

McFadden (1995) argues that deviance is often a means of shielding oneself from hurt and danger. He believes that "students from certain backgrounds have experiences of schooling which restrict their opportunity to extend their knowledge, " so their natural response is to resist (McFadden, 1995, p. 237). He adds that students dislike schooling that takes away their power, which is typical of modern-day curriculum and pedagogy, which use practices such as streaming. He argues that the evidence does not suggest that students resist the dominant societal ideology, which would need to be the case if the resistance arguments are to be believed.

Another perspective on student resistance comes from Kreager (2007). He points out that "males who perform poorly in school, irrespective of their socio-demographic backgrounds or school contexts, are more likely to gain status benefits from violence than are higher achieving peers" (Kreager, 2007, p. 918). This assertion demonstrates Kreager's belief that deviant students use violence to reclaim lost image due to their academic underperformance. Violence is, therefore, a tool used to complement their image and status and is not necessarily antisocial or oppositional to dominant societal ideology.

2.2.1.6 Youthful Nature of Deviance

Davies (1999, p. 199) criticized subcultural and resistance theories, proposing an alternative, which he refers to as "*youthful* nature of deviance." Davies argued that school rebellion is more a result of gendered expectations and pressures than it is about class. He adds that young males nowadays exist in a peculiar environment that pressures them to meet specific standards of masculinity, embodied by aggression and rebellion, which ultimately pushes them toward deviance. This is in line with Gilmore's (1990) assertion that hegemonic masculinity, which emphasizes aggression, domination, and confrontation, is sometimes culturally ingrained. Davies writes, "subcultural explanations are premised on the notion that deviance erupts from a clash of norms between a subgroup and the dominant society. My alternative model breaks from previous subcultural explanations by locating the source of cultural discord not in social class, but in the age composition of society" (Davies, 1999, pp. 198–199).

He argues that almost all jobs these days require formal education or certification, leaving youth dependent on adults for longer periods. This economic dependence and the longer period of association with peers make them subordinate, and this subordination creates a need for reliance on and approval from peers. This approval can be sought through deviant behaviors, such as confronting a teacher, which prove popular with youth.

Davies adds that the requirement that youth conform to normative ideas of masculinity or femininity supplements the need for peer approval. He asserts that male teenage deviance might be heightened machismo used to compensate for weakened teenage masculinity. As time goes on and deviant males grow older, their exaggerated masculinity is likely to fade. Females, likewise, use domestic traditionalism and exaggerated femininity to adapt to their lack of success in school.

For these reasons, Davies believes that deviance is not necessarily reflective of class but rather the youthful nature of deviance and conventional forms of masculinity and femininity. Davies does admit, however, that socioeconomic status is a "prime determinant of student fortunes, and explains why some students and not others tend to [be] successful in school in the first place" (Davies, 1999, p. 201).

2.2.2 Quantitative Approaches

Most studies on juvenile delinquency have been quantitative, employing surveys of large numbers of youth to identify risk and protective factors that correlate to deviant conduct. Commonly identified factors include race, gender, socioeconomic and family background, peer influence, parental absenteeism, and school failure. Guan (2012), for instance, used a sample size of 407,800 to identify pathways to crime among youth in Louisiana. He found that being male, African American, and being from a family of low socioeconomic status increased the risk of criminal involvement. Similarly, Elsass' (2015) study of 20,750 secondary students spanning grades seven through 12 and 17,700 parents concluded that attachment to school, less experience with violent victimization, and less association with delinquent peers correlates with behavioral conformity. He notes that active pure conformists are often female, white, associate with delinquent peers less often, and have higher levels of control than passive pure conformists. Studies like these demonstrate the power of quantitative studies, which lies in their ability to identify generalizable factors and trends within a given population.

Quantitative studies probe the domain of the "individual," highlighting factors and events that correspond to an individual's life, personal sphere, or control. They are notably less adept at explaining these phenomena and the contexts that create and maintain them, which are logically inseparable. As Burris (1980, as cited by Gordon, 1984, p. 524) asks, "how do we reconcile the formal equality of the educational system with the persistence of class inequality?

In particular, how do we account for the strong tendency of working-class children to end up in jobs similar to their parents?" Quantitative approaches struggle in addressing these questions, and, thus, fail to explain the persistence of social class divisions within an education system that is meant to be equitable and merit-based (Anyon, 1981).

Smith (2000, p. 300) criticized the quantitative paradigm, noting that "quantitative researchers usually do not critically interpret school objectives, social interactions, or students' perspectives and agency." Ilan (2007, p. 28) agrees, describing mainstream criminology as an examination of crime that does not "recognize, consider or probe the lived experiences of those who offend." Smith called for more qualitative research on disadvantaged schools with large numbers of marginalized students as a rebalancing of positivism in juvenile delinquency research. In addition, Ilan notes that ethnographic research challenges positivist criminological perspectives through "nuanced reportage" of social worlds and the meanings that actors within them attach to various phenomena. The quantitative approach's inherent weakness in understanding delinquency has highlighted the importance of alternative approaches.

2.2.3 Qualitative Approaches

Qualitative studies, in contrast, have looked at the broader environment or system within which delinquency is precipitated, laying more blame on the structure than the agent. Gordon (1984) writes:

> Existing liberal and radical explanations of this phenomenon have tended to be overmechanistic and overdeterministic, stressing various socialization factors, theories of correspondence between school and society, and the imposition of a dominant ideology on a largely passive working class. These approaches have concentrated on mechanistic, recurring features of class-based school failure, and have produced positivist views of society which are quite unable to

> account for contradiction, transformation or change. The ethnographic method de-emphasises the mechanistic features of reproduction, and instead concentrates on the subjects who live and experience that reproduction (and, as Willis notes, even produce such reproduction) (p. 106)

Qualitative accounts emphasize the holistic investigation of social phenomena, particularly context and actors, and allow us to engage with discourses that challenge our often single-dimensional understanding of social phenomena. Gintis and Bowles, for example, challenged the normative expectations that schools produce successful, productive citizens, regardless of socioeconomic baselines. These approaches also allow for more nuanced perspectives while subscribing to broader theoretical underpinnings. For instance, Willis' 1977 study of delinquent boys in the British Midlands showed how the reproduction of class and its associated norms, values, and behaviors occurs at the crossroads of cultural conflict, structural bias, and individual agency.

A fundamental tenet of qualitative research is the role of the researcher and the relationship between respondent and researcher. The ethnographic method especially emphasizes this. As Parry (2000, p. 5) writes, "whereas quantitative (positivistic) methodologies claim that objects of study exist independently from both the agents and tools of research, qualitative methodologies are based upon the premise that data does not exist independently but is constructed through the process of research and the relationship between researcher and respondent." This perspective is critical when dealing with delicate issues such as delinquency and crime, in which quality data extraction is predicated on the strength of the relationship between the researcher and the respondent. Densley (2013) shares this perspective in his justification of using qualitative approaches for gang research, a similarly delicate issue. He writes, "qualitative methods provide a snapshot rather than a portrait of processes and

peoples, but they are appropriate given the sensitive nature of the subject matter and the challenges inherent in gang studies" (Densley, 2013, p. 7).

In sum, qualitative perspectives give a more in-depth view of the processes surrounding delinquent indulgence, not merely an outlay of probabilities and likelihoods. They also emphasize the importance of the subjectivities of the researcher in painting a balanced picture of social phenomenon.

2.3 Delinquency in a Jamaican Context

2.3.1 Typical Explanations of Delinquency

While studies have investigated criminal gangs and gang culture in Jamaica, scholarship on juvenile delinquency among males in Jamaica is relatively limited, confined to quantitative research based on American studies that seek to identify risk and protective factors. Even among the few qualitative studies of delinquency that focused on the school system that I identified, none was carried out using an ethnographic approach.

Jamaican studies attribute male youth deviance to a variety of factors, including parenting styles, poverty, the influence of dancehall music and culture, youth exposure to violence, negative media influence on youth, peer associations, school failure, and the insufficiency of the criminal justice system (see Crawford, 2010; Jackson, 2016; Pottinger, 2012; Samms-Vaughan, 2008; see Women's Media Watch Jamaica, 2011).

Levy's 2012 study of youth crime provided much insight into the misclassification of criminal behavior by the police and state, which he argues leads to resistance and greater embeddedness of crime among inner-city youth. Levy makes distinctions between "corner crews," "defense crews," and "criminal gangs." Corner crews, he notes, are simply a gathering of youths who hang out, play games, and socialize. Defense crews use weapons to defend the community in times of war but are not organized or wealth oriented. Gangs are organized

wealth-pursuant illegal entities. Levy's study highlights a critical aspect of offending -labeling- about which many authors have theorized. Labeling theory or Societal Reaction Theory posits that society creates criminals and delinquents by condemning or attaching labels to persons based on stereotypes and/or their rejection of dominant conformist attitudes. Levy clarifies that a group of people hanging out on the street in a particular area does not equate to a group of criminals, even though the two may share the same space. Levy's assertions can apply to the low-achieving school, where students' mere existence is a point of judgment on their cultural orientation. Nonetheless, Levy's study does not focus on the cultural dynamics or the values that create these groups and, more importantly, the cultural dynamics that cause youth to move between groups.

2.3.2 Evans' Study of Educational Delivery in Jamaican Schools

Hyacinth Evans, a leading education scholar in Jamaica, has written several pieces about the state of Jamaican schooling, which seems best captured by the following line, "Schooling holds out promises for all its students, but enables their achievement for only some" (Evans, 2001, p. 143). Evans' studies cover the gamut of educational institutions in Jamaica and focus on structural and individual factors such as school curriculum, gender, language, pedagogy, and socialization. As an education scholar, she emphasizes effective lesson planning, classroom techniques, and the qualities education professionals require to effect change in a demanding Jamaican context. Evan's work is insightful and timely, highlighting some of the biases and conflicts students in this study also faced and offering context-specific solutions based on scientific data. Nonetheless, it does not explore – and rightfully so, based on Evan's objectives – how student underachievement is intertwined with broader societal trends and the implications this has for the status quo. This study picks up on the inequality Evans described – the differential class-based outcomes of Jamaican schooling – and extends it to a conversation

of not simply a structural deficiency in schooling, but more broadly, social change in Jamaican society regarding the value of education.

2.3.3 Issues of Gender and Masculinity

One of the more frequently cited reasons for the explosion of crime, violence, and lawlessness in Jamaica is the toxicity of Jamaican definitions of manhood. Several scholars have written extensively about masculinity in Jamaica (and the wider Caribbean) which can be summed up as "toxic," "flawed," and "crime-inducing." Parry (2000) starts by explaining Caribbean masculinity's historical context. While she acknowledges its resonance with white notions of male power, profit, and pleasure, she notes its location in the historical institution of chattel slavery, wherein black masculinity was negated, relegated, and othered. She then describes the issues of expected school behaviors being incompatible with dominant images of masculinity, compounded by the lack of suitable male role models for boys, especially those who grow up in fatherless homes. As shown in subsequent narratives, expected school behaviors such as being well-spoken, being able to read, and displaying refined, polite behavior is associated with gayness, which adds to boys' resistance.

Hope (2006) links Jamaican masculinity to broader discourses of patriarchy in society. While we know patriarchy is not unique to Jamaica or developing states, Hope connects patriarchy in post-colonial states to a society-wide values system that idealizes males and is reinforced by the institutions operating within that system or society. This is similar to what Thame and Dhanaraj (2014) call bourgeois patriarchy – a form of masculinity concerned with middle-class, heterosexual men's domination over society. Hope notes that a "real Jamaican man" is expected to act as a traditional hunter and provider with access to wealth, power, money, brand-name clothing, flashy cars, and beautiful women. For men who lack access to these sought-after masculine symbols – men at the lower socioeconomic levels, for instance – violent

replacements such as gun-worship[5], aggression and warlike demeanor, forcefulness, violence, and phallic imagery are bartered as commensurate with hegemonic images of masculinity as required by Jamaican patriarchy (Hope, 2006), justifying the claim that dominant middle-class masculinity is under threat by urban underclass masculinity (Thame & Dhanaraj, 2014).

Other scholars have raised issues related to gender and masculinity's impacts on male schooling, such as the privileging of Caribbean men, whose exclusion from household responsibilities render them unsuited for a gendered school setting (Figueroa, 2000); the post-emancipation marginalization of males and the resultant exodus of men from the teaching profession in the Caribbean (Miller, 1986); and the idea of the growing ambivalence of manhood among Jamaicans (resulting from a hybrid of the previous two points) that distorts boys' valuation of education and limits their aptitude for excellence at school (Chevannes, 2002).

These perspectives show that gender and notions of masculinity help to define boys' adaptability to schooling and their resulting academic performance, which is tied to their behaviors. Subsequent chapters will expand these themes by situating the West Hill Boys' (WHBs) case in these discourses.

2.4 Understanding Delinquency (Research Gap)

The preceding paragraphs summarized the variety of perspectives on the issue of delinquency, youth crime, and school deviance, dating back to the 1930s. Given the ubiquity of schooling obligations among youth in the modern era, many studies emphasized schools' influence on deviant behavior. Cultural factors also weighed heavily in theorizations of delinquency, and rightly so, as culture is the lens through which humans interpret the world and

[5] Term used to capture idolization of guns. It may include gunplay, glorifications of shooters, gunmen, or "shottas" as they are referred to in Jamaica, and lyrics that emphasize violence

their position within it. However, very few studies could represent the overlap of schooling obligations and cultural factors in a way that captures the nuances of deviance from the perspectives of the delinquent. This is important to our understanding of delinquency and helps to counter the lack of candor about the plight of marginalized people in an age of neoliberal ideology, which shifts the responsibility for success and failure to the individual.

While many of these approaches accurately capture key aspects of delinquency, there is still room for more nuanced characterizations of youth deviance and contemporary masculinities. Many of the studies, particularly quantitative ones, seemed too focused on the behaviors and deviant actions of delinquent boys or the precipitating environments for deviant behavior that they failed to capture the essence of deviant boys as individuals in search of validation and dignity amidst cultural constraints that limit their options. Moreover, while the Caribbean male context shares similarities with many other geographies, especially among formerly colonized nations, there are unique and complex dynamics that warrant focused attention. While race may factor less in Caribbean male delinquency, class, historical background, and gender peculiarities make for interesting revelations about the Caribbean male experience and how it frames boys' schooling.

As Densley (2013, p. 40) pointed out in justifying his study of gangs, "To understand why youths join gangs we must first understand the contexts in which they join." Similarly, to understand why working-class boys develop an affinity for academic underachievement and deviant conduct, we must understand the context in which such an affinity grows. Admittedly, the context is complex, encompassing many factors and circumstances that are structural and agency-based. Jay MacLeod's (2009) book, *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood,* provides a framework for investigating context. MacLeod argues that school and the labor market act as the structure boys must navigate, using the tools and

subcultural logic the family provides (agency). To supplement the lack of context in the existing characterization of the Jamaican delinquent boy, this study investigates the schooling of the 13 West Hill Boys. An essential component of context is the mission of education. In Jamaica, the Ministry of Education (MOE) operates under the motto "every child can learn, every child must learn" and promises inclusivity regardless of class or social background.

Moreover, there seems to be an under-emphasis on the power of schooling to constrict individual potential and desire. As Smith (2000) notes, it is crucial to investigate how the education system's imperatives (policies and practices) match the expectations and abilities of its marginalized students. In addition, we must examine the influence of educational imperatives on students' attitudes and behaviors.

I sense that very few studies try to understand, as opposed to explaining, delinquency. Positivist approaches tend to overemphasize scientific rigor and produce mechanistic accounts that do not explore the complex role of context (social and cultural) in behavior. A significant limitation of quantitative studies is that they often overlook or misconstrue context. This is where the ethnographic method shines. It allows us to digest behavior not in isolation but in tandem with the interactions that inform it. Such an approach is more likely to produce insights that help us perceive delinquency in ways that studies focused solely on computational logic cannot.

However, the problems with the existing studies are not merely methodological but also conceptual. Even qualitative ethnographic studies often fail to capture the nuances that characterize behavior. Exploring working-class youth and their attraction to "danger" is no different. Willis' study provides a good model for investigating delinquency among working-class boys in Jamaica. However, perhaps because of the cultural context in which it occurs, there are gaps in Willis' representation of the class reproduction process when applied to

Jamaica. A prime example of such a gap is the influence of gender. While Jamaica is still patriarchal and women often struggle to break glass ceilings in corporate and political circles, Jamaican women outnumber, outperform, and outachieve men in education. Women also command considerable power over men's agency, as a key tenet of Jamaican masculinity is males' appeal to women. This complicates the performance of boyhood and the extent to which a boy needs to go to prove his worth. Another aspect of Willis' analysis that differs from the Jamaican context is the adulation of manual labor as a feature of masculinity. Modern technological progress renders this a somewhat dated perspective. Therefore, more recent and better-contextualized notions of masculinity are needed. In addition, geographical and ethnic considerations must be brought to bear when theorizing about men in the Caribbean. Parry (2000, p. 2) reminds us to "avoid extrapolating our findings about white male experience, in either the Caribbean or elsewhere, to the experiences of Caribbean black men" as it has been demonstrated that the reproduction of white disadvantage is inappropriate in a black context owing to different cultural variables.

Even so, the existing scholarship on Caribbean masculinity has limitations. Scholars have emphasized the influence of "toxic" forms of masculinity on males' rejection of academic excellence and how such underachievement intersects social class. However, the interrogation of "deviance," "violence," and "crime" is only cosmetically explored through the lens of male underachievement and schooling. Instead, such analyses focus on subculture, and the target shifts from marginalized males (such as low-achieving schoolboys) to gangs. We should question the dynamics that create school underachievement and explore the transition from underachievement to criminal enlistment. However, such an undertaking is mammoth and not a realistic target for a Ph.D. study. Nonetheless, this study looks at what might be considered a snippet of this relatively unexplored transition period.

Caribbean scholars have also emphasized the peculiarity of Caribbean masculinity, which entrenches an image of an absolute, unrelenting toughness cloaked in layers of machismo, violence, and irrational thinking. However, in addition to the behavioral traits, masculinity should also be viewed in terms of its current utility. For instance, is masculinity still a tool used to dominate women and children, as has been suggested, or is it more a tool used to appease women? Our understanding of not just *how* but also *why* boys perform masculinity still has room for augmentation.

Current discourses about deviance and male underachievement in Jamacia theorize and explain delinquency from typical perspectives. Despite being limited to schooling, this study hopes to understand, not merely explain, delinquency by accounting for cultural nuances, contexts, and relations that characterize delinquent behavior, particularly among low-achieving youth.

Chapter 3
Schooling in Jamaica: The Social Construction of Achievement and Failure

Against the backdrop of the functionalism thesis, this chapter describes the features of the Jamaican education system, arguing that in line with national development goals, the education system sets a particularly "high bar" for its students. This "high bar" proves particularly problematic for low-achieving students, many of whom originate from marginalized backgrounds. Negotiating the "bar" results in a social divide or dichotomy that frames our understanding of achievement and failure.

Firstly, the chapter offers an overview of the Jamaican education system, including the policies and expectations of government and education officials. This is important in establishing the context against which schooling gains its authority. Next, I look at how Jamaicans perceive the salience of education. This is used to explain the mutual acceptance of schooling's legitimacy. Next, I explore specific characteristics of schooling, along with specific policies that, against the backdrop of a validated social mandate, frame students' understanding of the academic world around them and their positionality within this world. I then explain how this creates and sustains the "ideal student" and, by extension, the "delinquent student." They embody "achievement" and "failure," respectively.

Functionalism is one of the major paradigms in sociology used to analyze schooling. Functionalism asserts that schools work to make society function. Under this paradigm, schools teach students important technical skills and competencies and facilitate the inculcation and re-negotiation of shared values. Ansalone (2009) notes that schools teach students to prioritize society's needs above personal ones and, in so doing, promote unity and transmit culture and

values. However, under functionalism, the most important role of schooling is the refinement of the mechanism of societal role assignment –the system of selecting the best and most talented people for the various jobs needed to keep society going. In other words, schooling is a talent-matching apparatus without which we would not be able to realize the smooth functioning of society. For this reason, schools have been an indispensable part of modern societies.

However, functionalist perspectives fail to explain why the most desirable, lucrative, and least physically strenuous jobs tend to match with the wealthiest, most advantaged, and historically dominant members of society and vice-versa. This anomaly highlights the persistence of social divisions in the talent-matching process, a perspective highlighted by conflict theorists and neo-Marxists (see Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Collins, 2009). Conflict theorists maintain that schooling is the place of social reproduction of class divisions. Here, the disadvantaged class is conned into sustaining their poverty while simultaneously increasing the economic and political advantages of the "advantaged" class. Simply stated, schooling is seen as a scam that exploits the poor to sustain the rich.

The reproductionist view of schooling is difficult to defend in the modern era, characterized by democratic ideals, capitalism, and globalization. As universal education has swept the globe, ushered in by the ubiquity of shared global goals such as the MDGs and its successor, the SDGs, governments have rallied behind the universal education banner, promising equal opportunity for social mobility through education, irrespective of social status. Nonetheless, the anomaly persists. There remains a divide between those who "achieve" and those who "underachieve," those who "succeed," and those who "fail," and this divide is still demarcated along class lines, which questions the egalitarian profile of modern education. Without casting the entire school system under the weight of conflict-based theorizations, this chapter seeks to examine how the persistence of "low-achieving schools" in Jamaica

undermines functionalist conceptions of schooling by analyzing achievement, and failure by association, from a social constructivist point of view.

Constructivism asserts that there is no objective truth about the meaning of achievement or failure. Both are subjective concepts normalized through hegemonic processes in conjunction with the adapted realities of those who traverse the space within which these concepts exist. This overlap (the intersubjective) shaped these concepts and gave them meaning. Schooling is one such actor within the social space that shapes what it means to be "successful" or "failed" and what it means to have "achieved" or "underachieved." Schooling, in and of itself, does not declaratively ascribe these meanings. Admittedly, it is the social actors (many of whom have limited power in the social space) who, in negotiating these meanings, concretize and perpetuate their validity. Nonetheless, schooling as an arbiter of this negotiation process is undeniably crucial in the social construction of achievement and failure.

3.1 Overview of the Jamaican School System

Formal schooling is the primary method of education for Jamaicans between the ages of three and 18. The Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY) administers the education system through its head office in Kingston, six regional offices, and 11 agencies. The ministry is responsible for the management and administration of public education in Jamaica and operates under the philosophy: *every child can learn, every child must learn* (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2019a).

According to official public data, the Jamaican education system caters to approximately 900,000 students in over 1000 institutions, served by over 23,000 teachers (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2019b; Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2020). It comprises four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Early childhood education caters to children between the ages of three and five. It is offered by hundreds of public and private institutions under the supervision of the Early Childhood Commission, an agency of the education ministry. Most children attend community-operated basic schools, which are recognized and subsidized by the government, provided they satisfy certain conditions. Nurseries and pre-kindergarten (usually attached to privately run preparatory schools) also accept students in this age cohort. Students at the Early Childhood level sit the Grade One Individual Learning Profile (GOILP), which confirms their mastery of the skills and concepts taught at the Early Childhood level (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2020).

Primary education in Jamaica is compulsory and begins at age six. In public institutions, primary schooling is offered free of charge. Primary school comprises six grades, after which students matriculate to secondary education via primary school exit tests. This testing system is called Primary Exit Profile (PEP) and replaces a similar system called the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT), which ended in 2018. Both PEP and GSAT evaluate students' aptitude and act as a screening system for matriculation into secondary school. Matriculation is based primarily on a matching system of students' pre-selected high schools of preference and their test results. This matching is managed by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

Secondary education comprises five years, spanning grades seven through 11, after which students graduate. Secondary schooling is offered in two cycles, lower secondary (grades 7 through 9) and upper secondary (grades 10 and 11). These levels are often called "lower school" and "upper school," respectively. Some secondary schools offer an additional two years of secondary school education (grades 12 and 13) under the Career Advancement Programme (CAP) and Sixth Form/Pre-university programs, where students can prepare to re-sit secondary level examinations or pursue advanced studies in preparation for tertiary education.

Aptitude at the secondary level is evaluated by an external examination system administered by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC). The CXC offers two levels of examinations, one for regular secondary students and the other for Sixth Form students. They are the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Placement Examination (CAPE), respectively. The benchmark of success at the secondary level is the attainment of five CSEC subjects, including English Language and Mathematics.

Tertiary education is offered by public and private institutions of both local and international origin. The University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) is responsible for the accreditation of the programs offered at the tertiary level. There are currently five accredited universities in Jamaica, the University of the West Indies, Jamaica (UWI); the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech); Northern Caribbean University (NCU); University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCJ); and the Mico University College, with a combined student population of nearly 45,000[6]. These institutions maintain a minimum requirement for matriculation: attaining at least five CSEC subjects, which must include English Language. Admission to UTech and Mico University College also requires Mathematics.

Apart from universities, tertiary education also includes teachers' colleges, community colleges, and training institutes, which can be either private or public. The Human Employment and Training Trust/National Training Agency, known locally as the Heart Trust/NTA, is one such institution. The trust is a government institution that provides training and certification for technical and vocational employment. The trust was set up in 1982 to address Jamaica's underdevelopment and high levels of youth unemployment and has trained hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans to date (HEART Trust-National Training Agency, 2009).

[6] Publicly available student enrolment numbers as of November, 2022 (based on data from university websites) - UWI: 19,058; UTech:12,978; NCU: 5622; UCC: 5000+; The Mico University College: 2300+

3.1.1 Government Education Policies

This section outlines the Government of Jamaica's (GOJ) policies regarding the delivery and utilization of education. Education is a crucial component of the GOJ's National Development Plan (NDP), which aims to transform Jamaica into a world-class nation by 2030. Dubbed "Vision 2030", the plan envisions Jamaica as "the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business." To achieve this, a sector plan for education has been formulated. The plan aims to make the education system "[a] well resourced, internationally recognized, values-based system that develops critical thinking, life-long learners who are productive and successful and effectively contribute to an improved quality of life at the personal, national and global levels" (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009a, p. 4).

The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2011-2020 is one of Jamaica's most comprehensive yet concise education-related policies. The plan places "renewed emphasis on accountability, security and safety in schools, early childhood development, information and communication technology (ICT) and media in education, and national literacy and numeracy" (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2012, p. ii). Based on my synthesis of NESP, in conjunction with reports from task forces, national committees, the ministry's official website, and other publications, academic literature, and media publications, I have identified three categories, which I believe sufficiently cover the essence of the government's policies regarding the education sector. They are universal access to quality education; educational leadership, management, and governance; and teacher training and certification.

3.1.1.1 Universal Access to Quality Education

UNESCO notes that quality education is fundamental to building inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable societies. Providing unfettered access to education is a crucial tenet of facilitating this inclusion and a vital policy provision of many governments worldwide. In Jamaica,

universal access to education is a feature of the government's education policy, on which it has worked assiduously over the last decades.

According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), universal access to early childhood and primary education in Jamaica has already been achieved, with nearly 100 percent and 90 percent net enrolment at the early childhood and primary school levels, respectively. Universal education at the secondary level has remained elusive, with 2015 figures showing lower and upper secondary school enrolment at 82.1 percent and 66.2 percent, respectively. In both cases, male enrolment has lagged that of females by an average of about 8%. Tertiary level enrolment is around 28.5%, a figure the government hopes to double by 2030 (Angus, 2017).

As a component of improving access, physical infrastructure was a focal area. In the 2000s, the government committed to building new schools, upgrading existing ones, and abolishing the shift system wherein two sets of students share school facilities - one attending in the morning and the other in the afternoon. In addition to the physical infrastructure, government policy also focuses on providing a safe, secure, healthy physical, social, emotional, and spiritual environment for learners (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2020).

Known inhibitors to educational access are socioeconomic status and financial limitations, which the Jamaican government has tackled using various techniques. While early childhood education is not provided free of charge, the government's subsidy of basic schools reduces the burden on local communities and families. At the primary level, education is free and includes learning materials and lunch assistance. At the secondary level, the government covers the core costs of educational delivery, including the cost of teachers' salaries, while asking parents to contribute to school development and sports. In addition, most secondary schools have a book rental scheme, and a lunch assistance scheme is usually available. Schools are allowed to charge students for registration packages and are also allowed to collect auxiliary fees, but only after

the MOE approves such fees. Moreover, under the MOE's policies, non-payment of fees cannot be used to deny student acceptance, placement, or registration in secondary schools (Myers, 2018).

At the tertiary level, the government subsidizes the operation of public higher education institutions (HEI). It also facilitates access to student loans through the Students' Loan Bureau (SLB), a statutory body established in 1970. The SLB receives about 15,000 applications annually and approves more than 95 percent of them. The maximum loan amount is one million Jamaica dollars and the maximum repayment period is seven years (Students' Loan Bureau, 2017; Students' Loan Bureau, 2022).

For low-income families, the government's Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) provides financial support through regular payments to households registered under the program. For children, coverage is available from birth until the completion of secondary school.

In sum, universal access to education is a vital component of the Jamaican government's education policies. Universal access has already been achieved at the early childhood and primary levels. However, access at the secondary and tertiary levels is still unsatisfactory by government standards. The government has put several measures in place to ensure that a common barrier to access, financial constraints, does not inhibit access at all levels.

3.1.1.2 Educational Leadership, Effective School Management, and Governance

Based on the recommendations of the Task Force on Education report of 2004, the Jamaican government has implemented the Education Sector Transformation Programme (ESTP), a multi-agency project designed to improve the delivery and quality of education in Jamaica. Key focal points of the program include school leadership, management, governance, and accountability, which the National Education Inspectorate (NEI) is tasked with evaluating.

In fulfilling the goals of the ESTP, several other semi-independent bodies were set up to support different aspects of the education system.

The National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) was established in 2011 under the ESTP to provide leadership training to aspiring and veteran school leaders. The college's training programs are intended to offer participants opportunities for individual growth and development, leading to improved skills and competencies, thereby helping to "create and sustain effective schools." The NCEL has trained more than 500 principals and education officers under its Effective Principals Training Programme (EPTP), in addition to more than 40 aspiring principals trained under the Aspiring Principals Training Programme, which is certified by the UWI at the diploma level. The college has also developed programs for executive leadership, school finance and administrative management, mathematics instruction, and ICT (National College for Educational Leadership, 2020).

The reports on school performance produced by the NEI outline the specific targets and outcomes that the government expects from public education institutions (PEI). The NEI evaluates schools based on the following subcategories: school-based leadership and management, self-evaluation and school improvement planning, governance, and relationship with parents and the local community. Evaluations are based on a five-point scale ranging from "exceptional" to "needs immediate support."

In sum, the government policies regarding school leadership are administered by several semi-independent agencies of the Ministry of Education, which provide training, evaluation, and support for effective school management.

3.1.1.3 Teacher Training and Certification

The government is committed to improving the quality of education delivery through the training and certification of teaching professionals as summed up by the following objective

taken from the NESP 2011-2020, “attract and retain well-qualified, certified and licensed teachers to fill the requirements of all educational institutions at all levels of the system by 2020.” The Jamaica Teaching Council is charged with managing the professional certification of teachers in public schools. The council is responsible for the following:

> a) regulating the teaching profession, b) building and maintaining competences of teachers, and c) raising the public profile of the profession as a change agent to societal reform and development in the context of the Social Policy vision for Jamaica (Jamaica Teaching Council, 2022, para. 2)

According to a Jamaica Teaching Council registration document, all “Jamaican teachers are required to be registered with the Ministry of Education for eligibility to teach in Jamaica prior to approval of salary payment. An unregistered teacher does not qualify for compensation and would be subject to disciplinary action” (Jamaica Teaching Council, n.d., p. 1).

Beyond registration and certification, the government has set new educational attainment requirements for specific categories of teachers. To be a certified trained teacher, one must possess either a bachelor’s degree in Education, be a trained instructor, or have graduated from a teacher’s college. Moreover, Mathematics, English Language, and Geography teachers must have bachelor’s degrees. A report entitled “Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in Jamaica” by the World Bank and UNICEF notes that most Jamaican teachers have advanced teaching certificates, with about 53 percent of early childhood public education teachers being university graduates and about 70 percent in primary and secondary schools (World Bank & UNICEF, 2021).

In 2018, the government, in partnership with the UWI School of Education, provided scholarships for more than 200 teachers to receive official teacher training. The scholarships

are valued at JMD 300 000 per annum per student and cover tuition, housing, books, and other critical amenities (Hunter, 2018).

3.1.2 Government Expectations of Students

Government expectation of students is best viewed through the lens of the NDP, which has education at its core. The plan envisions an education and training system wherein the *average beneficiary*

> will have completed the secondary level of education, acquired a vocational skill, be proficient in the English Language, a foreign language, Mathematics, a science subject, Information Technology, [and] participated in sports and the arts (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009a, p. 4)

3.1.2.1 Student Academic Performance

Student academic performance is another expectation of the government. The National Standards Curriculum (NSC) is a broad-based set of guidelines that will allow educators and parents to facilitate student success. The three main aims of the NSC are to foster: 1) successful lifelong learners, 2) confident and productive individuals, and 3) Jamaican identity and citizenship. The NSC outlines expected student performance at different stages of schooling.

Students are expected to explore the world around them at the lower primary level (grades 1 - 3) while developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. To facilitate this, subjects are taught in an integrated manner. The focus on literacy ties into the government's goal of "improv[ing] learners' performance across the formal education system and the wider society to achieve universal literacy and at least 85% numeracy" (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2012, p. 24).

At the upper primary level, students are expected to develop more distinct competencies, such as problem-solving abilities, an understanding of self in a national context, an ability to be

creative, and an ability to understand and use ICT. At this level, students should be aware of and able to relate to real-life situations and create solutions to everyday problems.

Students are expected to develop stronger competencies and interests in various fields at the lower secondary level and begin choosing career paths. At the upper secondary level, students are expected to solidify and begin to follow their chosen career paths. At this level, "the curriculum becomes a menu of options toward different qualifications, whilst retaining a common core element for all students" (Ministry of Education and Youth, n.d., p. 7).

However, in a more general sense, performance is often viewed through the lens of attainment of a secondary education, which, while not compulsory, is considered an obligation of sorts by many Jamaicans. The government's push for universal access to and completion of secondary education supports this. Nonetheless, the government's benchmark for successful completion of secondary school is not explicit. It seems to default to the national standard benchmark of 5 CSEC subjects, including English Language and Mathematics, which universities and businesses use as a basis for admitting and employing high school graduates.

Based on NEI evaluation criteria, academic progress has emerged as another expectation the government has of students. Progress refers to the extent to which a student's abilities have improved relative to their starting points. In other words, how much do they know or can do at the end of a given period compared to the start of the said period?

3.1.2.2 Multifaceted and Socially Responsible Students

The NDP expects that through exposure to the education system, graduates will "be aware and proud of … [Jamaica's] local culture and possess excellent interpersonal skills and workplace attitudes." Emphasis is placed on participation in co-curricular activities, foreign language proficiency, and technical competencies, especially regarding the use of ICTs.

The government has introduced Spanish as a core subject at the primary school level, in addition to integrating the use of technology in lesson delivery. The government also expects students to be physically active, participate in sports or the arts, and to be mature, socially conscious, and morally upright students in anticipation that such traits will transcend the adult years, thereby reflecting positively in society. The following excerpt from the Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation Programme (JASPEV) National Social Policy Goals for 2015 captures the government's expectations candidly:

> Education is required to go beyond equipping students with appropriate occupational and academic skills ... [and] … should mold citizens who can play an active and constructive role in society and develop educable individuals who have the creative and analytical skills, the attitudes to learning, and the emotional intelligence, that equip them for on-the-job training and lifelong learning. [The education system should] produce full literacy and numeracy, a globally competitive, quality workforce and a disciplined, culturally aware and ethical Jamaica citizenry (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009b, p. 49).

Several programs and interventions have been developed with these aims in mind. Guidance counseling is one such way of stamping out anti-social and maladaptive behaviors. Others include:

> The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE[7]) Programme and National HIV AIDS Response Team; the development of a Civics and Moral Education Curriculum; the Safe Schools Programme (focusing on the

[7] Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) is a moral education class that helps students appreciate issues relating to drugs, sexuality, and ethics. It usually shares a single 60-minute period with Guidance and Counseling, which deals with similar themes and issues. Both the HFLE teacher and one of the school's two guidance counselors usually teach the class jointly.

> reduction of violence in school); Pathways to Peace Programme (to promote peace in schools); and the Educate, Assess and Socialize the Youth (EASY) Programme delivered under the Programme for Alternative Student Support (PASS) which targets students who have been diagnosed as being seriously maladaptive (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009b, p. 31)

In sum, the government expects students to possess multiple skills and competencies that, combined with moral and ethical consciousness, can lead to a productive and globally competitive citizenry. To this end, the government has instituted programs to precipitate behavioral change and suppress antisocial behavior.

3.2 The Psyche of Jamaicans Regarding Education

> *The best way to balance people's lives is to give everyone the opportunity for a sound education* - Former Minister of Education, Ronald Thwaites.

The way Jamaicans perceive education can best be described as mixed. While normative discourses highlight class differences in the internalization and intrinsic value attached to education, in the Jamaican context, irrespective of class, education is viewed positively. Moreover, among the lower social strata, it is perceived as having instrumental value or the potential to secure brighter futures that entail social and economic success. This positive disposition has historical roots and is a part of what Mortley and Senior (2022) call "respectability and rectitude"- a distinctly Eurocentric flavored sense of morality that evolved from the Afro-Jamaica slave experience. Lewis (2020, p. 177) described this respectability as a "sociomoral fetter that produced fixed notions of success and accomplishment." Attitudes toward education ride the backbone of respectability and are reinforced by the state and ruling classes.

Empirical studies have validated Jamaicans' favorable disposition toward education. Based on their research of perceptions on the value of education, Cook and Jennings (2016) note that both parents and students valued education as a means to another valuable or desirable end, such as a good job or financial independence. Jamaican parents also make sacrifices, including working additional jobs, to afford the fees for extra lessons for their children (Stewart, 2015). Stewart (2015, p. 36) also notes that Jamaican parents had a strongly expressed view of education, which signifies "an undergirding mantra that *education is a must* [evidenced by the phrased parents used, such as:] 'by all means,' 'whatever the cost,' and 'the only way to success.'" These sentiments seem entangled with the desire parents have for the children to experience a better life than they [the parents] had for themselves, which necessitates children having successful careers. Evans (1989) notes that

> [Jamaican] parents express a firm belief in education as an avenue for better opportunities, upward social mobility, and a passport to white-collar jobs. They apparently transfer their own thwarted aspirations to some or all their children … [for whom they desire] prestigious occupations such as medicine, law, or teaching (p. 193)

Chevannes (2002) corroborates this among boys, whom he notes place education among their priorities, albeit secondary to making money.

Moreover, as the following excerpt shows, the affinity with education can be considered culturally embedded in the psyche of Jamaicans as it has been proven to be intergenerational. "It is important for my child (for me) to get an education because my own parents instilled the importance of education in me when I was growing up" (Cook & Jennings, 2016, p. 93). Beyond scientific evidence, anecdotal evidence of this affinity abounds in the social domain. For instance, the conceptions and momentum surrounding "back to school," and "September

morning[8]" in Jamaica are momentous. Back-to-school preparations begin early in the summer holiday break, from buying new uniforms, books, school bags, and school shoes to the grooming and unease leading up to the first day of school. It is the one time of year when parents postpone other obligations to bring their children to school, meet their children's teachers, and establish a bond of mutual trust regarding the care and nurture of the child over the coming year.

Additionally, even in the face of tragedy and disaster, like the aftermath of a fire, the dominant theme is usually the loss of *schoolbooks* and *school uniforms* or the loss of income needed to "*send di pickney dem gaa school* [send the children to school]."

Nonetheless, a contrasting perspective also exists, with studies highlighting the relatively inferior perception of the value of education among Jamaicans, perhaps concerning its intrinsic value (Jennings & Cook, 2019). Moreover, the commitment to schooling seems particularly strong while children are young. As mentioned, Jamaica achieved universal primary education with nearly 100 percent attendance by 2015. Secondary enrolment, however, has hovered around 80 percent over the last decade. Jennings and Cook (2019) also found that while secondary students perceived education as necessary for improving their lives, their value of education was moderately low. Since some of this devaluation of education is associated with class-based factors such as financial constraints–which often necessitate the prioritization of daily needs over schooling–education among Jamaicans, in general, can still be considered valuable.

Social (and legal) sanctioning is another reason for the positive outlook on education. This occurs through legal provisions and cultural precedence. For instance, denying children access to school is prosecutable by law. According to Section 28 (1) of the *Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) 2004 (Jam.)*, "every person having the custody, charge or care of a child

[8] September morning refers to the resumption of school after the summer break. Since the Jamaican school year ends with the summer break, September morning also signals the start of the new academic year.

between the ages of four and 16 years shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the child is enrolled at, and attends, school." Failure to do this constitutes neglect which may be reported to the Children's Registry. The penalty for neglect may include a fine of up to $1 million, a prison sentence of three to five years with hard labor, or both (The Gleaner, 2010).

As recently as 2018, the ministry of education even reconsidered reinstating its truancy officer program in schools to ensure that all children are always accounted for and that once students are of school age, they attend school consistently (Smith, 2018a).

In sum, irrespective of social class or background, schooling is culturally embedded and generational. It is desirable and utilitarian in the Jamaican psyche, especially regarding younger children.

3.3 Traditional and Non-traditional Schools

As shown above, the formal education system in Jamaica is modern and advanced. Decision-making, governance, and accountability have become hallmarks, and guided by the "no child left behind" policy, the system orients itself as egalitarian and meritocratic, in line with functionalist conceptions. However, there is a great divide in Jamaica's education system, which results from broader class divisions, causes these class divisions, or a mixture of both. This divide skews academic achievement along class lines, disproportionately against those who started at lower baselines.

On either side of the divide are the Upgraded High schools (UHS), mainly attended by children who did not achieve high enough scores on primary school exit examinations, and the elite high schools, the prestigious academic-orientated schools modeled off the British 'grammar school' (Bent-Cunningham & Allida, 2021; Jennings & Cook, 2019). Both are known locally as *non-traditional high schools* and *traditional high schools*, respectively. Before

their upgraded status, non-traditional high schools were oriented toward vocational education, corresponding with working-class jobs in agriculture, automotive technology, and construction.

Training needed for traditional careers, such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers was the prerogative of traditional high schools. Handa (1996) notes that the impact of secondary education on the reduction of inequality in Jamaica was limited due to this dualistic system. Thus, in the 1990s, the Government of Jamaica introduced the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) project, which standardized the offerings at secondary institutions across the island, aiming to provide every child the opportunity to pursue their preferred career path regardless of the type of high school they attend. Lindsay (2002, p. 240) notes that the "core curriculum of the program would ensure equality in education for all students at the secondary level, unifying students of all social classes, while at the same time providing for their specific needs." Nonetheless, this did not close "the divide" as, to date, most students at traditional high schools are (still) from the middle and upper social strata, while most non-traditional high school pupils are (still) from the lower social class (Jennings & Cook, 2015).

The divide is reflected in test scores as well. A leading Jamaican newspaper, The Gleaner, and a research institute, Johnson Survey Research, developed a rating system to evaluate the quality of student test results in Jamaican secondary schools. This index, Quality Score Index (QSI), is scored out of 100. Traditional schools averaged 48.8 QSI points in English Language over three years from 2011 to 2013 and 29.6 in Mathematics over the same period (The Gleaner & Johnson Survey Research, 2013). While these scores seem relatively low, the averages from non-traditional schools pale in comparison, a mere 9.7 for English Language and 3.3 for Mathematics. The primary exit test scores (GSAT), which determine student placement in secondary schools, tell a similar tale, with the average incoming GSAT score of the highest-ranked school standing at 95 percent compared to 26 percent for the lowest-ranked high school.

West Hill High teachers also noticed the disparity, noting that the bottom of the pile gets sent to West Hill High.

> Mrs. Burke: Some of the worst performing students come to this school.
>
> Ms. Norris: Most of the students they send here get between 0 and 20% on GSAT. What do they expect us to do with them? … Unless we are going to work magic.

Secondary exit exams paint an even more dismal picture. Traditional high school students outperformed their counterparts almost two to one in Mathematics and English language between 2010 and 2013 (Francis, 2014). By another measure, we can deduce a sizeable gap in performance between high-performing (typically traditional) and low-performing (typically non-traditional) schools. Results from 2013 show that Jamaica's top-performing secondary school achieved 100% benchmark passes[9] in CSEC exams, while the worst-performing school failed to achieve even a single benchmark pass (Educate Jamaica, 2014).

In sum, the divide between Jamaican schools that excel academically and those that do not is stark. More troubling is that the divide conforms to the traditional class divisions, wherein the "advantaged" classes who attend traditional schools do better than their "disadvantaged" counterparts who typically populate non-traditional schools.

3.4 Feminine, Feminized Schooling

This dissertation looks at the issue of male juvenile delinquency, which necessitates the exploration of gendered themes. Since males dominate delinquency in schools and crime in Jamaica, the gender issue and hegemonic notions of masculinity have been brought into center stage. Gender and masculinity were already discussed in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, it is worth

[9] One "benchmark pass" equates to a final year student who passes five (5) or more subjects including Mathematics and/or English Language in Caribbean regional examinations

reiterating at this juncture considering the gendered nature of schooling, which is the subject of this section.

If schools in Jamaica had a gender, it would be female. In justifying this ascription, I will draw on two popular perspectives, Miller's marginalization theory of the male in post-emancipation Jamaica and Figueroa's privileging theory.

Miller (1986) notes that the British empire, in hopes of limiting black male access to political power through education, sought to feminize the education system, ousting boys after elementary school and giving women free rein over the domain both in terms of studentship and administration (teaching). He argues that the deficit of males caused a feminization of education and is partly responsible for the perceived "feminine" gender of Jamaican schooling. However, women's predominance in school teaching is not unique to Jamaica. This is the case in most countries around the world, with as much as 80 percent of the teachers in the United States and the United Kingdom and 90 percent in Brazil, Russia, and Italy being female (Drudy, 2008). Parry (2004) cites several authors who corroborate the notable under-representation of men in the teaching profession in the Caribbean, emphasizing the severity of the situation in Jamaica and the Caribbean (Leo-Rhynie, 1989; Miller, 1989; Scheifelbein & Peruzzi, 1991, as cited by Parry, 2004).

Figueroa (2004) views the feminization of education through the lens of "male privileging" or the gendered socialization of boys. This aligns with Parry (2000), who identified two distinct patterns of socialization in the Caribbean, one for males and the other for females. While gendered socialization is not unique to the Caribbean, Figueroa blames this practice for males' underperform in school. He downplays Miller's marginalization thesis, arguing that it is more the socialization of the Jamaican boy that is to blame for his unreadiness in schooling. Figueroa notes that the education system is based on rote-learning, sit-and-listen, teacher-

centered approaches. Therefore, the "privileging" of boys, which allows them to roam the streets freely and renege on homework and housework, causes them to miss out on attaining the soft skills that would guarantee success in the education system. Figueroa's arguments support Evans (1989), who links children's readiness for schooling to appropriate forms of socialization. Evans writes,

> One can judge child-rearing practices by their appropriateness in preparing children for future roles in the society. One such role is student in the institutional context of the school. The children are required not only to learn but to fit into institutional and group demands. They have to learn and adhere to rules, to remain still and wait their turn for the major part of the day, to share limited classroom resources, and to be co-operative and share with peers. They need to display a sense of responsibility and orientation to the task at hand in order to please the teacher and accomplish academic and other assigned tasks. Those children (primarily girls) who have had to assume responsibility for younger siblings and for carrying out tasks around the house may be able to display this responsibility and task orientation (p. 195).

Cobbett and Younger (2012) argue that it is more so class than gender that gives rise to boys' academic underperformance in the Caribbean, thus challenging the feminization and male disadvantage theses. Clarke (2005) notes that while Jamaican girls outperform boys overall, middle-class boys outperform other boys as well as lower-class girls, making it clear that working-class boys are the worst performing. Nonetheless, Figueroa's arguments are generally supported by the literature. Even though males' perception of schooling has been shown to not necessarily be feminine (Heyder & Kessels, 2013), several studies corroborate the feminization of education globally and show girls' greater adaptability to modern-day schooling (Corsetti, 2018; Drudy, 2008; Houtte, 2004).

Though seemingly conflicting, Miller's and Figueroa's perspectives are not mutually exclusive. It seems plausible that the marginalization of men and their exodus from the education system to pursue rough and tough manly breadwinning could have entrenched an image of Jamaican manhood incompatible with schooling, on which future generations have come to base the socialization of their male children. In addition, it is the same event that created the overabundance of female influence that has "feminized" education over the years, which inevitably makes it more accommodating to female tendencies and socialization. However, in critiquing Figueroa's point, I would argue that, perhaps, it is not that the gendered socialization of males has ill-equipped them for "feminized" schooling, but that "feminized" schooling is ill-equipped to accommodate gender-socialized males. This will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

The fact that girls continue to outnumber and outperform boys at every level of the education system in Jamaica only exacerbates the feminine perception of schooling. At the tertiary level, nearly seven out of ten students are female. World Bank data show that 35 percent of eligible females in Jamaica enrolled in tertiary institutions in 2015 compared to 20 percent for males (World Bank, 2015a; World Bank, 2015b). The difference at the secondary level is less drastic but still shows a higher female subscription rate compared to males. Moreover, as Anderson (2006, p. 75) found, Jamaican high school girls "value the schoolwork domain at a higher level than Jamaican boys."

These statistics raise the issue of the influence of masculinity in maintaining the feminization of schooling. As Figueroa (2004, p. 152) notes, "education increasingly appears to boys as a "woman thing." Moreover, as Mohammad (2004) notes, masculinity in most cultures (especially in contemporary Western ones) is defined by its distance from what is denoted as feminine. Therefore, the extent to which school is a 'woman thing' requires boys

to preserve their masculinity by rejecting it. Figueroa corroborates this assertion noting that boys actively assert their maleness by resisting school (Figueroa, 2004).

The feminine profile of schooling also correlates with boys' poorer school attendance compared to girls. Gibbison and Murthy (2003) found that girls are more likely to be sent to school regularly than boys, while boys' school attendance was more likely if the household had male representation.

Gender, masculinity, and the feminization of school also affect the perception of certain subjects, such as English Language and Home Economics, which further fuels male rejection of these academic fields. English Language, for example, a core curriculum subject, was described as too effeminate, not macho enough, nerdish, and too girlish by males in Parry's (2004) study. Moreover, most English Language and Home Economics teachers are female.

Based on the preceding, I argue that the following three peculiarities of Jamaican schooling make it "feminine": (1) Jamaican schooling and pedagogy tend not to resonate with Jamaican hegemonic masculine identities and male socialization, which require men to reject behavior considered girly or overly refined. (2) Men are underrepresented as teaching staff throughout the education system in the Caribbean, resulting in an overabundance of female teachers. (3) Girls outnumber and outperform boys at every level of the education system, which solidifies the perception that schooling is the domain of females.

Whether a consequence of the gendered socialization of boys or not, male underrepresentation in the education sector and the feminine profile that persists within Jamaican schooling sets the stage for the lackluster participation of boys. This explains why girls are outshining boys in education and how this impacts the construction of male underachievement.

3.5 Dominant Standards in School

In addition to the academic expectations discussed above, Jamaica's formal education system maintains explicit and implicit standards that influence student behavior and academic performance. Two such standards are the linguistic standard and the dress code standard. Corresponding narratives based on original data will be given in Chapter 5. These standards differ from the abovementioned expectations as the Ministry of Education does not necessarily institute them. Nonetheless, they are common in Jamaican education.

3.5.1 The Linguistic Standard

As a former British colony, Jamaica's official language is English. However, a local dialect, Patois, is widely spoken. Patois, or Jamaican Creole (JC), is an amalgamation of multiple languages that reflects the country's colonial heritage and African roots. Patois has long been considered dirty and uncouth and, until recently, was seen as the language of the uncivilized and the definitive speech for the underclass (Brown, 1999; Wassink, 1999). Bryan (2010, as cited by Lodge, 2018, p. 291) notes that "[i]n contemporary Jamaican society, despite the recognition of JC as a language since the 1950s, Creole speech remains disappointedly stigmatized, having been reduced to a mere 'Englishified patwa', fit only for jokes and folklores." It is common for news reports of interviews with "undereducated" people trying to use SJE to be turned into parodic tunes[10] that are circulated among the elite and middle-classes often to ridicule the underclass' non-mastery of the English Language.

Fierce debates rage on in educational and political spaces about the formal recognition of Jamaica Creole as the country's mother tongue and making it a language of instruction in Jamaican schools. Concerns abound that formally recognizing Jamaican Creole will diminish

[10] Examples of such videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hknVoAoyy-k; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4XT9JKJnn8; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TPjLzvMPuw

the status of Standard Jamaican English, putting several Jamaicans at a significant cultural, competitive, and business disadvantage regarding interaction with the outside world (Jackson-Miller, 2018). A counterargument is that Jamaican creole is valuable in facilitating students' understanding and participation in education and is critical in promoting an inclusive learning environment that respects and understands Jamaican children's culturally rich, linguistic heritage (Lodge, 2018). Nonetheless, Standard Jamaican English remains the language of instruction in the Jamaican education system, and students are expected and required (in some cases) to produce it. In fact, at West Hill High, speaking Standard Jamaican English is one of the official school rules.

However, as Evans (2001, p. 113) found from her study of two groups of Grade 7 students at two corporate area schools, "Jamaican Creole was the language of the overwhelming majority of … students, their home, and community." Evans adds that creole was the students' default medium of self-expression and the language they were most comfortable with. Furthermore, Åberg and Waller (2012) found that many Jamaicans perceive SJE's utility as being confined to the classroom, thereby complicating teachers' efforts to get students to master SJE. There are also gender-based factors at play, as Jamaican men were found to use SJE less often than women and perceived it less favorably compared to Jamaican women (Carpenter & Devonish, 2012).

While most studies on the language standards in Jamaican classrooms focus on linguistical factors such as the ability to reproduce language correctly and the influence of language on students' learning and communicative skills, there is another often overlooked dimension – respect. Owing to the elevated status of the English language as the language of the elites, language is deeply intertwined with the show of respect in the Jamaican context. Let us look at the Jamaican Creole equivalent of the word woman - "ooman." Even in a positive

context, “ooman” carries a negative, disrespectful undertone, as do many other JC words and phrases. Accordingly, the use of Jamaican Creole to authority figures is viewed unfavorably. Nonetheless, since language production is also a reflection of social class and cultural background, the impact of enforcing language standards extends beyond the linguistic realm. Nero (2014) argues that the current language education policy in Jamaica reinforces socioeconomic disparities and further marginalizes low-socioeconomic students who cannot produce Standard Jamaican English.

3.5.2 The Dress and Grooming Standard

The dress and grooming standard refers to expectations for students’ physical appearance. School uniforms are a feature of schooling in many countries worldwide, and Jamaica is no exception. Virtually all pre-tertiary educational institutions mandate students to wear designated school uniforms. Brunsma and Rockquemore (1998) summarize claims of the positive effects of uniforms on student safety, behavior, academic achievement, and psychological well-being. Claims include increased student safety by lowering student victimization, reduced gang activity and fights, improved student learning and positive attitudes toward school, heightened school pride and increased student achievement, high levels of preparedness and conformity to organizational goals, decreased behavior problems, increased attendance rates, lowered suspension rates, reduced substance use, positive psychological outcomes such as increased self-esteem, increased spirit, and reinforced feelings of oneness among students (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998). Opponents of uniforms claim that they limit student freedom and creativity (Park, 2013) and do not necessarily improve academic or behavioral outcomes (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998).

Given the prevalence of the uniform culture in Jamaica, the education ministry has created guidelines to help schools create rules that promote positive values and attitudes while

respecting students' rights. The guidelines, obtained from a document entitled "Student Dress & Grooming Guidelines for Public Education Institutions 2018," were created in consultation with major stakeholders such as the National Parent Teachers Association, National Secondary Student Council, Jamaica Association of Teachers of Secondary Schools, and the Jamaica Teacher's Association. This suggests that the guidelines represent a nationwide agreement about uniform standards. The guideline document states that rules should not be discriminatory or arbitrary and should be based on consensus and reasonableness. In justifying schools' use of uniform policies, the guidelines by the Ministry of Education and Youth (2018, p. 9) state:

- [A uniform policy] fosters the school identity and an atmosphere of allegiance, discipline, equality and cohesion;
- it allows children to learn in an environment which minimizes the pressures which result from marking differences on grounds of wealth and status;
- it reduces the risk of bullying at school, which may arise where social pressures develop through peer expectations; and
- it assists in promoting high standards of achievement in all aspects of a student's life, including attitudes and conduct.

The document also notes that dress and grooming codes should not discriminate against students based on, among others, gender, social class, and political views. In addition, the document highlights students' constitutional rights to liberty but notes that "some restrictions on individual liberty must be imposed by virtue of the operational requirements of public schools" (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2018, p. 17). While the guidelines are not absolute – institutions can manipulate them as they see fit – they outline some ground rules, some of which are worth analyzing. For instance, one of the sample rules states, "students shall, not

wear on their uniform any unauthorized accessory or embellishment" (p. 33). Another states that students "are not permitted to wear jewelry except, if desired, the following:

(i) an inexpensive wristwatch (male and female students); and

(ii) a single gold or silver knob without stones etc. in the lower lobe of each ear (female only) (p. 33).

A general guideline for male students states, "school uniform should be clean, tidy and neatly pressed" (p. 36). Another guideline states, "[Trousers should be] tailored for a smart and crisp look, with a 'straight leg' style, being neither over-sized nor presenting a tight form-fit [and] school trousers [should be] worn at the natural waist" (p. 37).

Since the dress and grooming code is intended to thwart delinquent behavior, it is worth exploring the relationship between the rules and delinquent behavior. Meeks Gardner et al. (2007) found uniform quality to be a protective factor against delinquency among primary school children in Jamaica. They claim that uniform quality may signal healthier home environments and guardians' interest in their children's education. They add that better quality uniforms also signals an ability to pay for uniforms. Tanioka and Glaser (1991) also found that uniforms allow for informal control as delinquent conduct is deterred by the fact that their uniforms make perpetrators easily identifiable. Also, in Jamaica, it is not uncommon for shopping malls to restrict student access while wearing uniforms, except when accompanied by adults (see Robinson, 2018).

In accordance with uniform and grooming standards, many schools in Jamaica, including West Hill High, prohibit males from wearing "tight pants," having long or braided hair (except for religious reasons), jewelry or non-school related insignia, and skin bleaching. As mentioned later, some of these stipulations do not allow for non-dominant gender models and subcultural traits such as the male-aestheticism that is commonplace in the Jamaican dancehall culture, as

Hope (2009) points out. Grooming rules, therefore, often cause conflict, although they are intended to thwart it.

3.6 The Emergence of Labels

Labeling theory can help us understand how the internalization of the standards, be it one's ability to meet them or one's perceived insufficiency at meeting them, can result in the adoption of a corresponding label.

> Labeling focuses on how a new reality (a label) may be applied to a particular person and how this new identity affects that person's actions and behavior. This perspective underscores the responses of others as the most important factor in understanding how behavior is created and the label is successfully applied (Becker, 1963, as cited by Ansalone, 2009, pp. 167–168).

Although Ansalone (2009) emphasized the assignment of labels, I argue that labels can also emerge organically and become attached to students, mediated by the intersubjective understanding of meaning and positionality within a social space. In other words, a student can understand where his position is even without being told so, which leads to the attachment and internalization of a corresponding label. This mirrors Evans, who explains that mere placement into a lower stream structures a student's identity around laziness and dullness, while a higher placement is associated with labels of "good, dependable, hardworking" (Evans, 2001, p. 91)

In the Jamaican context, for instance, uniforms distinguish students within a locale. It is an implicit label. It frames how the community perceives, interacts with, and responds to the wearer. The West Hill High uniform is distinct in the local area, and the images associated with it are often negative. Nonetheless, students must negotiate their interaction with the uniform label as they cannot wear their preferred clothes to school. They do not need to be told so explicitly to perceive the intersubjective understanding of the school they are representing as

being positioned inferiorly in the social space. The common knowledge that certain schools, like West Hill High, produce academically weak students who are bad-behaved frames students' understanding of themselves, which is reinforced by their daily interactions within the social space.

The traditional versus non-traditional school divide attaches similar labels of dignified versus uncouth behavior, moral integrity versus moral bankruptcy, and academic excellence versus intellectual incapacity. Similarly, being in the lowest track (class) within the grade or being ranked outside of the top 10 in a class reinforces certain labels. Having your cultural foundations contested daily by teachers who dress differently than you are accustomed to, speak differently, and treat you differently also reinforces your orientation around an inferior concept of self. As Ansalone (2009) notes, these negative labels create a self-fulfilling prophecy of underachievement. The opposite is also likely to be true. Positive labels reinforce dominant stereotypes and expectations, which progressively shape the normativity of the "ideal student."

The ideal student is, therefore, a creation of societal expectations of behavior and academic performance. These standards, in combination with the attachment and internalization of opposite labels paint a narrative of ineptitude among some students, which characterizes them as underachievers. Moreover, the normativity of the ideal student creates a natural dichotomy. Therefore, with the ideal as the standard, anything lesser than the ideal is necessarily inadequate. This makes "delinquent" the relational partner of the ideal student - an insufficient counterpart without which the ideal would not independently exist.

3.7 The Essence of the Divide

Despite the preceding discussion, it is undeniable that language requirements, dress codes, streaming, testing, and ranking are core components of modern schooling and help schools to fulfill their mandate. Standardized testing is deeply intertwined with the Jamaican

education system and begins at the primary school level. Considering how incompatible some of these strategies and standards are with the realities of low-achieving students, it is arguable, then, that the ministry's idea of "full potential" is skewed against low-achieving students who typically do poorly on standardized tests, do not always master the dominant language and are forced to part with their cultural identities. For these reasons, I consider these standards part of setting a "high bar," which influences the social construction of underachievement.

To conclude this chapter, I will reiterate the divide in schooling, highlighting its correlation with the social construction of achievement versus failure and ideal versus delinquent. Functionalists view schooling as an inherent part of society's smooth operation, in contrast to conflict-based theories that emphasize the role schooling has in maintaining the social stratification of society, which presents disadvantages for people at the base.

In the Jamaican context, there is widespread agreement that schooling is functional and instrumental to the pursuit of a successful life. However, there still exists a rift among the population, which separates those who do well in school (and society by extension) and those who do not. Undeniably, this rift is not the sole creation of any factor or institution but appears to be a combination of inputs from many institutions, including the government, family, and society. At the outset, the Jamaican government has set ambitious targets for the output of children leaving the education system in keeping with the vision it has imagined for an advanced Jamaican society to be realized by 2030. In keeping with this vision, the education system has operationalized schooling in a way that results in the structure, hierarchy, and organization that is evident today. Historical legacies, such as colonialization, gendered socialization, and hegemonic masculinity, have also impacted these processes, contributing to the feminine profile of schooling. This has implications for the reconciliation of schooling priorities and the masculine identities of Jamaican boys, particularly those from working-class

backgrounds. In addition, the traditional versus non-traditional school dichotomy and the prevalence of cultural and academic standards in schools further impact students' schooling experience. The cultural standards are of particular interest, as they might seem reasonable and consensus-based from a normative middle-class perspective. However, they must feel foreign or tyrannical to students from social backgrounds where contradictory norms and standards obtain. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize and address the impacts of the divide, especially on working-class students, given the MOE's policy of non-discrimination and inclusivity.

Chapter 4
Methodology and Analytical Framework

4.1 Methodology and Research Design

This is a qualitative study that employs the ethnographic approach. This section explains the ethnographic approach, considering its applicability to the research topic and context. As discussed in the literature review, research on juvenile delinquency favors quantitative methods. While qualitative approaches compensate for many of the limitations of quantitative probes, they also suffer some insufficiencies. In addition to the inability to reach generalizable conclusions, ensuring the accuracy and validity of responses is the major weakness of qualitative methods.

Two of the most common qualitative methods are interviews and focus groups. Interviews are the go-to qualitative method, but they can result in dubious data, given that it is common for interviewees to tailor their responses to match the perceived expectations of the interviewer. Focus groups capitalize on the interaction between participants through open discussions (Kitzinger, 1995). While focus groups are easier to organize and more suitable for eliciting responses from reserved or unresponsive participants, their usefulness wanes in light of sensitive issues such as crime or delinquency. Also, the element of "formality" that shrouds the focus group might not be appropriate for research about delinquency, which is heavily based on informal behavior. Focus groups might also result in a uniformity of thought and responses that raise questions about research validity. Therefore, the ethnographic method is valuable in increasing the likelihood of obtaining accurate and genuine answers. By gaining a high level of acceptance by study subjects, ethnographers can observe natural behaviors, elicit honest opinions, and triangulate observations with formal and informal interviews.

4.1.1 The Ethnographic Approach

Ethnographic methods have become relatively commonplace in sociological research. These methods aim to develop an in-depth understanding of social and cultural phenomena within specific settings and groups through direct immersion and interaction. The most notable strength of the technique is its flexibility, which is advantageous for research involving sensitive issues and volatile subjects such as juvenile delinquency and crime. The ethnographic approach depends heavily on participant observation, wherein the researcher embeds themself in the local environment, blending in as seamlessly as possible with the people being investigated to capture patterns of social interaction and contextual perspectives.

The ethnographic method has been a staple of anthropological research but has been adopted by other disciplines within the social sciences over the decades. In criminology, ethnography challenges the positivist approaches by providing nuanced accounts of the social worlds, the actors who exist within them, and the meanings actors attach to social phenomena (Ilan, 2007). Ethnography allows research to produce data that broad-based surveys, typical of quantitative approaches, do not. This is due to the flexibility it affords a researcher to incorporate data that cannot be coded at the time of data collection. By allowing the researcher to capture vast swathes of data about seemingly unrelated topics and situations, the ethnographic method allows for an intricate understanding of research subjects from which new knowledge and perspectives can be extricated as data analysis progresses.

Another strength of the ethnographic method is the intimacy that it allows between the researcher and the research subjects. This strengthens the authenticity of interactions and their resultant data. This "intimacy" between researcher and research subject is sometimes highlighted as a disadvantage of the ethnographic approach as the "objectivity of the researcher" appears to be lost. However, the rich insight premised on the strong bond between the researcher

and research subject compensates for this limitation. As the Ethnography Working Group Protocol of the Eurogang Program notes, ethnographic data can only be gathered when researchers get "close to" those they investigate (University of Missouri-St. Louis, n.d., p. 1). This must involve building rapport and garnering trust and cooperation, which should not be assumed as inherent in the researcher-subject relationship but must be actively pursued. This process inevitably requires innovation on the part of the researcher, which at the expense of a perceived compromise to objectivity, bolsters the authenticity of the data gathered. My account of this process with the West Hill Boys is given below.

4.1.2.1 Key Elements

The Eurogang Program devised a detailed guideline for ethnographers of gangs, which I have adapted as a part of the research design described below. Since my research does not focus on established gangs, I have extracted the applicable sections of the protocol, described here.

The first aspect of the protocol relevant to this study is the method of gaining access to the field site and study participants. The protocol encourages organic practices such as (a) obtaining introductions from people with whom the research subjects have established trust relations; (b) identifying key informants and building rapport with them, leading to gatekeeper access (c) identifying key locations where the research subjects spend time and frequenting such locations, gradually building rapport and friendships. The protocol noted that making contact through authority figures (police in the case of gangs) and having open discussions with such individuals would prove counterproductive to gaining access (Weerman, et al., 2009).

The second aspect of relevance is the length of time in the field. In principle, six or more months in the field is ideal. This is particularly important given the possibility of cultural unfamiliarity of the research site and subjects. Therefore, the researcher may need additional time to digest the local culture to make sense of cultural cues and actions.

The third and final aspect of the protocol is data collection. The protocol suggests four primary methods: (a) participant observation, (b) semi-structured interviews, (c) examination of key events, and (d) interviews with non-gang members.

Participant observation involves spending time with research participants, observing their activities, and gathering information based on informal conversations. The protocol requires the collection of interactional data – that is:

> data concerning the exchange of values, behavior, verbal exchanges and exchanges of other material means between members in the group and between groups, as well as group and group member interactions with key neighborhood/community institutions (police, family, schools, service providers, etc.) (University of Missouri-St. Louis, n.d., p. 3)

The data should include detailed descriptions of the scenes, events, and conversations. Semi-structured interviews should be conducted once sufficient familiarity with the research subjects is obtained and should be done with the most representative members of the group, where possible. Examination of key events involves following up on the activities that the research subjects consider important and that can reveal the intricacies of their realities. Finally, interviews with members outside the core group should be conducted to situate the group within the larger context.

4.1.2.2 Micro and Macro Ethnography

Ethnographic accounts of social phenomena offer us true-to-life insights and reports from those engaging with the phenomena. However, this may result in a bias toward micro-ethnography, or the overemphasis on individual-level interactions, thereby overlooking broader structural issues. In the context of schooling, Ogbu (1981) describes micro-ethnographers as those preoccupied with school, classroom, or home environments, probing transactional aspects

of school life and interactions rather than investigating the role wider society and its institutions play.

Ogbu (1981) criticized the narrow-minded view of school ethnographies that exclude ecological descriptions; details of language and communication; social organization within schools such as the separation of students into various grades and classes, as well as voluntary association and social stratification; the school-based economy including labor, procurement, and consumption; the political organization of schools; beliefs, socialization, and so on. By incorporating these elements, ethnographies account for the "structure, process, and function of the school system, which links it to other sociocultural institutions, defining its context in the wider community" (Ogbu, 1981, p. 5).

This study subscribes to Ogbu's macro-ethnography perspective. It seeks to provide a holistic view of schooling and its impact on delinquency by linking it with the broader social context that includes the subcultural belief systems of delinquent and low-achieving students. This is important to understand the disparity in academic output and behavioral standards within schools across Jamaica, which mirrors existing divisions, usually along class, subcultural and economic lines, within wider Jamaican society, as discussed in subsequent chapters.

In sum, the importance of the ethnographic method to sociological research is significant. The ethnographic approach helps qualitative researchers capture compelling and contextually accurate accounts of social phenomena and the realities of research subjects through immersion and long-term interaction. Ethnographers must build a good rapport with study participants, spend ample time in their natural environments, and employ robust empirical data collection tools that include participant observations. Also, emphasizing a macro-ethnographic approach ensures that the research accounts are grounded in broader social contexts, thereby avoiding overly descriptive explanations of exotic social phenomena or "a caricature of a school

community," as Ogbu (1981, p. 5) puts it. This dissertation employs this approach in the context of school-based juvenile delinquency in Jamaica, analyzing juvenile delinquency in schools as a microcosm of existing patterns in Jamaican society.

4.1.2 Research Design

The research design was carefully considered in keeping with the study's objectives, and the uncertainty of the fieldwork arrangements. The decision to focus on low-achieving males was based in part on Smith's (2000) call for data from schools with large populations of disadvantaged students from marginalized backgrounds, as well as the fact that juvenile delinquency and crime in general in Jamaica is a predominantly male issue. Additionally, given that evidence shows linkages between delinquency, social class, and students' achievement at school (Ring & Svensson, 2007), it was important to collect data from environments that feature significant numbers of students from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds and from those considered low-achievers, in particular.

For logistical reasons, it was only practical to do the actual field-data collection in a single tranche, given the distance between Jamaica and Japan. In addition, a flexible approach was needed, given the sensitive nature of the topic and the implications that any mishaps might have on physical safety. The ethnographic method stood out among the various design options available to qualitative sociological researchers.

Considering the study's objective to understand youth attraction to delinquent behavior, I contemplated investigating the lived experiences of children in foster care facilities. I contacted various agencies, including the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA), which manages the nation's network of residential care facilities, and the Juvenile Services Section of the Department of Correctional Services, Jamaica. I spoke at length with

the manager of a childcare center in Western Jamaica and the research manager for the correctional services department. Their insight made it clear that conducting research at these institutions would not help me satisfy the study's objective. I drew this conclusion after learning that research activities at these institutions would be limited to interviews and focus groups, limiting my autonomy to interact with participants. Moreover, wards in such a study would be brought to pre-prepared rooms to answer a list of vetted and approved questions.

Further, since all the residents at correctional facilities have been indicted for crimes, my understanding of their behaviors would be limited to their own perceptions, some of which would have already been shaped by their subjective experiences of life in the center and the interventions that centers provide. I wanted to see the mechanism of delinquency but without the confines of institutional surveillance. I needed to see the boys partaking in delinquent behaviors to understand what circumstances and contexts engender such behavior.

Two other options seemed apparent. The first was to live in a volatile community for a while, partaking in the activities of street gangs that recruit or attract young boys. The other option was to visit a school with a large population of delinquent students from volatile communities. The first option was ideal for collecting rich data but was impractical and dangerous. Additionally, residents from volatile communities tend to distrust outsiders, which would have made gaining access even more difficult. Moreover, I would inevitably become involved in criminal activities, which I could not justify for research. The second option proved more feasible as it provided a controlled environment and somewhat direct access to students from volatile communities and working-class families.

The next step was to identify the research site. I made a shortlist of possible candidates and secured help from a personal contact within the local education system to introduce me to potential schools. A formal letter and a research proposal were sent to a candidate school, which

the school principal approved, as is customary in Jamaica. The approval was contingent on individual parental consent. As such, I was asked to prepare a formal letter/consent slip for parents. After arriving in Jamaica, a meeting was set up to finalize the terms of my engagement with the students. One crucial aspect of the terms was that the school and the boys must benefit from my research, which inspired me to add an "action research" component to the research design – the jerk chicken project (described below).

4.2 The Fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted at a low-achieving secondary school in Western Jamaica from November 2018 to February 2019. Following the on-the-ground data collection, data were continuously collected through online interaction with the study participants via WhatsApp. There were 13 eighth-grade boys in the core group of participants. Most data were collected from the core group of boys, selected based on a shortlist of students with behavioral issues obtained from the school administration. However, data were also gathered from the general school population, particularly students with whom the 13 core boys often interacted. The 13 boys came from five different classes (streams) and comprised multiple peer groups. The boys' ages ranged from 13 to 15. The boys came from a mixture of urban, inner-city, rural, and suburban settings and were mainly from lower or lower-middle-class backgrounds. The boys' academic abilities were mostly low. However, one boy had a comparatively high academic performance.

Most of the data collected from the boys came from informal conversations, usually at their preferred hang-out spots. I attempted to conduct a focus group session with the boys, but they were restless, uncooperative, and became overly suspicious, which thwarted those efforts. Semi-structured interviews with the boys were also attempted but suffered a similar fate. Personal conversations via WhatsApp proved most effective in supplementing incomplete data

such as the boys' family backgrounds and home environments. These were complemented by information gathered from teachers about the boys. My daily interactions and routines involving the boys (discussed in Section 3.5 – Gaining Access) offer more insights that might be useful in clarifying the study's methodology.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and staff. I conducted semi-formal interviews with eleven teachers and staff and had a combination of informal conversations, direct interactions, and class/lesson observations with more than twenty teachers. Of those formally interviewed, nine were female, and two were male. Their length of experience ranged from a few months to 22 years. All the teachers interviewed had formal training. I also gathered data from interactions with the boys' guardians, who were contacted via telephone before the jerk chicken project started. I also sat in on meetings with parents who visited the school regarding disciplinary and other issues. I also interacted with parents and guardians on report day when they came to the school to collect students' report cards.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic and the need to earn the trust of the boys under investigation, no audio recordings were made of the interactions with the boys. To compensate for this limitation, copious were taken during breaks. For similar reasons, informal conversations with teachers and parents were not recorded but reconstructed from written notes and memory. To maintain the integrity of the data collected, a daily journal was written every evening to consolidate field notes and memory.

The school has a considerable number of students with behavioral problems. Therefore, the original shortlist of students the study sought to engage had over 20 boys. However, in addition to the consent from the school's administration to conduct research, further consent was necessary to allow students to participate in the project component of the study. Formal letters were sent to parents signed by the grade coordinator, school principal, and me. Only the

13 boys for whom explicit further parental consent was received were included in the final study participant list. Nonetheless, the anecdotes and narratives shared in this dissertation capture the interactions with many of the other boys.

Observations and formal interviews with staff at two agencies involved in student counseling and remediation were also conducted. These agencies cater to students who are suspended from school for behavioral infractions. One agency is a government-endorsed non-profit organization working to prevent and rehabilitate drug abuse victims. I perused several case files related to secondary school students and took copious notes. The other agency is a non-government organization focused on peace and restorative justice. It runs a program for students suspended from school for violent behaviors.

4.3 The Researcher and Reflexivity

The role of the researcher in ethnographic research is crucial to collecting reliable data and interpreting such data, which informs their analyses. It is the subjectivities that the researcher brings to the study that phrases his/her interpretation of the research subjects and social phenomenon they navigate. The process of reflexivity allows researchers to scrutinize themselves and the roles that biases, beliefs, and personal experiences play in their research (Berger, 2015). Pearson (2001) suggests objectivity is neither possible nor desirable in research about delinquent youth. She notes that the orientation of researchers is shaped by their social orientation, personal history, values, and interests, which determine how researchers navigate their studies. Therefore, qualitative research cannot be carried out in an autonomous realm that is somehow shielded from the broader social context and biography of the researcher (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). A crucial part of this is the conscious effort of the researcher to recognize unconscious biases, which lead to conclusions informed not by the realities they

discover through their investigations but by their pre-existing notions and beliefs (Buetow, 2019).

Admittedly, my biography was consequential to my view of delinquent behavior and working-class values. I grew up on the fringes of the middle-class. I say fringes because while my family was not poor, my parents experienced poverty as children. Somehow, they both managed to eke out a "decent" living for themselves, my mother as a teacher (the only public servant of her nine siblings) and my father as a government construction foreman. I took the bus to school, wore unbranded shoes and school bags, and got "just enough" daily allowance to afford lunch and transportation. Being from a rural community, I was never directly exposed to working-class families, except for interactions at my school, which was one of the "better" ones in my area. At home, I was not allowed to stay out late, use "swear" words, listen to "rag" music or renege on housework, and I was socialized to think of children who did as "bad." Regular attendance in church with my mother was another pillar of my morality and upbringing, shaping how I viewed working-class behaviors and people. While I might not have considered myself better than working-class people, I certainly saw their behavior as uncouth and their lifestyles as frivolous and fatalistic. More importantly, I saw their eventual perdition as a "destiny" of their own. I basked in my academic successes, made it to university, and slowly began acquiring a more elitist orientation. I was surrounded by the "smartest" in the nation, which pulled me even further away from working-class realities. I became the president of my university's students' union, sat in the national youth parliament, was appointed as a national youth ambassador, and was awarded the prime minister's award for excellence in leadership. These engagements brought me into direct contact with less fortunate youth but did little to change my disposition that their plight was anything but the result of systemic marginalization. After all, although my mother was born poor, my sister and I grew up better off than she did.

This orientation fluctuated over the years following my graduation from university. However, my sympathy for disadvantaged youth never seemed to extend to those I saw as having embraced subcultural impropriety.

It is against this background of disapproval for the subcultural identities and expressions of working-class youth that this research was conceptualized, which adds intrigue to the process of transformation and self-upheaval that informed the analysis of this study's findings. In other words, my role as a well-to-do middle-class Jamaican researcher forced to walk in the shoes of low-achieving working-class youth was very insightful to the analysis presented in this dissertation.

4.4 Research Site - West Hill High

4.4.1 Overview

West Hill High is a co-educational public secondary school in Western Jamaica. Despite its classification as a rural school by the Ministry of Education, many students come from urban, inner-city, and volatile communities. Some students live in nearby communities within walking distance of the school. However, a significant number of students commute long distances using public transportation. The school's capacity, student-teacher ratio, enrolment figures, and student attendance rates are in keeping with national averages.

There are over 1000 students enrolled, whose family backgrounds range from lower to middle-income. Additionally, many students are from single-parent families, where paternal absenteeism is not uncommon. Many parents are self-employed in professions such as laborers, merchants, and taxi operators, while others work as teachers and care workers. More than a quarter of the school population are beneficiaries of the government welfare support program–PATH (discussed above).

The school faces several student-related behavioral challenges and academic underperformance, creating a challenging learning environment for students and educators. The following is a paraphrased account of the school's profile obtained from one of the school's guidance counselors:

> Many students have challenges in the home and are low-level, so their performance and behavior tend to reflect this disposition. Also, there are several serious gang affiliates within the school. The higher grades have more hardened students with greater exposure and involvement in criminal activities. The volatile inner-city areas many students come from also reflect their gang-related exposure and tendencies. The upper school is harder to work with and might be physically dangerous. The lower-form students, while less exposed, are still in contact with criminal elements and are being molded to participate in criminal activities. The school environment can therefore be described as rough.

The school is diligent about student safety and has strict protocols and rules for students and visitors. Students are subject to a search upon entering the school compound and are forbidden to bring cell phones, weapons, cigarettes, and other contraband. Students are also prohibited from leaving the school compound prior to the end of the school day. Visitors must register with the security post at the main gate before being given access to the compound.

4.4.2 West Hill as a low-performing school

Based on national high school rankings, West Hill High School is considered a low-performing school. This ranking system is unofficial but based on students' academic performance in CSEC examinations and compiled by Educate Jamaica. Based on benchmark passes (bp), West Hill High's performance in CSEC examinations falls toward the lower end of the spectrum, with less than 20 percent of the grade eleven cohort obtaining benchmark passes. For comparison, the best-performing Jamaican school in CSEC 2018 examinations

received 100% benchmark passes. Notably, in addition to perfect bp performance, nearly 95% of the cohort attained passes in 8 or more subjects. West Hill's performance places it among the worst-performing schools in the country, which is a status well-known in local circles. The 2018 NEI report also confirms students' weak academic record, describing student performance in English Language and Mathematics as unsatisfactory.

Performance is often viewed in a broader sense that includes non-academic prowess. Excellence in sports, the arts, debating, quiz, and other co-curricular linked competitions also contribute to a school's performance rating. However, the typical trend is for academically high-performing schools to dominate these non-academic events. For instance, the largest non-academic secondary school event, the Inter-Secondary School Sports Association (ISSA) Boys and Girls Athletics Championship, known locally as "champs," happens every year at the National Stadium. At this athletics meet, schools from across the nation vie for the title of all-island champion, and new athletic stars gain national prominence. However, traditional schools have dominated the competition over its 100-year history. Other sports competitions like all-island football, basketball, and cricket competitions follow this trend. West Hill High School has participated in national competitions and has done relatively well at the regional level in some events but has never been able to achieve national prominence for such participation.

4.4.3 School Environment and Climate

4.4.3.1 Physical Infrastructure

The school building is relatively new. There are two main sections connected by a central hall. Each section has two sets of buildings separated by an open-air courtyard. The section that houses the administrative offices and grades 8 and 9 is called the "lower school block," and the other section is called the "upper school block." The upper school block houses grades nine through 11 and subject-specific rooms such as food preparation, metal work, welding,

automotive laboratories, and science laboratories. Classrooms are outfitted with concrete or metal louver windows, which can be opened and closed. Classrooms have blackboards, concrete floors, metal chairs and desks, and cabinets for storing books. All buildings are two stories and have metal roof sheets. One set of toilets, separated by gender, is in each school section. The school canteen is in the lower school block.

The school sections are physically separate and self-contained using metal gates that are either locked or manned during specific hours of the day. Therefore, upper and lower school students do not encounter each other during school hours. Lunch breaks are also separate, with lower school going first during the third period and upper school during the fourth period.

While the school's physical infrastructure is not deplorable, the buildings suffer from significant leaks that disrupt school activities during heavy downpours. During sustained rain, classrooms, the staffroom, and even administrative offices are flooded.

4.4.3.2 Typical School Day

A typical school day at West Hill High begins with student registration, which takes place in homerooms. Each homeroom class is assigned a homeroom teacher, who checks student attendance, provides students with moral support, liaisons with parents about children, and assists with other class-related administrative tasks. A student is marked absent if he or she is not present at the time of registration.

Registration is followed by devotion, conducted in individual classrooms or the courtyard with the entire school population. Where devotion is conducted depends on the day of the week and is sometimes influenced by the weather. Devotion is a brief religious ceremony that involves singing religious songs, reading scripture, admonition (usually from a religious leader), and prayer. Devotion usually starts with the singing of the National Anthem. Devotion typically lasts 15 to 30 minutes, after which students head to their classrooms.

A typical school day comprises six 60-minute sessions, including a lunch break. Usually, a single subject is taught per session. However, depending on the subject, two or even three sessions might be allotted to a single subject. Lower school students usually study eight to 12 subjects. English Language and Mathematics are core subjects and are mandatory for all students. Additional subjects include Integrated Science, Industrial Arts, English Literature, Social Studies, Physical Education, Arts and Crafts, Spanish, Information Technology, Performing Arts, Business, Technical Drawing, Home Economics, Health and Family Life Education (HFLE), and Guidance Counseling. Students typically remain in their classrooms while teachers move around, except for subjects taught in special rooms, such as Information Technology, which is sometimes taught in the computer laboratory. The start of each session is signaled by a chime broadcast over the school's public address (PA) system. When the chime sounds, students must be seated in class and ready to participate in their lessons. At the end of the last session before the lunch break, subject teachers supervise the lunch prayer before sending students out on lunch break.

Like lesson sessions, the lunch period is also 60 minutes long. Lunch is sold at the school's canteen and tuck shop. Very few students bring packed lunches from home. Students typically purchase cooked meals, patties, snack items such as sweet bread (called "bun"), cheese, and drinks. Students are not required to eat together and usually eat in their peer groups in the courtyard. Students (primarily 7th graders) typically play together after eating. As a part of the school's security routine, classrooms are locked during the lunch break (except on rainy days or other special circumstances), requiring students to spend their lunchtime in the courtyard. A chime signals the end of the lunch break and the resumption of classes.

The school day ends with a brief homeroom session, student registration, and a departing prayer. A student who is absent for both morning and evening registration is marked absent for

the day. After being let out, students typically leave the school compound and head for public transportation. Students involved in co-curricular club activities such as sports, cadet, sign language, or music typically spend an extra 2-3 hours on the school grounds after school. After classes end, classroom cleaning is usually carried out by the school's ancillary staff.

4.4.3.3 Academic Practices

Streaming, Testing, Ranking: In keeping with the Ministry of Education's policy, West Hill High students are streamed based on their abilities and the extent of the educational support they require. The streaming system, called Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education (APSE), comprises three "pathways," SP I, SP II, and SP III. According to the Ministry of Education, APSE is based on a constructivist approach that emphasizes interactive and learner-centered (rather than school-centered or teacher-centered) approaches to learning. The intended result is an inclusive system built on differentiated instruction, problem-based learning, and alternative forms of assessment. SP I, or Secondary Pathway 1, is the standard secondary school pathway based on the National Standards Curriculum. SP II is a transitional program for students needing moderate additional instructional support. Students in SP II are re-evaluated at the end of the 8th grade and placed in either of the other two pathways. SP III is a seven-year program for students with limited mastery of literacy and numeracy. The Ministry notes:

> Students in SP III will be instructed through a functional academics curriculum in the core subjects: Mathematics, English Language, Communication, Social Studies and Science. Their instruction will be further enriched with Personal Empowerment, Technical and Vocational instruction, as well as the performing and creative arts (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2016)

Testing is the primary method of student evaluation at West Hill High. Subject teachers conduct in-class testing occasionally, and major tests are conducted at the end of school terms.

Test scores tie into the school's merit system, wherein students can receive points if their test scores fall above a certain range. Test results are also used to rank students in their classes (i.e., first place, second place). Ranking is usually done at the end of the school year. At this time, progress reports are prepared, and parents are called in to collect the reports and discuss student performance with teachers. Test results and class rank may also play a role in determining students' pathways in the subsequent school term.

Prize-giving and Graduation: The school has an annual prize-giving ceremony where students are awarded for excellence. Prizes are awarded to students with an average of 60% and over. Students can attain gold, silver, or bronze awards based on their grades. Awards are also given for good behavior and participation in sports and other extracurricular activities. Secondary school graduation occurs after completing the 11th grade. To graduate, a student must have a near-perfect behavioral record (in the last year of school) and must have passed a minimum of five CSEC subjects.

4.4.4 Official School Rules and Disciplinary Practices

West Hill High uses a Behavior Management System to administer student discipline and rewards. Students are rewarded for positive behaviors and reprimanded for negative ones. Like most high schools in Jamaica, a Dean of Discipline is the dedicated administrative officer that handles disciplinary matters at West Hill High. However, subject teachers, home-room teachers, grade coordinators, security guards, guidance counselors, vice-principals, and the school principal become involved in the disciplinary process at various levels depending on the severity of an offense.

The merit system rewards students for "good behaviors" such as perfect attendance for a month, perfect punctuality for a month, honesty, leadership skills, and initiative. Student leadership opportunities exist at every grade level. In lower school, students can be class

monitors, and student council representatives, while upper school students can assume similar roles in addition to sub-prefect and prefect posts. Positions also exist for a head boy, a head girl, and two deputies.

Students are punished for breaking school rules and displaying negative behaviors. Students are punished based on a three-tier system involving level one, level two, and level three offenses. Level one offenses include disruptive behavior, reneging on assignments, and wearing inappropriate uniforms. Penalties include demerits, detention, and being sent home to correct uniform violations. Level two violations include fighting, smoking, bullying, skin bleaching, gambling, stealing, and skipping classes. Penalties include suspension, referral to external entities for rehabilitation, and being mandated to attend counseling sessions. Level three offenses are the most serious and may involve criminal acts such as possessing weapons, drugs, vandalism, and injuring others. These offenses may be punished by suspension. Students may be referred to law enforcement for further action in cases where criminal acts are committed.

Offenses remain on students' records and are referred to when further infractions occur, which may lead to compounded sanctions. For instance, refusing to report for detentions may result in suspension, and three suspensions may result in expulsion.

Students may also be expelled for serious offenses such as sexual intercourse on campus or while wearing school uniform and for forming and participating in gangs, among others.

4.4.5 Parallel system of discipline

Although the behavior management system officially governs discipline at West Hill High, a less strict form of discipline operates in parallel to the official system. This parallel system involves kicking students out of class, locking them out of the school compound, and tolerating or ignoring their misbehavior. Many West Hill High's students display maladaptive

behaviors, making classroom management and teaching challenging (National Education Inspectorate, 2018). Many students disrespect peers, curse, disregard teachers' orders, and provoke and bully other students. An approach that some teachers use is to ignore students who misbehave. Alternatively, teachers might downplay the severity of the infraction and try to sway the victim into not retaliating. These strategies often prove less disruptive to classroom instruction, allowing teachers to carry on with their lessons.

Verbal abuse is perhaps the most common classroom infraction. Students often use derogatory language such as "*dutty gyal* [dirty girl]," "battyman [homosexual]," and "*tink mout* [stink mouth]" to address each other. This behavior violates official school rules. However, the formal disciplinary measures (outlined above) and processes are time-consuming and disruptive to teaching, so teachers often use their own disciplinary methods in the classroom. These may include firm verbal reprimand, in-class punishment such as writing lines, reseating problematic students, and sending (kicking) students out of the classroom. Students sent out tend to congregate on the corridors violating school rules and risk being referred for formal disciplinary measures. Therefore, they typically hideout in empty classrooms or areas where they are unlikely to be discovered by security guards.

The wearing of inappropriate uniforms is another high-frequency infraction at West Hill High. Security guards can refuse students entry to the school compound for this misbehavior. Locking students out of the compound means students must spend several hours outside the classroom until administrative processes to allow them onto the compound or officially send them home are completed. These procedures typically involve the Dean of Discipline or other designated school officials.

4.5 Gaining Access

The journey to acceptance by the West Hill Boys was a story of suspicion, apprehension, self-reflection, and self-change. As mentioned, I did not grow up in wealth, nor was I destitute. Despite having endured struggles and shortages as a child, my story is unmistakably middle-class, which framed my perception of non-conformists and delinquents until I met the West Hill Boys. A journey of self-reflection and self-upheaval followed, resulting in a genuine affinity for the boys and a deep understanding and recognition of their struggles and resilience compared to my relatively privileged journey.

Differences in age, socialization, beliefs, educational attainment, attire, and modes of speech and expression framed the initial intersubjective understanding between the boys and me, which dictated our interactions. This section explains how I overcame some of these barriers and gained access to their protected spaces, allowing me to make sense of their experiences from an inside perspective.

At first, students thought I was a new teacher. However, soon after, rumors began to swirl about my identity. My initial research design called for an investigation of older boys like those Paul Willis' investigated in his *Hammertown* study. However, on the recommendation of the school administration, which feared for my safety, I targeted boys in the eighth grade. Access was to be gained through the guidance counseling department, to which I was assigned, and which would allow me to tap into the counselors' expert knowledge of students who were "delinquent" or displayed maladaptive behaviors. The male guidance counselor, Mr. Golding, who is from a working-class background and considers himself a "ghetto youth," was instrumental as a gatekeeper to the boys. He briefed me about the school setting and the profile of the students on Day 1 and began introducing me to teachers who could give me access to the boys. The school's vice-principal warned me to refrain from making cordial gestures with the

school administrators as this would be disadvantageous to building close relationships with the targeted boys. This strategy corresponds with the Eurogang Program protocol described earlier. Therefore, *parring with* or associating with Mr. Golding, who was already within the acceptable realm from the boys' perspective, was key to becoming familiar with the boys. Despite this cordial introduction, there was still suspicion about who I was.

I primarily observed students for the first few days, occasionally talking briefly with teachers to seek permission to observe their classes and the like. As I increasingly showed up in the back of classrooms, in corridors where students congregate, and in the guidance department, which students on the welfare program (PATH) frequent, students eventually demanded to know who I was. Female students were forthright with such demands. The targeted boys, however, were unequivocally evasive. Students would ask me questions like "Sir, yuh a wah? [Sir, what is your role?]," and "Sir, wha subject yuh teach? [Sir, what subject do you teach?]." As a part of my research design, I was never formally introduced to the school population, which would require me to stand at the morning assembly and be officially presented by the principal or vice-principal. Therefore, students were genuinely curious about my identity. Moreover, my failed attempts to explain what a Ph.D. was or how it is that I was a "student" added to the confusion. For students, it was also suspicious that although I claimed to live in Japan, I was black and spoke Jamaican.

After about two weeks of showing up and sitting at the back of classes, observing the behavior of students in silence, suspicion began brewing that I was an undercover police officer who was scouting out bad-behaving students who would be taken to a rehabilitation institution. Some students saw it as a source of entertainment, jokingly uttering phrases such as "di police a come [the police officer is coming]" as I approached. However, this was having a polarizing

effect, which seemed to be driving me further away from the boys I tried to reach. I had to try to erase the police label, although my primary weapon was plain-old denial.

By week three, most girls in the eighth grade were comfortable talking to me. Some of the boys and I occasionally had superficial exchanges, but the so-called bad boys still avoided me, despite my attempts to communicate with them. By then, I had a feel for the rhythm of the school and the movement of the boys, and I was ready to start talking to the boys. While preparing, I tried to learn as much about the boys as possible from their teachers. The more I learned, the more I immersed myself in their spaces. However, I still needed to "prove myself."

Eventually, most students began to open up to me, including many of the targeted boys owing to my efforts at engaging them. I tried to greet them as often as we met, I entertained their probes in a welcoming and friendly manner, and I even caved to a request to show my university student ID, which settled the score about me not being a teacher. For Bob (one of the 13 boys), my casual dress style was the most distinctive indication that I was not a teacher, which he aggressively touted.

However, I still needed to get closer. I wanted to reach a point where the boys were not altering their behavioral patterns to accommodate me. I understood that I still had the remnants of an upright, somewhat serious image, which I needed to shed. I needed to be like them. I toyed with the idea of 'becoming one of the boys.' I could not be one of them because even though I was a student, I was also an adult and at least twice their average age. Moreover, I did not act the part. My dress was casual but regular, and my speaking style was rough but not "street." To be like them, I had to learn to talk like them, overlook their bad behavior, and take on an image with which I had little experience. I pondered how they must feel being made to "do school" based on unfamiliar customs, values, norms, and expectations.

I devised a plan which ensured that they had maximum exposure to me. At the heart of the plan was ensuring that I saw them, even briefly, every day. A part of proving myself meant being open to doing favors for them. However, the most crucial element of my interaction with the boys was keeping an open mind toward their behavior. In addition, I had to transform myself into an image that was more in tune with theirs, which, based on my observation of their interactions with certain male teachers like Mr. Golding, was based on working-class or inner-city swag. This image was entirely new territory for me. However, I understood the efficacy of this image and was determined to perfect it. As uncomfortable as it was, I learned to greet them using their gestures ("*y pree?"* was the most common one – a street version of "what's up?"). I also became comfortable using their slangs (for example, "*lift up"* to mean leaving an area), and I laughed at their jokes. I sat with them in their hangout spots and talked about the things they found interesting (girls, sex, guns, violence, fashion, smoking, gambling, and so on). For once in my life, the hierarchy of values I had embraced all along became inverted. I expected the boys to display negative behaviors, but I slowly began questioning the origins of the negative labels as I genuinely tried to embrace their actions with neutrality. The more they offered insights into their family backgrounds, community settings, dislike for certain teachers and subjects, their future dreams, and so on, the lesser my judgment of them became. In the end, boys who refused to reply to me when I tried to greet them regularly initiated conversations with me. The process was slow and notably riddled with contestations of self, values, socialization, dominant power, class, and society.

Our interactions were not merely superficial teacher-student-type encounters, either. I genuinely felt they saw me as someone they could relate to, even as I tried desperately not to blunder. Marlon, for instance, greeted me with what appeared to be a street version of "long time no see" after his brief absence from school. Although not verbalized, his actions were

loaded with emotive signals. Before long, the requests for favors began, they began acknowledging and reporting to me when they arrived or left certain places, and they joked around effortlessly. Compared to the initial stages when conversations about girls, sex, drugs, guns, and violence would end awkwardly with my arrival, after getting into their inner circles, such conversations continued naturally, sometimes soliciting my input.

There were occasional blunders that challenged my status with the boys – a boy apologizing or using an expletive in my presence, for instance. However, these tended to be smoothed over by the "he is not a teacher, so don't worry" kind of assurances, which usually came from the boys, Bob in particular. A concrete example of a challenge to my status came when Ms. McDonald, the grade 8 coordinator, asked me to call the security guard on a group of misbehaving boys. I refused. However, one of the boys (not a member of the core group of 13) whom the security guard eventually rounded up chastised me later, accusing me of calling the security on them. Leo (one of the 13 WHBs) defended me ardently, which settled the score about my allegiance and gave me a weird sense of security.

The jerk chicken project (described above) was another milestone in building warm relations between the boys and me. The project began with their input and was executed based on their ideas and initiatives. This allowed them to retain ownership of the project. Despite various challenges, the boys' participation in the project seemed enjoyable and signaled their willingness to engage in learning.

The highlight of my acceptance journey was my promotion from "Sir" to "dawg." By then, I felt wholly accepted and fully immersed in their world, even though I was far from them regarding age, social background, educational attainment, and interests.

It was not enough to tolerate them. I had to accept them, and them, me. In so doing, I had to ask myself what was so wrong with their behavior or, better yet, what was so right with mine.

I decided that unless they were causing physical harm to someone else, I would withhold the tendency to judge and, in so doing, see the extent to which I could become comfortable around them, enjoy their company, and prod them to do the same.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

The study investigates youth who engage in socially abhorrent and sometimes criminal conduct. There are several risks associated with such research, which can have long-lasting emotional and legal consequences for study participants (and their families), the researcher, and the institution where the study was conducted. Therefore, explicit consent was sought in writing, and extreme care was taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data and protect the study participants' identities. Clearance to conduct the study was sought from the school's administration in writing and confirmed with a face-to-face meeting before starting data collection. Due to the nature of the study, the initial phase was exploratory (observations), and targeted students were not initially told that the study was about investigating their behavior. However, as the study intensified, consent forms were sent to parents to gain permission for them to participate in aspects of the study. Before sending letters, I called each participant's guardian to explain the nature of the ward's participation and answer any questions they had. Six of the targeted boys did not return their consent forms, which resulted in them being excluded from the study. An explanation of the study preceded interviews with teachers and school administrators, and permission to conduct the interviews was sought explicitly. While the interviews were not recorded, given the sensitivity of the contents discussed, copious notes were taken. Teachers were given the option of refusing to discuss uncomfortable topics, and some refused my requests for interviews. Some teachers also asked that some of the things they mentioned be "off the record." In such cases, the knowledge gained from those exchanges was used to frame my understanding but not included in narratives or in the official write-up. All

names used in the dissertation are pseudonyms, and I was sure not to include information that might lead to any study participant being identified.

4.7 Analytical Framework

4.7.1 Overview

This study employs a macro-ethnographic approach. Under this approach, it is insufficient to merely explain low-achieving boys' attraction to delinquency or to simply describe the ambit and nature of their indulgence in socially abhorrent behavior. The analysis must also connect these behaviors to the broader social context – that is, the social and cultural impetuses that provide fodder for the growth and development of these behaviors and the propensity for the behaviors to shape society and culture.

In this context, the study's analytical framework of "moral fluidity across the divide" is conceptualized and used to explain delinquency in Jamaica. Moral fluidity across the divide is a framework for understanding the changing nature of morality, which influences the validity of behavior within a contested and divided sociocultural space. Jamaica is a small, largely monoethnic yet diverse nation that, at only 60 years old, is still defining its values system. Austin (1983) discusses M. G. Smith's 40-year-old characterization of a stratified Jamaica wherein the dominant group values materialism, the middle tier is preoccupied with color, and the lowest section is fixated on immediate physical gratification. These variances in ideology caused conflict. Smith argues that amid such strife and the absence of universal values, the dominant group's power maintains social stability. Austin pushes back against Smith's conflation of values and ideologies, arguing that the former is a shared set of beliefs spontaneously generated, while the latter is a set of beliefs propagated through powerful institutions that constrain the experience of the people subjected to them. Therefore, class

values are inspired by ideologies imposed by the powerful in society, which preserves their power and maintains social structure. Austin proposes a different model. She argues that:

> [S]carce resources and inequalities of power … tend to generate two conditions: radically different contexts for everyday life and radical conflicts of interest. The former condition tends to produce different values and institutional complexes on the part of different classes, regional groups, and ethnic groups. The latter condition (of conflict) tends to produce competing ideologies of legitimation propagating the interests of these different cultures (p. 237)

Here, Austin provides a rather convincing explanation of why Jamaican subcultures, particularly dancehall, seem to value materialism, which was historically an upper-class value. She shows that although the subculture of the masses is seen as autonomous and in conflict with the upper classes, unequal power relations have already caused the infiltration of subcultural values through powerful social apparatus. Thus, the Jamaican working-class views wealth, dignity, and respect as a must-have social inheritance despite the unequal access to systems that grant these desirables.

4.7.2 Neoliberalism and Competitive Individualism

Neoliberal ideology revolves around entrepreneurship, innovation, and individual effort and responsibility. Kaufman (2017) cites Silva's analysis of neoliberalism's grasp on our psyche. Silva's study is based on 100 in-depth interviews with young adults in Massachusetts and Virginia. It describes how working-class individuals make sense of and explain their inability to succeed in their jobs and families. Kaufman writes:

> Instead of identifying external variables such as economic restructuring and downsizing (which affect job opportunities), cultural transformations of the meaning of love and marriage (which affect romantic relationships), and long-term stagnation of wealth and

> income for all Americans except for the top 1% (which affects financial stability), these individuals are more likely to adopt an individualistic perspective and place the blame for their shortcomings squarely on themselves. In other words, they embrace a neoliberal ideology to explain their failings (Kaufman, 2017, para. 11).

Neoliberal ideology conditions us to perceive external and structural obstacles, such as economic injustice, as personal failures. Kaufman (2017) adds that the internalization of neoliberal thinking reverberates deep within an individual's consciousness, leading to the belief that their success is "wholly dependent on two mutually affirming ideas: self-reliance and rugged individualism" (para. 12).

When we embrace the logic of neoliberalism, we become blind to patterns of sociostructural manifestations that affect large swathes of the social domain. Indeed, school failure, delinquency, and underperformance occurring uniformly across a population signals the existence of broader social phenomena embedded within the structure of society. However, because neoliberal ideology obscures our ability to perceive social phenomena outside the individual realm, our understanding of the influence of power that enables some and constrains others is limited. Neoliberal ideology also blurs our perception of these patterns of ability and constraint as coinciding with existing class lines. Instead, we internalize social success and failure as a tenet or flaw of our competitive individualism.

In sum, neoliberal ideology tethers us to the incessant refinement and marketing of self, which causes us to self-blame when we encounter crises regarding our social standing. This internalization process explains our overzealousness to achieve social status, dignity, and respect, which is true even for delinquents (such as the West Hill Boys) and other social non-conformists, as argued later.

4.7.3 A Mertonian Perspective

Merton's strain theory can help us make sense of delinquency in light of our neoliberal consciousness. Merton's theory is discussed in Chapter 2 but is again summarized in Diagram 1 below for reference. Merton's theory describes the discrepancy between social goals and means in terms of "acceptance" and "rejection" of goals and means. In my adaptation, I add "incompatibility" as an alternative to rejection to de-emphasize the supposition of agency on the part of the social actors.

In the Jamaican context, conformists' route to social success embraces the school-to-work-to-success model–the primary means of social mobility for the ordinary Jamaican man. Conformists are those who succeed in school and adhere to normative models of success most intently. Ritualists are likely to have failed in school, unable to achieve the high standards set by the school system but chose to enroll in vocational education to give themselves second chances at success. This cohort internalizes failure as the result of their shortcomings in line with neoliberal ideology.

		MEANS TO ACHIEVE GOALS	
		ACCEPT	REJECT (INCOMPATIBLE)
SOCIAL GOALS	ACCEPT	CONFORMITY: Achievement of goals using the approved means	INNOVATION: Achievement of approved goals with unapproved means
	REJECT (INCOMPATIBLE)	RITUALISM: Settling of lesser goals using approved means	RETREATISM: Become disconcerted with the goals (e.g., drug use)

	NEW MEANS
NEW GOALS	REBELLION: Reject the goals and means altogether.

Diagram 1. Adaptation of Merton's Strain Theory (Merton, 1938)

Innovators are those who choose to pursue the goal despite the de-legitimization of their accessible means. They are likely to have failed in school due to incompatibility and rejection of the approved means. They are whom we might call delinquents or deviants. In Jamaica, where wealth acts as a proxy of the Jamaican Dream, people who insist on becoming wealthy through illicit or unapproved means such as narcotics trading, scamming, and organized crime might be innovators. Rebels decide that being wealthy is not important, and so may not be as agitated about education and formal employment; the Rastafari movement in Jamaica comes to mind.

Diagram 2 visually depicts this adaptation of Merton's strain model, showing how conformist and innovative routes to social success are traversed.

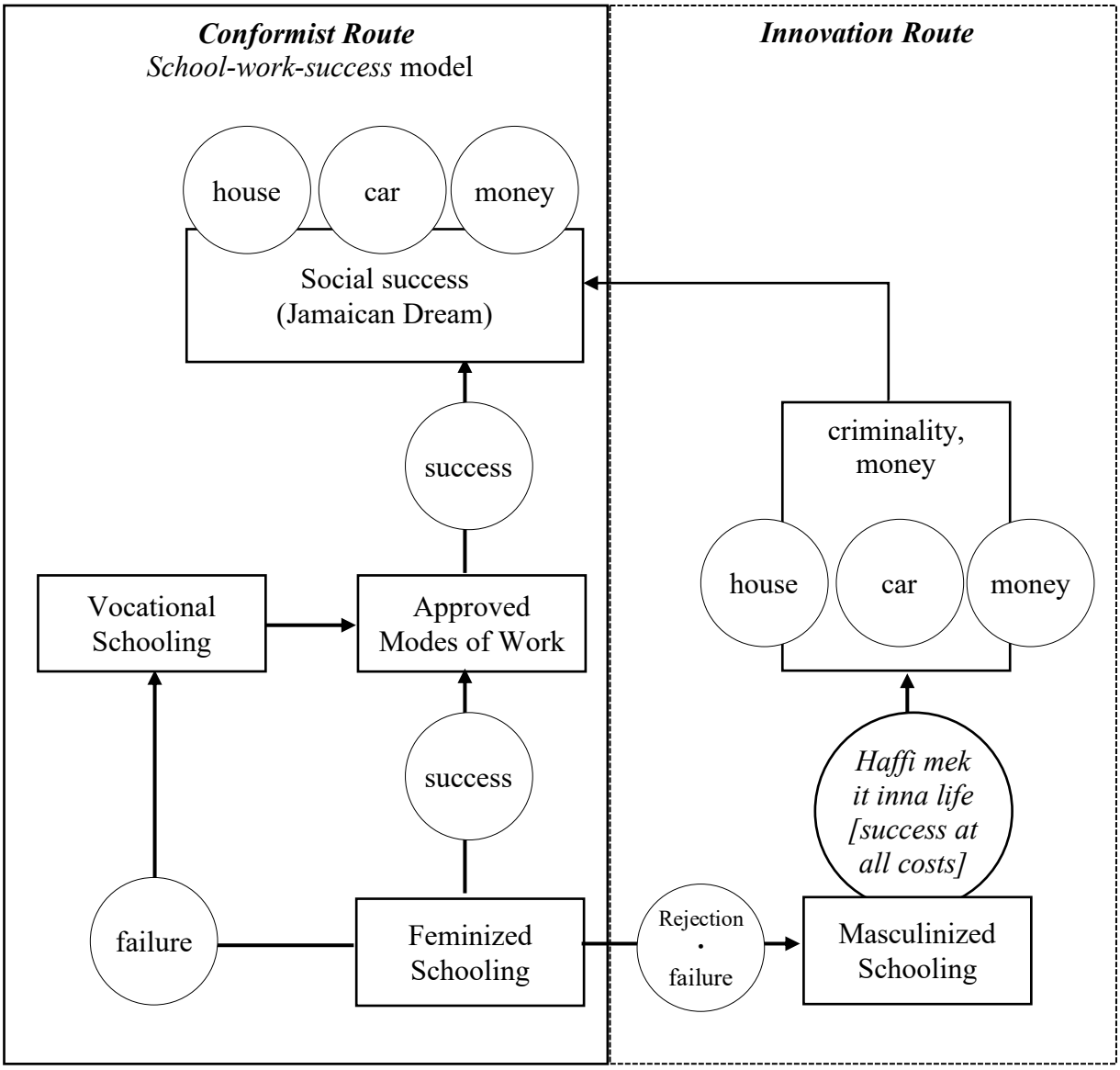


Diagram 2. Framework depicting conformist and innovative routes to social success (created by author based on Merton, 1938)

Given the universality of wealth as the most tangible social goal among Jamaicans, symbols of wealth are represented at the top of this model. It is safe to say that under capitalism's grasp, becoming wealthy is a universal goal. However, most would agree that there is no inherent value in wealth. It is the qualities that wealth symbolizes that are valuable to those in its pursuit–qualities such as dignity, respect, and stature that emanate from access to wealth.

Therefore, the fixation on wealth becomes problematic as it misconstrues the dignity people seek.

In pursuit of wealth (the goal), we must use designated paths (the means), which vary widely based on culture, values, and geography, among other factors. Our chosen paths must traverse a field of morality (cultural values, norms, and behaviors) wherein specific values boost the means. Subcultural values associated with working-class morality typically align with less acceptable forms of economic pursuit, while dominant morality typically aligns with productive and reputable work.

Typically, each path is reinforced and propelled by values (morality) that correspond to either side of a moral divide (right versus wrong, good versus evil, conformist versus innovative). Innovative means align with adherents of subcultural values, and conformist means with the middle-class status quo. However, as innovators gain success and power, they acquire the means to influence morality, which may result in traditionally negative moral values becoming neutralized. It seems that this neutralization process is associated with the efficacy of a particular value in facilitating the goal. To the extent that wealth (the goal) is inaccessible without a particular value, then that value maintains its salience. However, as its importance wanes, so does its positive perception.

Nonetheless, this binary conception of morality is misleading. We tend to see values as either or. The value is either "good" or "bad," "wrong," or "right," which does not explain the fluidity that values undergo in the negotiation process that is inherent in cultural change. These binary statuses seem to depend on the cultural objects' situation and subjectivity. For instance, stealing to feed one's family is justifiable in some cultural contexts, including Jamaica, but killing another person to acquire a car is not. Of course, a lot depends on how important the goal is. The more salient the goal, the more justifiable the means to achieve it becomes.

4.7.4 Applying This Model to the Jamaican Context

There is a hyper-emphasis on wealth in the Jamaican context. We could speculate that this is the result of the country's proximity to and internalization of the wealthy lifestyles of its North American neighbors, which is the primary source of its contemporary cultural and economic influence. This study looks at a subsection of the mechanism through which hyper-emphasis on wealth is actualized among Jamaican excluded from conformist means to success. As will be shown later, there is an ongoing shift away from the view of education as having instrumental value and toward innovation (including criminality) which is increasingly viewed as potent in creating wealth. This shift is supported by innovators' ability to loosen moral boundaries owing to their success at achieving social symbols, including wealth.

So far, I have introduced the West Hill Boys and their learning environment. I have also discussed the class-based divide that demarcates low and high-achieving schools and creates a high bar for low-achievers from working-class backgrounds. In the subsequent chapters, I will show how schooling's middle-class orientation and this high bar make for a harsh experience for low achievers, characterized by victimization and humiliation, and how the boys navigate these circumstances. I will then show how these experiences and the influence of neoliberal ideology translate to an exaggerated eagerness to succeed that is receptive to deviant innovation.

Chapter 5
The West Hill Boys: Rulers of the Courtyard

The primary inquiry of this research is understanding low-achieving boys' affinity with delinquent behavior. This chapter gives insight into the school-based activities and realities of the West Hill Boys. Building on previous chapters, which described the profile of dominant schooling in Jamaica, coupled with high sociocultural and academic expectations of students, the process of navigation and maneuvering that the boys engage in is detailed here. In this chapter, anecdotes and thick descriptions are given of the boys' actions, followed by interpretation and analysis.

The influence of peers in the development of deviant conduct is well documented in the literature (see Gifford-Smith et al., 2005; Junger-Tas, 2012; Thornberry et al., 1993; Weinberg, 1964; Willis, 1977). In fact, much of the delinquency captured in this study involved a collection of peers. However, it is important to note that the study did not investigate a contiguous deviant peer group with shared values, agreed norms and behaviors, group identity, or allegiance. Therefore, the data revealed multiple behaviors and beliefs among the 13 boys, some informed by sociocultural influences, others adapted from the boys' navigation of schooling. This peculiarity results in a spectrum of delinquent profiles ranging from mild to extreme, as shown in Table 1 below. Accordingly, the analysis presented in this chapter is not exclusively about group culture or group dynamics but about the delinquency of individual boys within a group-based context. Nonetheless, the chapter underlines the centrality of urban popular culture among the boys.

The chapter begins with a profile of each boy, followed by stories of conflict and dexterity in the Courtyard, the boys' "domain." The chapter concludes by showing how the

boys' dominance of and fluency in the ways of the Courtyard offer them benefits that can accrue dignity and respect.

5.1 Profiles of the West Hill Boys

Dean

Dean (13 years old) is the de facto leader of his micro peer group A. He is small in build but has a large personality–a compact powerhouse. He has an older sister who goes to the same school in the 10th grade. Dean lives near the school with his father, stepmother, and sister. He seldom spoke of his mother, but I know they have a relationship because of his occasional social media posts about her, including a decorated Mother's Day message with a picture of his mother and charming words. His family's lower-socioeconomic status means Dean does not always have much money but makes do with what he has or asks favors of people in his network. Unlike other extreme delinquents in the group of 13, he does not rob, steal, or intimidate for monetary gain but rather to defend his tough image, which is one of his most distinctive traits. I call this image his "tough-talking swag," which he uses to paint himself as a fearless, unforgiving savage who is not to be provoked. Most of this painting is done verbally, as he seldom gets into physical altercations with other students. Despite his verbal bravado, he is a loyal boy with a good heart.

Dean came to West Hill High in the 8th grade as a transfer student from another low-performing school, and according to him, he was forced to leave because of his bad behavior. His father strongly influences his life and seems to be a role model of sorts but in a questionable way. He describes his father as a *badman* who used to run the community from which the family moved. He seems fascinated by his father's "badness" but insists he has decided not to follow a similar path. His academic ability is at the higher end of the spectrum (among the cohort of 13 boys), but he still struggles with literacy, which is a common weakness at West Hill High.

Despite the savage image he projects, Dean is a charmer and knows how to get by with the help of his peers and teachers. Like most of his peers, he brags about his sexual escapades and his "popularity among girls,", especially on social media. He also feuds a lot on social media. About half of his posts are about some adversary who has crossed him and would face revenge or warnings to would-be adversaries not to venture close. However, at the heart of this feuding shell is a passion for friendship. He professes loyalty and craves it. He sticks up for his friends and expects them to do the same for him. When this does not happen, he lashes out (mostly verbally) but sometimes quite aggressively.

Nonetheless, Dean was one of the most loyal members of the jerk chicken project team. His proximity to the school made him a reliable source of help with logistical issues. Moreover, he is naturally optimistic and has a strong "can do" attitude. In fact, the idea that became the project was his. His jovial personality is another reason people gravitate to him. He is a joker, a prankster, and a fun-loving boy, who never lets up on an opportunity to make those around him laugh. As a result, he pulls a large "fan base" over which he exerts significant influence, often getting them to do his bidding.

Keith

Academically, Keith (13 years old) is the shining star of the group. He is a quiet, seemingly shy boy but quite outgoing and talkative when he gets comfortable. Keith lives near the school with his mother and younger brother. His mother is a supervisor chef at a prominent hotel. He has an older half-sister who lives elsewhere. Before moving to the parish, he lived with his father and attended a prominent high school. That explains his academic brilliance compared to his peers. However, Keith knows how to adapt. In situations where his academic skills prove worthless, he takes on the persona of his environment and blends in with his peers. Keith seems economically comfortable. He does not beg for money and can access nice gadgets.

He proffers a distinct image of himself as a "girls' man," regularly talking about and posting on SNS about his girlfriend. He is one of the few boys among the 13 in a steady relationship or who openly declares this fact. Talking openly about a steady girlfriend is somewhat of a contradiction, as promiscuity is an unofficial hallmark of masculinity in this environment. As such, boys are expected to brag about their sexual experiences with multiple girls, and appearing to be exclusive with one girl is viewed negatively.

Keith loves his little brother and speaks about him quite often. He is fully committed to helping his mother as well and often turns down requests from his friends to hang out because of the need to help his mother. Keith is also honest. I could always depend on him to tell me the truth about a situation and to do the "morally right" thing. I once asked him and Dean to buy charcoal for the jerk chicken project at a community shop near the school. They inflated the price of the charcoal and pocketed the extra money. However, the next day we needed a bottle of water for the project, and Keith volunteered to buy it without me providing the money. I found this strange. Upon inquiring, he told me what they did and that it drove him to buy the water with the extra money. However, Keith struggles with his image as a "nerd," for which even his close friends sometimes tease him.

Bob

Bob is the final member of peer group A. He is small in build but quite vocal and outgoing. He lives with his stepmother and stepsiblings. His father lives and works overseas and supports him and his family financially. This support means he is comfortable financially and never asks for money or favors, unlike many of his peers. His academic ability is comparatively good compared to his cohort, as he can read and write considerably higher than his peers. However, he struggles in class and is often in the dark about subject materials and complex topics. Bob maintains a calm persona, despite the apparent influences of working-class values and popular culture that permeate his background. He jokes about deviance and professes badness

occasionally but mainly under the influence of the mood of the conversation. Like Keith, Bob maintains a tough enough image to ward off attacks from peers but rarely gets into serious confrontations, despite being a close friend of Dean. He seems to dislike studying and becomes inattentive in classes. He sometimes hangs out at the back of the classroom with other inattentive classmates, including troublemakers. However, he is never absorbed in the madness. He knows his limits and always exits before things take a dangerous turn. He even disavowed Dean once after an incident involving Dean and another student whom Dean threatened to "shoot." Bob did not want to get caught in what he thought could become a serious conflict that could make him a target because of his association with Dean.

Marlon

Marlon is the ringleader of subgroup B. He is by far the most delinquent of the group of 13 and has had many disciplinary bookings with the school. Marlon is the youngest of three male children and has a somewhat tumultuous relationship with his older brothers. His mother, about whom he speaks fondly, is serving jail time, so he lives with his brothers and frequents the residences of friends and other family members. His primary residence is in a volatile community in the parish, known for high levels of gang activity. His family is of a lower socioeconomic status, which is reflected in Marlon's image. However, he does an excellent job of fitting in with the others and acquiring the things he wants, often by force. Marlon is a heavy smoker and drinker and often brags about his habits on social media, posting several images of him engaging in such acts. He has been exposed to violence and has been a chief perpetrator of violence at school, including robberies, threatening behavior, and assault. He claims to be involved in other serious crimes, such as shootings, fraud, and robbery, which he claims to engage in with persons in his social environments. I have seen images on social media of him brandishing large coils of cash, posting images of weapons such as guns and ammunition, and hanging out with his circle of friends outside the school.

Marlon's academic abilities are limited, although he can read and write to some extent. Marlon skips school very often, and when he does turn up, he spends most of his time on the corridors, in bushes near the school, or empty classrooms with his peers. Some of his truancy from school and class is a factor of volition, but in some instances, he is not welcome to attend classes because of his turbulent relationship with some teachers. Marlon is extremely evasive and becomes angry when questioned too intently. He is very suspicious of his surroundings and tries to keep as low a profile as he can. He has some influence over his peers and often gets them to accompany him on his delinquent escapades, on and off campus. It took me quite a while to gain Marlon's trust, but even then, it was always a fickle, fragile relationship that was conveniently fractured and reconstructed as the circumstances demanded.

Paul

Despite having a more stable family background, Paul is Marlon's protégé. Paul lives with his mother and younger brother, who is in elementary school and has a different father. Paul's father is not involved in his life, although the circumstances of their separation are unclear. His mother is studying to be a healthcare professional while working to support Paul and his brother. They live in a relatively nice area, although prone to volatility in recent years, and Paul's brother's paternal relatives seem very involved in their lives, at least financially.

He wears nice clothes, branded items, an expensive bag, and nice shoes. He has a cellphone and brags about having the latest gadgets and access to anything he wants. His family is in the middle socioeconomic bracket. His mother is a strict disciplinarian who has very high expectations for Paul's academic performance and behavior and often punishes him harshly for his deviance. Paul, however, has found solace in his newfound peer group and the company of ringleader Marlon. He skips school, skips classes, smokes, drinks, molests girls, talks back to teachers, assaults peers, disrespects adversaries, and threatens his peers. He is particularly emboldened when in the presence of his peer group. However, Paul seldom gets caught in the

crosshairs of school discipline as he is skillful at evading school authorities. Moreover, he seems to have a solid moral compass with limits on how far he will go. While still on the extreme side of the behavior spectrum, he falls short of the deviance his peers often display. However, the school has sanctioned him for his incessant skin bleaching.

Despite this, Paul also has a strong work ethic and was instrumental in the success of the Jerk chicken project. Paul typically attends meetings on time and is usually around for critical moments such as registration, tests, and other important events where attendance is recorded. Even in the company of his peers, he works diligently and thoroughly and is not easily distracted. This attitude extends to his academic work too. When he does attend classes, he tends to pay attention and attempt to do his work. He even tried cheating on a test by bringing in a strip of paper with answers, even though most of his friends did not turn up. He is one of the "extreme" delinquent boys, but paradoxically, perhaps the most diligent and dependable one.

Billy

Billy is another of Marlon's henchmen. He is the tallest of the cohort and one of the least vocal. He can be pretty shy and introverted, but he also dabbles in serious delinquent acts alongside his peers. He was one of the hardest to get to because of his persona, but once I reached him, we became close quickly. He is a talker and loves to share details, which helped me balance the rhetoric of his peers. He lives with his father, stepmother, and other family members at a family residence in the parish and is one of the better-off members of the group. His father is relatively young, so his grandfather often takes on guardianship. He wears branded shoes, carries a name-brand bag, and has nice things. He does not brag much in person but sometimes brags on social media. Like Marlon, he is a heavy smoker. He also drinks occasionally. Like most of the cohort, he also brags about sexual escapades with females. Billy is often absent from school, and when he does show up, he skips classes frequently, roams the

corridor with his peers, and escapes to the bushes to smoke. His academic abilities are at the lower end of the spectrum, but he is literate and reasons quite well.

Leo

Leo is the last of Marlon's peer group. He is from a neighboring class but often hangs out with Marlon and his crew. Leo lives with his aunt and other relatives in a nearby community. He is not in close contact with his mother. His socioeconomic status is toward the lower end of the spectrum, but he lives comfortably. He wears nice clothes, has a branded pair of shoes, and a branded bag. He also brags about having high-end gadgets at home. Leo is an associate of Marlon, but loosely so. They occasionally hang out during breaks, spend time out of class on the corridor and escape to empty classrooms, but Leo seldom jumps the fence or heads to the bushes to smoke. He can be evasive and requires much prodding to disclose information, but he is still a friendly boy who is easy to talk to. He strongly values justice for his friends and defends them religiously.

Leo's academic performance is relatively weak, and he was even forced to repeat a grade. Like his close friends, he is a tough talker and regularly threatens weaker students. He has earned notoriety for misbehaving in class and disrespecting teachers. Some teachers even ban him from their lessons. Despite this, Leo seldom gets into serious disciplinary problems at school and claims to have never been suspended, unlike Marlon and Billy.

Otis

Otis is in the same class as Marlon, Paul, and Billy but is not in their inner circle. He is a jovial boy with a sense of humor but is short-tempered and irritable. He hangs out with Arnold, who is also considered delinquent but not one of the 13 boys in my study group. Otis attends school regularly, is usually in class, and is relatively cordial with his peers and teachers. He is from a lower-socioeconomic background but lives relatively comfortably. Otis is a known troublemaker and frequently initiates pranks along with Arnold. However, he somehow

manages to stay out of trouble, primarily by aggressively defending his innocence and displaying threatening behavior when accosted. He can be rather vocal on topics that interest him, but he is not talkative. Academically, he is very entrepreneurial but is on the low-performing end of the spectrum.

Sheldon

Sheldon lives with his adoptive parents. He is shortly built and mixed race, and extremely short-tempered. As a result, he often gets into fights with his peers. However, he has a friendly, questioning personality. He loves to strike up a conversation and probe for details. However, his friendliness dissipates extremely quickly if he is provoked. Despite the pressure to conform to established standards of masculinity, Sheldon is an open crier, especially when provoked. Most times, if he is crying, he is feuding with someone. Attempts to restrain him intensify his outrage and increases his tears. His academic performance is average, and he can read and write basic content. However, like most students at West Hill High, his abilities pale in comparison to students at a similar level in high-performing schools. Sheldon dresses according to the school rules. He does not wear fancy shoes nor carry an expensive bag, but he seems comfortable in his attire, which usually causes his peers to ridicule him.

Chris

Chris is a joker and prankster who constantly seeks opportunities to make fun of others. He lives with his mother in the parish and is from a lower-socioeconomic background. He is not poor but also not well off, which is often reflected in how he dresses. Chris's mother is a strict disciplinarian and does not tolerate dissent, yet Chris constantly gets in trouble at school, requiring his mother to visit the school. However, his misbehaving is mild, ranging from mild provocation to disrespect for authority and disobedience. Chris typically wears loose-fitting pants and regular shoes, which have earned him the title of "nerd." He is in a higher-performing stream, which means his academic abilities are average and above that of the Marlon group. He

does not smoke or drink. He religiously attends classes and does not display threatening behavior. However, he is prone to conflict with his peers, which has resulted in physical fights in the past. Like Keith, he is widely perceived as a nerd primarily because of his attire and behavior, and he is sometimes bullied and ostracized by other students.

However, he has a distinct boyish innocence. He is very playful, cooperative when prodded, and responsive to scolding. He can be good company, even though his friends sometimes find him annoying.

Joseph

Joseph is the most hyperactive of all the students in the group. He is small in build but full of energy. He has an explosive character and electric personality, which is hard to overlook despite his tiny stature. He often screams at his peers, picks fights with students much larger than him, and never backs down from a confrontation. Joseph lives in a neighboring community with his mother and younger siblings. He is one of the few students in the cohort involved in an extra-curricular activity, so he stays back after school most days. In class, he is the mood-maker, always offering a witty comment to amuse his peers, counter a teacher's scolding or get his way. He can be provocative in language and behavior and is often reprimanded by his teachers. However, he can be cooperative and helpful if encouraged. Joseph is in one of the middle-tier streams and has average academic performance. His family seems okay financially. One of his distinguishing traits is his love for tight pants, which is very common at the school. However, unlike his peers who occasionally violate the uniform rules, Joseph does it quite often.

Jason, Niel

These two boys are best friends, whom it is safe to say are more "hyperactive" than they are "delinquent." Teachers might disagree, as they pose severe challenges to class management and lesson delivery due to disruptive behavior and inattentiveness. However, unlike most boys

in the core group, they seldom profess “badness,” they conform to uniform rules, have most likely never smoked or drunk alcohol, do not molest girls or claim to be “girls’ men,” and do not get into serious fights. Academically, they are average performing and are in one of the middle tier classes in the eighth grade. While they do not skip classes intently, they often frolic when teachers are absent or roam the corridors playfully with other students. Jason lives with his mother and father in a volatile community in the parish. While they do not fall into the lower middle-class category and income bracket, they are comfortable financially. Neil is from a poorer background. He lives with his grandmother and two brothers (one older and one younger) and commutes to school by bus. Both boys joined the Jerk chicken project but crumbled under the pressure of the more severe delinquents and eventually decided to quit.

On the fringes

Arnold

An accomplice of Otis, Arnold is a problem for most teachers. He is disruptive in class, often initiating book fights and other provocations. During lunch breaks, he pranks students, often launching water attacks and staunchly denying any involvement. Arnold’s academic ability is not as low as the other students, but according to his teachers, he suffers from limited parental guidance as his mother lives abroad. Teachers note that his behavior and academic performance improve significantly whenever his mother is around, only to regress after she leaves. Arnold was one of the targets of the study, but unlike other boys who eventually opened up to me, he remained elusive. He also refused to participate in the jerk chicken project.

Dennis

Dennis is an accomplice of Marlon, Billy, and Paul. However, he is not involved in hardcore violations and can best be described as “hyperactive.” Nevertheless, he fights a lot and often gets summoned to the Dean of Discipline’s office. Dennis was not among the list of boys

earmarked for the study and, as a result, was not targeted. However, he frequented some of the core boys' hang-out spots and became known to me. He has participated in a few study activities, even though he was told he could not (owing to the lack of explicit consent). However, I tolerated him due to his vehement refusal to be excluded and not to alter the natural environment and interaction of the target subjects.

Roy

Roy is another of the boys targeted for this study. However, his poor attendance made investigating and incorporating him impractical. Roy was very friendly and receptive to my attempts to engage him. He was one of the first of the group of extreme delinquents to talk to me openly. Due to his intimacy with other core members, some of his narratives are included in the dissertation. We had several conversations, including his run-ins with the law and having to visit the court to answer charges of assault and marijuana use. He mentioned being ordered to do drug tests and being placed on probation for his behavior. I learned that following the completion of my fieldwork, he was sent to a juvenile detention center on an assault charge.

James

James is a very outspoken boy whom teachers universally consider a problem. Teachers have characterized him as disrespectful and maladaptive. He sometimes wears a hooded sweater over his uniform, covering his head and shading his bleached face. James was one of the targets of the study but refused to commit despite the cordial relations we developed. He often "reasons" with me on the corridor, during lunchtime, and even in class. He often complained to me about perceived injustices and the teachers whom he felt did not favor him and gave him a hard time. James walks with a distinct street swag which emphasizes the fearless image he is known to project. He often argues with his peers, gets sent out of class by teachers, and gets summoned to the Dean of Discipline's office for violations, including his dress code and bleached skin.

However, like many other hardcore students, he seldom gets into physical altercations with others.

Sam

Sam is a very reserved student who barely allowed me to get close to him. Despite being on the original list of targeted students, he never honored his commitment to join the jerk chicken project, which was the last opportunity I had to engage him intensely. After quitting the project, our interactions dwindled even further. Despite his reserved personality, he often feuds with his peers and has been involved in several fights. He is also reported to have broken a teacher's window with a stone following a disagreement at school. His homeroom teacher explained that he often has "bad days," so he is only likely to talk to me if he is having a good day. His proximity to some students in the core study group means he is featured in some of the narratives in the dissertation even though he is not a core participant.

Ian and Randy

These boys are in the second lowest stream from which most of the core group originate. However, they are relatively well-behaved. They are close friends and are often seen with each other. Like many of their peers, they brag about girls, sex, smoking, and drinking, and they occasionally provoke and tease other students and disrupt classes. Nonetheless, they are known for their membership in the school's football (soccer) team, which has brought them some fame among their peers. Also, they have near-perfect school attendance records. While they are not members of the core group, they are featured in the narratives because of their proximity to the core group.

	Alias	Age	Socioeconomic Status	Academic Performance	Community Profile	Extent of Delinquency*
Subgroup A	Billy	14	Middle	Very low	Rural	Extreme
	Paul	13	Lower-middle	Very low	Suburban	Severe
	Leo	15	Lower-middle	Very low	Urban	Serious
	Marlon	14	Lower	Very low	Inner-city	Extreme
Subgroup B	Keith	13	Lower-middle	High	Rural	Mild
	Dean	14	Lower	Moderate	Rural	Serious
	Bob	13	Lower-middle	Moderate	Inner-city	Moderate
	Joseph	13	Lower	Low	Rural	Serious
	Jason	13	Lower	Moderate	Inner-city	Mild
	Sheldon	13	Lower	Moderate	Inner-city	Serious
	Niel	13	Lower	Low	*Unknown*	Mild
	Chris	14	Lower-middle	Very low	Inner-city	Moderate
	Otis	13	Lower	Low	Inner-city	Serious

*
Mild – minor impertinence (e.g., disregarding instructions, talking back to teachers)
Moderate – major impertinence and antisocial behaviors (e.g., swearing, provocation, skipping classes)
Serious – unruly behavior, aggression, and violation of laws that apply only to children (e.g., fighting, truancy, smoking, drinking, running away from home)
Severe – behaviors that violate both child laws and adult laws (e.g., robbery, bullying, assault, theft, fraud)
Extreme – involvement in major criminal offending (e.g., drugs, violence, weapons, shootings)

Table 1. Personal background and profile of the 13 West Hill Boys

5.2 The Jerk Chicken Project

The jerk chicken project was a joint undertaking by the West Hill Boys and me. The project facilitated an intimate space where the boys could communicate freely, both with me and with each other. While the jerk chicken project was not a part of the pre-fieldwork research design, it became an essential component of the research design, which was implemented in

response to the school's request to make the research more beneficial to the boys and the school. Such a pivot in the research design was possible because of the flexibility of the ethnographic method, which allows for adaptations to the fieldwork circumstances. The project's purpose was two-fold: (1) it allowed for more efficient and authentic data collection as it provided an extension to the natural environment in which the boys' actions could be observed. Instead of relying solely on direct questioning and interviews, I could gain insight into the boys' work ethic, belief systems, subcultural orientation, and the stimuli they interacted with in their immediate social environments, including at the household and community levels. I was also able to observe group dynamics, including interactions with power and authority, and the boys' relations with senior students. The project also provided a genuine (real-to-life) target against which to evaluate the boys' subscription to dominant mores and values, such as honesty and teamwork. (2) The project provided an unofficial test of a project-based learning activity, which allowed us to gauge the boys' receptiveness to diverse learning styles. This was useful in clarifying the boys' orientation around learning. The rejection of achievement ideology which is often touted as a basis of delinquency could be tested, albeit informally, along with a possible alternative to curriculum-based learning. In addition, since the boys comprised multiple peer groups from multiple classes, the project served as a united banner to engage all the boys.

The project involved building a jerk pan[11] (barbecue grill) from raw materials, cutting and seasoning chicken, and using the jerk pan to make jerk chicken[12] to be sold on the school compound on a designated day. The proceeds would be shared among the boys. The project involved three phases: (1) building the jerk pan, (2) seasoning and marinating chicken, and (3) making and selling jerk chicken.

[11] A jerk pan is a charcoal fired barbecue grill. It is usually made from metal drums which are cut and welded. See Appendix F for photos.
[12] Jerk chicken is a kind of street food that is popular in Jamaica. It is roasted chicken marinated in local Jamaican spices and prepared on a charcoal grill (jerk pan). Jerk chicken is usually eaten with bread.

The decision to do the jerk chicken project was made in consultation with the school administration and one of the more influential boys. At first, I registered my intent with the school administration and the guidance counselors. I then narrowed down the possible project ideas to three based on the available resources at the school, the available budget (which I seeded), and the time available for execution based on my research timeline. I discussed the shortlisted ideas with one of the more influential boys who, in consultation with his peers (subgroup B), chose the jerk chicken project. I then packaged the idea and convinced the other boys to join. Because of the nature of the project, the school required that all participants gain prior written approval from their parents or guardians. This eliminated some of the boys I was targeting, as they failed to return the permission slip despite my constant reminders. Additionally, two boys (Jason and Niel), although not on the original list of targeted students, became interested in the project through association with Chris, one of the targeted students. This proved helpful, as I could observe the dynamic between boys at various positions along the delinquency spectrum, which enriched the collected data.

The project lasted approximately three weeks. Three teachers were involved in the project. Mr. Dixon, the welding and automotive technology teacher, supervised the construction of the jerk pan; Ms. Wright, a home economics teacher, assisted with the pre-preparation training, and Ms. McDonald helped with administrative tasks, such as contacting parents, preparing permission slips, and getting the principal's approval. Ms. Lin (home economics department) and Mr. Howard (grade 10 teacher) also assisted with the execution of the project. Details of each phase of the project are provided in Appendix D.

5.3 Subcultural Proclivities

This section describes and discusses the attitudes, beliefs, tendencies, and behaviors of the boys in this study through the lenses of their working-class identity and its proximity to dancehall culture. Given that this chapter is dedicated to highlighting the 13 West Hill Boys, they will be the focus of discussion. However, given the proximity of the boys to other students, many themselves "delinquent," there will be a diversity of characters introduced throughout the narratives presented here.

Dancehall is often considered a vulgar successor to Jamaica's iconic Reggae music. However, contemporary characterizations of the musical genre see it as much more than music and lyrics – it is a lifestyle. Professor Donna Hope is one of Jamaica's leading scholars on culture and a professor of Culture, Gender and Society at Jamaica's largest university, the University of the West Indies. Hope (2006) defines *dancehall culture* as "a space for the cultural creation and dissemination of symbols and ideologies that reflect and legitimize the lived realities of its adherents, particularly those from the inner cities of Jamaica (Hope, 2006, p. 27) ." Hope identified 6 'Gs' that embody dancehall culture – Guns, Gal (girls), Ghetto, Gays, Ganja, and God. These 'Gs' seem to be an appropriate lens through which to situate the West Hill Boys' activities in school.

5.3.1 Hot Topics: The 'Gs'

5.3.1.1 Gold (Money)

A day in the life of a West Hill boy will invariably feature discussions around one or more of the 6Gs. However, an essential seventh G, hinted at in Hope's schema, is gold (money). Money was by far the most dominant theme among the boys. They discuss ways of obtaining money, using money, the benefits of having money, the types of people who typically have money, and how no money affects their lives. Countless posts on their social media accounts

reinforce the boys' adulation of money. Figure 1 shows extracts (memes) from three of the boys' social media posts. In addition, the boys often used money-related emojis, such as dollar signs, money bags, and flying cash, when making posts on social media. Not only do they discuss money, but they also actively try to acquire it.

Soliciting (begging) is a common way to obtain money, of which I was often a target, as shown below.

[Chat with Otis at a PE class outside]

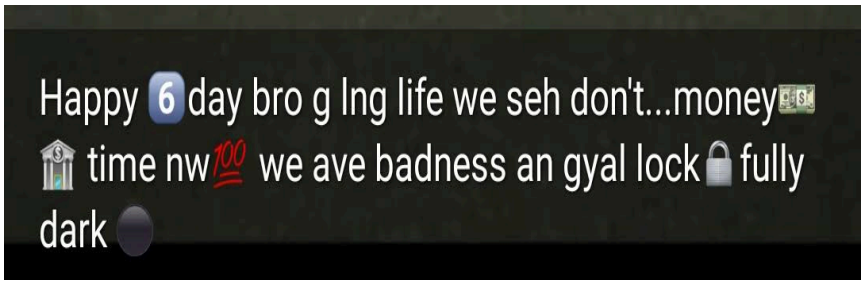
Otis: *Sar, mi waa two bills fraa yuh right now* [Sir, I would like you to give me $200 dollars right away].
KW (in jest): *Yah man! Wah yuh want it fah?* [Sure. What for?]
Otis: *Mi waa buy waa drinks* [I want to buy a drink].

A week later, I engaged Otis as he loitered on the corridor[13]. I asked him why he spends so much time on the corridor. He bragged about his father being rich and that he did not need to worry about his future. He took out a wad of cash and started bragging about how much money he had. He waved it close to my face several times, obviously seeking a comment. I obliged. "*Yuh rich man* [You are rich]", I said. According to him, he "hustles" every day but today's earnings was not that much. He beamed as he walked away. Otis is an undercover snack trader, which does earn him hefty revenues. Yet, as shown above, he still begs for money.

Money is, therefore, a versatile unit in the social and power relations of the West Hill boy and is used in various ways to invoke feelings of self-sufficiency, start or boost conversations, and dismiss threats to stature brought on by the insinuation of poverty or insufficiency. However, as Lewis (2020) points out, money is also tied to urban notions of Jamaican manhood, where the more money one has, the more of a "man" he is. As shown below, money is also a source of conflict and ridicule among the boys. Virtually all the 13 boys brandish, brag about, and beg for money. Bob was a notable exception. Paul, Dean, Marlon, Leo, Otis, and Alan frequently asked me for money. Instead of cash, phone credit, "gifts," lunch tickets, and other desirables were requested.

[13] Most Jamaican schools have balcony-styled corridors than protrude from the main buildings. Thus, we typically say "on" the corridor.

↑ Billy (original post): I'm married to the money. How is it that I never saw you at the wedding? It was lovely. Replaced $500 bills with $1000 bills.



↑Dean (original post): Happy birthday brother! Wishing you a long life. Now it's time to focus on money because we are already masters of "badness" and we already have the girls under control.

←Jason (posting a pre-made meme)

Figure 1. Social media posts of three boys depicting ideas of and desire for money.

There is also an association of providing money or other equivalent desirables with "good treatment:"

[Conversation with Dean after working on the Jerk pan after school]

Dean: *Sir, yuh cyaa mek mi get a two bills. Mi waa fix up mi bicycle* [Sir, can you give me $200? I want to repair my bicycle]
KW: *Mi noh have no money pon mi yah now yute.* [I don't have any cash now]
Dean: *So send me son credit den nuh.. mek mi call mi links and deal widdy* [So can you send me phone credit instead? I will use it to call a friend to help me]

[Conversation with Marlon about providing him a Christmas gift]

Marlon: *So wha yuh seh now? Christmas a come, wah yuh seh yuh a gi mi. Caa mi nah see yuh a push out nuttin inno and yuh come from overseas … Yuh nah treat mi good inno.* [So, what are you saying? Christmas is coming, what are you giving me? I don't see you making an effort and you came from overseas … You aren't treating me well]

[Conversation with Paul about lunch tickets]

Paul: *Yuh cyaa mek mi get waa PATH ticket.* [Can you help me to get a PATH (welfare lunch) ticket?]
KW: *How mi aggo do dat now?* [How can I do that?]
Paul: *Minno know. Yuh noh inna di guidance office so yuh muss cyaa liff up one fi mi.* [I don't know. You are always in the guidance counseling office so you must be able to get one for me].
KW: *No sah. Mi cyaa do dat.* [No, I can't do that]

Paul: *A soh yuh a deal wid mi, Sir?* [That's how you are treating me, Sir?]

The three previous narratives show the boys' expectation that people they perceive to be in a better financial position (temporarily or permanently) than them should treat them well by providing money and gifts as a symbolic honoring of a close bond.

The WHBs sometimes ask teachers (with whom they are friendly) for money or suggest that teachers pay money for misdeeds (see narratives in Chapter 6). Also, it is not uncommon for the boys to ask for favors. For example, Billy once asked me to help him to get let into the school building after being locked out for lateness. Otis asked me to help him reclaim a bag (with contraband) that he had hidden in a tree to evade the security inspection. Leo asked me to buy his lunch after he disrespected a canteen employee and was denied service (see Chapter Six for this narrative).

Whether asking for money, a lunch ticket, or favors, it struck me as odd that begging, and its subtle emasculating cloak, was as widely practiced as it was, especially among boys who so vigorously embrace their masculinity and its embedded self-sufficient image. However, begging is an absolute staple of the boys' daily interactions at school.

Another way to earn money is through gambling:

> ***[Group of boys gambling in the courtyard]***
>
> Lunchtime was in full swing, and scores of lower school children were in the courtyard. I walked by a group of boys flipping a bottle around. They were playing a game in turns. A student holds the bottle by the neck, flips it toward himself, and tries to make it land on its base without toppling. I watched them play for a few minutes before asking them what they were doing. The student I asked, Pete, said, "*a gamble dem a gamble* [they are gambling]." He was not playing at the time. "So tell me how you play it," I asked. He explained as two other boys, Errol and Timmy, played. At that point, Errol had won the round, and there was a minor uproar as Timmy secretly handed him some money before walking away.
>
> Pete challenged Errol to a round. Errol asked how much Pete was wagering, and they agreed to $50. They played, and Errol won again. Pete handed Errol $50. Errol smiled and looked around as if he were recruiting new players. Pete decided to try again. I questioned his reasoning, but he insisted he would get his money back. At the end of the

rematch, Pete won his money back. I left briefly. On my return, Pete was still at it. He seemed to be on a winning streak. I asked him how much money he had won. He said, "*mi* [I] have whole heap *a* [of] money." He then reached into his pocket and pulled out a bundle of cash. I asked how much it was. He told me he had $850, of which $350 was won gambling.

As mentioned, "hustling," or peddling, is a way students earn at West Hill High. While only Otis among the boys was explicitly involved, other students sold candy undercover. Hustling sometimes takes priority over class participation and often necessitates deviant innovation and manipulation of juniors, as shown below:

[In an HFLE Class]

A student was lurking at the door. I asked him if he was in the class, to which he replied, "*A something mi come fa Sir* [I came for something, Sir]." I asked what he came for, and he pointed to Otis. Otis recognized he had a *customer* and came to the door with a bar of chocolate in his hand. He gave it to the boy in exchange for $100, which he quickly put in his pocket and returned to his desk.

Security is strict at West Hill High. Students are screened for contraband every morning by dedicated security personnel. Otis explained that he hands his boxes of chocolate to a 7th-grade boy through an opening at the back of the 8th-grade block each morning and retrieves them after clearing security. I asked if the boy gets a commission for his assistance. He said, "*fi wah Sir...a waa seven grade boy inno* [why would that be necessary…the boy is a 7th grader]," suggesting that the boy's lower grade meant he could ask for special favors without the need to compensate.

It is not merely the acquisition of money that was fascinating; the fanaticism and romanticism about money also struck me. The boys all dreamed of being rich, and many had already begun to plot their journey to wealth. The most common path was through *scamming*, which was a universal hot topic at West Hill High in general, not just among the boys. Many West Hill High students, including several of the 13 boys, have professed to be associated with scammers, even at the household level.

5.3.1.2 Gal (Girls)

Next in the hierarchy of desirables is girls. The boys' attitude toward girls is mixed. On one hand, girls are a source of companionship and an object of affection. On the other hand, girls/women are sexual objects for exploring sexuality and gaining bragging rights about virility.

Having "nuff [many]" girls is an integral part of the boys' masculinity, which is perhaps a trait they inherit from wider Jamaican/Caribbean society and dancehall culture more specifically (and one of Hope's Gs- *Gal*). Parry (2000) points to research done in Jamaica, Dominica, and Guyana, where masculinity was said to be attested by sexual prowess, measurable by the number of concurrent female sexual partners a man has. However, this womanizing view does not paint a complete picture, as having an "*ooman*" or a dedicated girlfriend is an equally important trait of manhood. The combination of both components signals a boy's sexual desirability and maturity. A conversation with Billy demonstrates this:

[Conversation with Billy via WhatsApp]

KW: *Mi know seh yuh aa Marlon dem always have y girl dem all ova y place …but mi neva know seh yuh have yuh own B weh yuh a deal wid* [I know that you and Marlon are always hanging around with many girls but I didn't know you have your own girl that you were dating (at West Hill High)]
Billy: *How yuh mean bro. Wi haffi have wi owna B of course caa y ressa gyal dem cyaa cut anytime, yuh zimmi. Caa memba seh wi no own dem wi just parr wid dem, yuh zimi. Mi have mi B long time but mi neva did a show y … Marlon have ee B, Paul have ee B.* [Of course! We must have our own girls because the other girls can go at any time. I've had my girl for a long time but I wasn't really showing off... Marlon has his girlfriend, Paul has his girlfriend]

[Group conversation after PE]

Ian hijacked an unrelated topic about the "seventh grade" to brag about having had the most girls among his peers when he was in the 7th grade:

Ian: *Inna seven grade mi get di nuffest gyal inna 7 grade* [(Since you brought up the seventh grade,) when I was in the seventh grade, I had the most girls]
KW: *Hummuch girl yuh did have?* [How many girls did you have?]
Ian: *Bout nine gyal mi did have inna seven grade* [I had about nine girls in the seventh grade].

For the boys, besides having a dedicated girlfriend, treating her well is a must. Similarly, boys value their mothers and other close females and believe in treating them respectfully.

However, the boys also view girls and women as tools of exploration, a crucial tenet of heteronormative dancehall culture and Caribbean masculinity. It is perhaps what Brown (1999) calls *patrichology*, which he describes as a heterosexual and sexist sociocultural code that renders the female body a site of violence and sadistic pleasure. Girls, therefore, are a means to an end, somewhat indispensable but equally disposable. As a result, the boys often insult and abuse (sometimes physically) girls to whom they are not close. In addition, the boys use derogatory terms, such as *dutty gyal*, *sketel*, whore, and *loose gyal*, to refer to such girls. The term "gyal" can be friendly, but most times, the boys use it negatively.

[Water Attack at lunch time]

Arnold and Otis attacked a student with water. Students around laughed wildly at the boy, who was now dripping wet. After the commotion subsided, a girl pointed out Arnold, the main attacker.

> Girl: *A da black one deh fling y* [That black guy is the one who threw it]"

Arnold fired back with Otis' backing, launching a vicious attack on the girl.

> Arnold: *Ei gyal! Dougn pint paw mi! Yuh simmi fling nuttin?* [You girl! Don't point at me. Did you see me throw anything?]
> Otis: *Ugly gyal. Dougn pint panni man* [Ugly girl. Don't point at him]"

[After PE Class near the field]

After PE class, Ian and Randy are spraying up with cologne. The cologne belongs to Ian, but Randy lent it to a female classmate, aggravating Ian.

> Ian: *Weh yuh a gi dey tinkin gyal deh mi tings fah Dean?* [Why did you give that stink girl my things (cologne)?]

However, without girls, boys cannot access sex, which limits their ability to participate "truthfully" in sex talk, which is also a part of the daily discourse. Sexual intercourse is codenamed "chopping" by the boys. If one "chops" a girl, you engage in penetrative sex with her.

Women are also the mechanism of actualizing manhood, symbolized by "having yutes" or producing offspring. Parry (2000) notes that secondary proof of manhood is denoted by the number of children a man can produce, either inside or outside a committed relationship. The following narrative shows this line of thinking among the WHBs:

[Conversation with a group of boys at a jerk project session]

Dean: *Sir, yuh have no yute* [Sir, do you have any children?]
KW: *Mi no ha no yute* [I don't have any children].
Dean (partially surprised): *Whammek*? [Why not?]
KW: *Mi no really waa no pickney.* [I'm not really interested in having children]
Keith: *Sir! A kill yuh a kill out the human race inno Sir".* [Sir! Yuh are going to kill out the human race.]
KW: *Yuh know hummuch fi tek care a pickney* [Do you know how much it costs to raise children?]
Keith: *Yeh. But yuh need a yute Sir. Yuh betta hurry up aa find waa ooman and breed har.* [Yes. But you need a child, Sir. You had better hurry and find a woman and get her pregnant]

Bob chimed in, changing the subject slightly. He added that his stepmother sometimes gets too "*brite* [impertinent/testy]," and he has to "*dis* [disrespect]" her. Dean jumped in, adding, "*My stepmadda cyaa ramp wid mi* [My stepmother cannot challenge me]."

These narratives indicate the complexity of the relations between boys and females. The boys desire women as nurturers, natural companions, and enablers of manhood. However, the narratives also demonstrate the objectification of, and disregard for, girls/women who violate them or whom they do not consider treasured, stepmothers included.

5.3.1.3 Guns

Guns, a euphemism for fearlessness, bravado, and violence, are third on the boys' list of desirables. Inspired by the Jamaican dancehall, talk of shooting, killing, maiming, and obliterating the opponent has become a feature of everyday discourse among the boys. Such talk is also common among the general student population.

"Extreme" bad boys seldom get into physical fights, perhaps owing to the power of their fearless image, which they incessantly promulgate. The availability of violence-riddled dancehall lyrics, which are recited in intricate details by many of West Hill High's students,

boosts the building of this image. The following is an excerpt from a popular dancehall tune (translated to English for brevity):

Fire the 357 [gun] and splash him all over the place

Head over there, mutilated foot on the ground, wiggling and shaking

Nowhere to turn to, nowhere to run to

Throw a tire on you, pour gas [over you], light it, and burn you

The boys also spoke of their indulgence in violence and bravado:

[Conversation with Marlon at the jerk chicken project]

> Marlon: *Di principal waa sen mi go a Midlands High but mi nuh waa go a school so near to mi yaad caw if a boy diss mi mi juss run go a mi yaad fi mi ting an buss y … Tideh waa nine grade bwoy gwaan like him waa dis man. Mi run him dung aa bax him inna him face.* [The principal wants to transfer me to Midlands High[14] but I would prefer not going to school so close to my house because if someone disrespects me, I will just run home for my thing [gun] and fire it … Today, a ninth-grade boy tried to insult me. I chased him and slapped him on his face]

Marlon often talks about conflicts with his peers, even though I have never witnessed him fighting. His close friends Billy, Paul, and Leo follow suit. Interestingly, they project their bravado even toward their seniors, which is valiant and fearsome. For example, Paul threatened a 10th-grade boy while working on the jerk chicken pan at the automotive and welding lab. The senior who was assisting the jerk chicken project, owing to the boys' lack of experience with welding, got into an argument with Paul.

[Paul in conflict with a senior]

> Senior: *A waapen to da likkle boy yah. My yute move fraa yasso* [What is wrong with this little boy. Get away from here, boy!]
> Paul: *Battybwoy, cooa move mi. A wah yuh feel seh. Mi no fraid a yuh pussy!* [Why don't you try removing me, faggot! What are you thinking? I'm not afraid of you, pussy!]
> Senior: *Yute…y betta u easy yuhself caa yuh not even know what yuh a do. Unnu likkle bwoy love hype.* [Boy, you'd be better off toning it down because you don't even know what you are doing (endangering yourself). You little bwoys like to hype]

[14] *Midlands High* is a pseudonym

> Paul: *Yuh why try somen. Memba she yuh haffi leff school inno. Bet yuh cyaa hype pon mi when a di whole a wi. Buss yuh face man.* [Do you want to try something? Remember that you have to leave school. I bet you wouldn't try to insult me when I'm with my friends. I will bust your face.]

There are numerous scenes like the one above at West Hill High daily. A lot of the posturing is in jest between close friends. However, it often erupts into physical violence, which manifests as fist fights daily–often multiple times a day. Most of the boys say they are afraid of nothing. Some feel that they are strong enough and well-connected enough (supported by their "bad" friends and family members), so they do not need to worry. I saw some cracks in this "bullet-proof" posture when Paul got emotional after I asked about his father, whom he is forced to live without. However, the fearless, steel-plated image is the default. This performance of fearless masculinity among the boys reminded me of Gooch's (2019) description of juvenile inmates. These juveniles maintained a fearless reputation, which "separates the men from the boys" and leaves "no doubt that the individual concerned could employ violence competently, and tangibly manage the threatening, risky … environment" (p. 10). She notes that for these young inmates, failing in this task meant being labeled a "vulnerable, weak 'boy' and, ultimately, a victim" (p. 10). While the setting of Gooch's study was different (prison versus school), the performative nature of the fearless image was strikingly similar.

For the extreme boys, guns represent more than an ideology. Marlon, for example, has been involved in and exposed to gang influences, physical violence, vandalism, theft and robbery, and shooting. Teachers verified his exposure to crime, which I partially corroborated through my post-fieldwork online interactions with him. He often posts images of himself with large bundles of cash, drugs, alcohol, images of guns, and deviant rhetoric.

Initially, the boys resisted my probes about their offending. They gave responses such as "*nuh worry yuhself man* [Do not concern yourself with that," or "*jus cool nuh man* [Let it be]." Closer to the end of my data collection, they seemed genuinely willing to allow me to join them

in the bushes where they meet and "practice" delinquent behaviors. I never accepted their offers for ethical reasons. However, I got a taste of what happens in the bushes at the jerk day practice, as described below.

The boys also have seniors from higher grades who "coach" them. However, I could not get close to these seniors because of the warnings from the school not to. However, as a part of the jerk chicken project, I worked closely with 10th and 11th-grade boys. Thus, I witnessed the relationship and interactions between the boys and their seniors, which depicted a mixture of admiration and disdain. They are fearless toward seniors who insult or try to subjugate them, but they are friendly with seniors who treat them as equals and respect them. Respect means not calling them "little boys" or chasing them away. The following narrative shows the boys' interactions with seniors:

> ***[At the practice session for the Jerk Day]***
>
> Marlon and Billy left briefly to buy marijuana. They returned with two seniors. They all sat on the fringes enjoying their "weed" and conversation while the other boys prepared the grill and chicken. Marlon attended to the chicken only twice, spending most of the time with his seniors, who kept their distance from the grill. After the chicken was ready, the following exchange occurred:
>
> > Marlon: *Yow, mi aggo waa some fi mi niggas inno* [Hey, I also need some chicken for my friends]
> > KW: *Memba seh di teacher dem haffi get inno so if dem deh man deh get, none naago leff* [Remember we have to reserve some chicken for the teachers so if those guys get there won't be enough].
> > Marlon: *How yuh mean? Yuh cyaa dis di man dem…*[What are you saying? You shouldn't disrespect them]
> > KW: *Mi nah diss dem but the chikin nuh enough* [I'm not disrespecting them but the chicken isn't enough]
> > Marlon: *Yow, di general dem haffi eat a food inno…a dat mi a pree!* [I don't care, they have to get some]

The narratives demonstrate pleasant and unpleasant interactions among the boys and their peers, with Marlon insisting on us not "disrespecting" his senior by excluding him from the activities, even though he was not a part of the group and had not contributed to the project. On the contrary, Paul, triggered by the belittling use of "little boy" toward him, uses the power of

his peer group's ruthless image to exert pressure on his senior peers. This helped him stave off possible victimization and boost his image, even though he was alone.

5.3.2 Lifestyle and Vices

5.3.2.1 Skipping and Snatching

Truancy is a crucial part of the boys' navigation of schooling. It is a primary predictor of delinquent behavior as it disrupts the students' connection to academic culture (Singleton, 2011). Truancy at West Hill High is two-fold. The first pattern involves attending school but skipping some or all classes. The other form is skipping school altogether. Truancy is also associated with teachers "kicking" students out of class or banning them from lessons, leaving them to roam around unsupervised. Among the WHBs, most acts of truancy were spontaneous and varied. Truancy was more frequent among the boys in lower-stream classes, but even there, it was not uniform. Paul, for instance, was always present when it mattered most—for morning and afternoon registration. However, he would escape class and roam the corridors with his friends in between. Leo and Marlon were always on the corridors, often claiming that teachers refused to "let them into" classes. Otis, Arnold, Ian, and Randy (also from the lower streams) were almost always in class except when a teacher was absent, in which case, most students roamed the corridors. The boys in higher streams skip classes less often but are sometimes disruptive and problematic for teachers. Chris, Sheldon, and Jason were often guilty of that. Joseph, Bob, and Keith occasionally skip the classes of teachers they dislike. These teachers, they claim, are the "strict" ones who too aggressively enforce school rules and insist on punishing them (see accounts of this in Chapter Six). They were also intolerant of teachers who did not have a sense of humor and would not allow them to "have fun." They also dislike teachers they consider incompetent (see narratives of Dean in Chapter Six).

Roaming the corridors is the most common thing to do when not in class. Boys occasionally congregate in empty classrooms or jump the fence and head to the bushes to smoke and drink. Chasing and molesting girls is also an everyday pastime activity:

> ***[Girls Snatching]***
>
> A group of boys is loitering on the corridors and in a nearby empty classroom. The boys were touting the girls that passed by, occasionally groping them. The girls screamed in contempt, but seemingly playfully, as soon after they ran off, they would return to where the boys were. Leo and Billy desperately tried to lure a particular girl into the nearby empty classroom. They plotted together as I covertly roamed the area. Paul came along and started whispering in one of his friend's ears. They then ran off together. After some time, a student said, "*Sir, look wha dem a do to the girl inna the class* [Sir, look what they are doing to the girl in the classroom]." The classroom door was shut, and a student was guarding it. I pushed the door and entered. About four boys, including Leo and Billy, were restraining the girl. I could not tell where they were touching her, but she laughed and squirmed.

Compared to sitting diligently in class, snatching girls is fun for the boys and one of their favorite truancy-related activities. Of course, the degree to which the boys participated in girls snatching is not uniform but varies in degree and intensity. Nevertheless, to some degree, most (except Chris, Sheldon, Neil, and Jason) engaged in this activity.

5.3.2.2 Smoking and Drinking

Smoking and drinking alcohol are common among the "extreme" boys, although several other boys have admitted to experimenting with smoking and drinking. Ganga, more commonly referred to as "weed" in Jamaica, is the preferred choice of smokes for the boys and is another of the 'Gs' in Hope's schema of masculinity in dancehall culture.

Most boys participated in discourses about weed smoking but were not actively involved in the practice based on my observations and checks with their teachers and parents. However, Paul, Billy, and Marlon were involved in habitual marijuana smoking, which occurred in my presence once. In addition, they occasionally posted images of them smoking and drinking on

social media. The boys are often unapologetic about their drug use, echoing popular dancehall narratives of its therapeutic effects:

[In an HFLE class about drug abuse]

In leading the discussion about the effects of drugs on the body, Ms. Norris added that ganja damages the brain.

> Otis: *A Craven-A and Matterhorn [local cigarette brands] do dat, weed mek yuh hol' a medz* [Craven-A and Matterhorn do that, but ganja makes you meditate]

This seemed to be a popular viewpoint at West Hill High. Ms. Norris gave several interesting stories. The students continued to offer their opinions and feedback, sometimes giving examples of people in their families or friend networks to whom the teacher's remarks applied. For example, Ms. Norris noted that people eat much more than usual after smoking.

> Male student: *Dat happen to me, Miss. Waa time mi cousin eat off all a mi food after him smoke* [I had that experience. My cousin once ate all my food after smoking].

The stories continued and there were shouts of "*a true, Miss* [that's true, Miss]", or "*a my father dat* [My father does that]," and so on.

I approached Marlon, Billy, and Paul to remind them that we were meeting after school to prepare chicken for the jerk chicken project. However, Marlon had other plans:

[Chat with Billy and Marlon about the jerk chicken project]

> Billy: *Sir, after school we haffi run go ketchy bus so we cyaa come tideh* [Sir, we can't participate today because we have to hurry to catch the bus]
> Marlon: *Sir, yuh no know seh after school a fi smoke weed.* [Sir, don't you know that after school is for smoking ganja]

Roy is also a habitual weed smoker. He came back to school after a long absence.

> KW: *Yow! Y pree yute! How long minno see yuh…*[Hey! What's up? Long time no see]
> Roy: *Fi real man. A jail mi did deh. Police ketch mi wid weed and mi haffi spen two night inna jail. Dem all sen mi go get drug test and dem aggo test mi agen two week fraa now so yow mi cyaa touch no week fi 2 weeks.* [That's true. I was in jail. The police caught me with ganja and took me to jail. I was even sent to do a drug test and I will be tested again in two weeks, so I have to refrain from ganja for two weeks]

Smoking weed was also touted a symbol of maturity or "growing up". After an argument with Patricia[15], Ian grabbed his chair and sat by a wall looking out the window. A male classmate began to tease him saying "*Watch him, a beer bawl him*

[15] *Patricia* is a pseudonym

bawl lakka gyal..Bwoy yuh fi grow up and bun soua weed [Look at him crying like a little girl. You should grow up and smoke some weed].

Drinking is another activity that many boys engage in or profess to have engaged in. Some boys even admitted to drinking alcohol from a tender age. In Jamaica, it is not uncommon for youngsters to "taste" alcohol offered by a parent or adult household member. For example, as a youngster, my dad would allow me to "try" an alcoholic beverage that he was having. However, it is not normal for youngsters to drink liquor (especially hard liquors like rum) regularly, and it is also unusual for them to procure it themselves.

The boys often asked me for money to buy rum and marijuana. Interestingly, they never asked me to buy it for them, so they have no issue procuring these products. It is illegal to sell drugs and alcohol to persons under 18, but the boys seem to have their "sources." They never told me who sells it to them, but I know some adults sell these drugs "under the table." Separate from the numerous second-hand accounts I obtained from the boys, I encountered students indulging in drinking and smoking, twice.

5.3.2.3 Flassing

Flassing is another aspect of the boys' lifestyle. Flassing involves "showing off" or "bragging" openly about procuring and indulging in "restricted" items such as alcohol and marijuana. While flassing involves smoking and drinking, it is just as concerned with the "performance" of the targeting activity and not just the activities themselves. Flassing conjures up images of wealth, power, and maturity and adds to the boys' "swag." Another term that captures the idea is "hype," a kind of desired cockiness. Flassing is the ultimate self-promotion activity and requires looking and acting the part, which necessitates eye-catching attire and wanton spending. Boys especially liked to discuss "flassing," which is affiliated with images of masculinity that require men to pay for women's drinks and to dole out cash to keep women comfortable. Since optics are an essential tenet of flassing, the wearing of branded shoes,

carrying of fashionable (atypical) school bags (or branded bags), and the brandishing of cell phones (which are restricted at school) are standard features. However, since flassing is the "act" of bragging, it is sometimes difficult to do at school. Therefore, instead of the actual acts, talk about flassing often suffices. Before the school's annual fun day, the only insight I had into the students' flassing habits (outside of the limited flassing they can do at school) was from their stories of attending adult dances in their communities where they would drink, smoke weed, and enjoy themselves. I got to see this firsthand at the annual fun day:

> ***[Fun day]***
>
> Students were walking around with beer bottles in hand, glittery branded clothing, and heavy jewelry and were quick to spend money. Dean looked fashionable–dressed in white sneakers and a branded shirt. He had a beer bottle in his hand, from which he occasionally sipped. There was little hesitancy to make purchases. They asked the price and paid right away. This readiness to spend differed from the economic conservatism they often displayed at school.
>
> The "disco room" was where the real flassing was occurring. There was a professional DJ, and admission was limited to "paying students only." The rate was $100 per 30 minutes. Teachers kept mental notes of students and would go in occasionally to remove those whose time had expired or collect the extension fee.
>
> The disco room was energetic. The students were dancing wildly, performing acrobatic stunts, and gyrating to the sounds of hardcore dancehall. When the DJ played popular songs, students sang the lyrics word for word, on the beat, while dancing. At the back, a few students were drinking, and others were smoking. As it got dark outside, more students flocked to the room. There were even two "plain-clothes" police officers sitting across from the disco room to ensure security.
>
> On one occasion, I saw a 7th grader smoking marijuana and dancing with a skimpily dressed older and larger-bodied female. Many usually quiet girls were dancing wildly, smoking and drinking. Ringo [school staff] was around selling lighters and smokes. Teachers would occasionally walk in to sell water or to collect for overstaying. Ms. Jennings came next to me and began pointing out how shocked she was to see what was

> happening. She expressed surprise at some students, saying how different they were from their usual selves.
>
> The students were having a great time. They were dancing, screaming, and laughing. They took *selfies* and turned on their camera lights to "walk into the video light," a distinctive trait of the Jamaican dancehall.

The fun day narrative shows how students perform sexuality as expressed in their subcultural backgrounds. Flassing seems to be a crucial way that students, particularly boys, construct their sense of worth, appeal, and sexuality. Girls were expected to dress skimpily and dance wildly, embracing the video light, while boys were expected to spend unsparingly, drink, smoke, treat the girls, and dance erotically with them. Many of the boys saved for months to have enough money to flass at the fun day, which probably meant denying themselves things like lunch or school supplies. However, it was all worth it when they got the chance to flass.

Nonetheless, *flassing* encompasses many delinquent activities and status offenses, such as smoking, drinking, and indulgence in highly sexualized and risky behaviors, which, by middle-class standards, are unbecoming of adults, let alone teens. That this was also occurring at a public education institution under the supervision of school staff and law enforcement officers might be even more perplexing from a normative standpoint. I asked Mr. Whitmore, a teacher, why teachers allowed such behavior at school. He noted that students participate in similar activities and behaviors in their communities. Therefore, by allowing these behaviors at a school fun day, teachers can probe aspects of students' socialization that are inaccessible through regular classroom interactions. This demonstrates the complexity of delinquency and its intersection with class and culture, indicating that delinquency is neither static nor absolute, but highly contextual.

5.3.3 Macho-metrosexuality

As mentioned, Caribbean masculinity is often characterized by a "rough and tough" profile that is deeply estranged from ideas of femininity and intolerant of non-heteronormative images. Moreover, Jamaican men from rural and urban settings construct their masculine identities around homophobic ideals (James & Davis, 2014). However, this bulletproof image has undergone a transformation over the last two decades that has resulted in incremental gendered shifts in Jamaica's rigidly guarded masculine terrain (Hope, 2009). These shifts seem conspicuous among the urban youth of the dancehall, which still ardently subscribes to notions of homophobia and anti-gayness (Chapman et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the contemporary image of males in the dancehall is preoccupied with flamboyance and male cosmetics, a notably feminized aesthetic reflected among many WHBs.

The paradox is glaring. Skin bleaching, shaved eyebrows, attention to hairstyles and "neatness," and tight-fitting clothes are prominent among the bravado and rigid heterosexual image, signaling the evolution of the ideal male aesthetic toward what I call *macho-metrosexuality (MMS)***.** MMS involves a set of standards for physical appearance, which are best described as androgynous. Most WHBs embraced MMS, often euphemizing its stereotypically "feminine" traits with the phrase "neat look."

Skin bleaching is another element of MMS. Jamaica's colonial history has enduring effects on notions of Blackness, status, class, and prestige. Therefore, colorism, or more appropriately, shadism, still features prominently in the consciousness of the Jamaican. From the subconscious pairing of "black" with "ugly" to the love for "browning[16]," shades have always been a feature of discourses on beauty standards in Jamaica. Accordingly, skin-lightening or "bleaching," as it is called in Jamaica, is widely practiced, particularly among

[16] Used to refer to black Jamaicans with light skin

working-class Jamaicans who associate a lighter complexion with an elevated social standing (Charles, 2009).

Traditionally, bleaching was associated with the uneducated urban female, purportedly suffering from low self-esteem and ideals of whiteness (Hope, 2009), but has since transcended gender boundaries, notably popularized by Jamaica's most prominent dancehall artiste (male), Vybz Kartel. Despite this, a subset of the population continues to view skin bleaching negatively. Altink (2020) and members of the Rastafari community in Jamaica, for instance, describe skin bleaching as a practice associated with self-hatred and attempts to negate Blackness. However, more progressive interpretations see it as a stylized aesthetic that is befitting of dancehall culture and lifestyle. Hope (2009) is of the latter view, describing skin bleaching as a fashionable self-transformation that gives prominence, magnificence, and visibility to dancehall's most fabulous.

Given the embeddedness of dancehall culture among urban youth, the inevitable permeation of this trend into schools has set the stage for conflicts between schooling's orthodox values and its students from subcultural backgrounds. It is indeed curious that dancehall's hallmark "look" and its accompanying paraphernalia, such as fake eyelashes and hair extensions (among women), mirrors Eurocentric beauty standards among a predominantly black population. However, it is equally damning that despite the ubiquity and subcultural embeddedness of skin bleaching, it remains a cardinal sin in schools, resulting in the denial of schooling through punishment and suspension.

Among the West Hill boys, Marlon, Leo, Paul, and James are obvious bleachers. James has been suspended several times for bleaching, and Paul has been subject to disciplinary hearings. Leo had already stopped bleaching at the time of the fieldwork but was sorry that he was forced to stop, as the following narrative shows:

[Conversation with Leo about bleaching]

Leo: *A chue di teacher dem force mi fi stop bleach inno. You yuh shoulda see mi…mi did almost tun white man* [It's because the teachers forced me to quit. I wish you could have seen me. I was almost like a white man]
KW: *Minno understand dis bleaching ting* [I don't understand this bleaching thing]
Leo: *Dat di gyal dem like inno paarie* [That's what the girls like, my friend]
KW: *So yuh aggo mashup yuh skin just fi get more gal? Yunno fraida di chemical inna dem cream deh?* [So, are you going to destroy your skin just to get more girls? Aren't you afraid of the chemicals in the bleaching creams?]
Leo: *No man…mi nah bleach yah now … Mi havvy picture dem pon mi fone, dawg. Mi aggo show yuh dem. Yow mi did white inno man…* [Well, I am not bleaching anymore … I have pictures on my phone. I am going to show them to you. I was so white!]

Marlon was not bleaching at the time of my fieldwork but began doing so after. I noticed the change in his appearance from his social media posts and asked him about it:

[Conversation with Marlon via WhatsApp]

KW: *Mi notice seh yuh tun white man. Wha dat bout?* [I realized that you became a white man]
Marlon: *Hmm so eh cum done man u know how y cum done aready.… fi di gyal dem* [It is what it is.… All for the girls]

The previous narratives suggest girls prefer lighter skin boys, which is the West Hill Boys' primary rationale for skin bleaching. Bleaching causes disciplinary headaches for school administrators, who must process detentions and suspensions and arrange consultations with parents and guardians. However, some argue that the infraction does not warrant denying a student the right to schooling, even temporarily. Nelson (2019) shares an excerpt from a letter sent by a Jamaican high school principal to a parent of a bleaching male child. The letter requests the parent to provide a medical report from a doctor as proof of a medical condition that causes lighter skin or have the child remain home until their original complexion returns. Nelson argues that punishing students in such a matter infringes on their individual liberties and right to privacy. Moreover, it runs contrary to norms in the students' milieu, where bleaching is often normal, encouraged, and void of judgment (Nelson, 2019). Therefore, we must be careful not to view skin bleaching in schools in isolation from the broader societal context and

the subliminal messages it carries. Leo's gleeful mention of coming close to the image of a "white man," for instance, offers insights into dark-skinned Jamaicans' insecurities regarding their race and skin shades.

Dancehall culture also tacitly justifies skin bleaching. It is undeniable that the Jamaican dancehall is a rapidly transforming cultural space where trends emerge and dissipate often. However, that bleaching has persisted for decades and has permeated the image of urban masculinity suggests bleaching is more than a fad, as Hope (2009) suggests. Instead, bleaching is tied up in working-class conceptions of black personhood and dignity, which have traditionally been contested, especially among the Jamaican underclass, as discussed later.

The wearing of close-fitting pants (tight pants) is another component of MMS. Most boys at West Hill High wore tight-fitting pants, and the 13 West Hill boys were no exception. Like skin bleaching, wearing skin-fitting pants was confined to the female realm and was traditionally associated with male homosexuality. Among the boys, Joseph is the most devoted to wearing tight pants, which he hand stitches to make them tighter. He even mentioned needing plastic bags over his feet to get in and out of the pants. The boys like to complement their tight pants with well-cleaned expensive name-brand shoes. The preferred brands are Clarks and Kickers, which cost between $15,000 and $20,000 a pair.

MMS also emphasizes grooming. Boys often carry colognes to school, combs for their hair, and shoe polish for their Clarks. Looking "neat" is very important, and they work diligently to achieve it. The boys insist that their efforts are all in service of gaining popularity with girls:

> ***[Discussion about Clarks at the end of PE Class]***
>
> Ian and Randy were almost done getting dressed, and their attention was on their shoes. About seven classmates were standing by, including Patricia and Stacey-Anne, with whom the boys are friendly. Randy was already "polishing" his shoes with powdered polish. I asked what it was. He said it was tire dust. Ian said a friend made it for him by

burning old tires and collecting the remains. Randy was pleased with the finished look of his shoes and sought my attention:

> Randy: *Yuh see dem style yah. Mi get the whola di girl dem. Yuh see when mi walk ponni block, yuh waa see all Patricia….mi haffi seh easy* [Can you see my style? (With this) I will get all the girls. When I walk on the block, even Patricia (will get drawn to me) …I'll have to tell her to calm down]

It was Ian's turn to blacken his shoes. Using a brush he borrowed from an 11th-grader, who was waiting nearby for it, he carefully manicured his Clarks until they were completely black. He bragged about how crisp his shoes looked and engaged a student nearby:

> Ian: *All dem man yah noh know nuttn bout Clarks inno* [Boys like these know nothing about Clarks]
> Student: *A two Clarks mi have, waa black Clarks and waa brown Clarks* [I have two Clarks, a black one and a brown one].

I asked about the "Clarks craze," and the students gave me the details. Ian said he had been wearing Clarks since the 6th grade. He said he would wear a "bank robber Clarks" in 9th grade. I inquired about the cost of a pair of Clarks. "$15500 upwards," Ian replied. "What!" I exclaimed in surprise. "Dat cheap [That is cheap]," another male student added before Ian began listing the prices of different Clarks, including the "Kickers," which retails for $25000, according to Ian.

Wearing Clarks is a status symbol and sign of stardom. It is a simple way to acquire fame and female attention or the perception of having female attention.

> Student: *Sir, dem bwoy yah a star inno, all weh a gwaan dem no kno seh di bwoy have two girl … Dem bwoy yah a live lavish inno* [Sir, boys like these are stars, you know. Despite all this chatter, people don't even know that he has two girls … These boys are living lavishly]

The previous narratives described the boys' navigation of culture, sexuality, masculinity, and gender through the lens of the contemporary Jamaican dancehall. They demonstrate how the boys practice self-transformation and what I call macho-metrosexuality and offer insights into why they do. In exploring the "why," two factors stand out. First is the abundance of macho-metrosexual themes throughout the Jamaican dancehall, which has liberalized the boundaries of Jamaican masculinity to include previously tabooed and gendered norms. Second is the salience of female appeasement to Jamaican masculinity and male self-esteem. It is puzzling that Jamaican urban masculinity, which is notoriously heteronormative and even

violently homophobic, could embrace gendered norms as key features of its image. When I was a high schooler in Jamaica (some 20 years ago), these practices were non-existent. For example, boys were teased for wearing non-pleated (baggy) pants or an earring on the right earlobe. However, a shift has occurred in two decades, and a new metrosexual image is now commonplace. While this study emphasized these trends in a low-achieving school with many students from urban backgrounds, this is not unique to low-achievers. It is more accurately a reform of Jamaican masculinity that sweeps the spectrum of manhood among youth. Nevertheless, in the face of this cultural change, traditional schooling, which is expressly inclusive and pluralistic (which implies progressiveness) continues to struggle with recognizing this cultural shift, perhaps because of its origin in non-dominant subcultural circles.

In sum, this explained the importance of showcasing physical prowess and appearance and its connectedness with sexuality and masculinity. The section also highlighted the overlap of the WHBs' lifestyles with the dominant themes emanating from Jamaica's urban popular culture scene, the dancehall. I showed the boys' tendency to be truant, to smoke and drink, or at least to brag about doing so and to project an image of sufficiency and the ability to live lavishly. The literature supports these tendencies and their connection to dominant notions of masculinity, highlighting the gendered nature of risk-taking and males' higher propensity for aggressive, risky behavior (Barberet et al., 2004; Gutierrez & Shoemaker, 2008). I also explained the prominence of MMS, a contemporary face of the urban Jamaican man, which reflects a tempering of the standards that define Jamaican masculinity. It also signals the boys' disengagement with the core activities of schooling, which have been usurped by more exciting prospects, like gaining female attention.

The boys' lifestyles highlight the profound influence of Jamaica's dancehall culture on urban youth, signaling the complexity of sexuality, gender, and masculinity and how they

transcend class and structure. The importance of boys' image and its connection to a perceived attractiveness to females is perhaps a key takeaway. These perspectives contrast the often-highlighted embeddedness of patriarchy within Jamaican masculinity, and the notion that the unequal power men wield constricts women's agency and autonomy (Brown, 1999). Arguably, contemporary Jamaican masculinity allows women some level of control, even symbolically, over men, as demonstrated by the power schoolgirls have over the image of urban schoolboys, which boys are eager to achieve even through defying the status quo. It also compels us to examine the extent to which subcultural cues and modes of self-expression can be interpreted as a form of resistance to dominant values. It seems more appropriate that the boys' actions pay homage to Jamaican urban masculinity and are merely delinquent to the extent that middle-class standards prohibit them.

5.4 Goals and Dreams

Contrary to the expectation that the West Hill Boys would favor deviant careers, their expressions about their future dreams were rather normative. Chris and Otis want to be in the army (soldiers) because, according to them, they want to shoot "bad" people and help "good" people. Dean wants to be an architect. Four of the boys want to be entrepreneurs. Billy wants to be a wholesale supermarket owner, succeeding his father, who is already in that line of work. Marlon also wants to be a "businessman," establishing several businesses ranging from music production to merchandising. Leo and Keith want to start food service businesses. Leo said he wants to establish a "cookshop" to demonstrate his culinary skills. The boys seem to believe that owning a business means "no one will mess with them," "they will gain respect from others," and "they can make a lot of money." Marlon mentioned that businessmen own nice cars and houses and have guns to protect themselves. Even after mentioning that it is difficult to start a

business (because of the capital required), they insisted they could make it in business. When I asked how they plan to get money for their businesses, "scamming" was a popular answer.

Other boys seemed unsure about their future dreams, which is typical of youth their age. For those undecided boys, when asked what they plan to do after leaving school, a typical response was "work." Bob joked about becoming a scammer.

[Talk about scamming]

> The boys conveyed stories of friends and family members that are scammers. Roy noted that it is difficult to quit scamming once you start receiving the money, suggesting it is addictive. I inquired about the wave of violence attributed to scamming and the murders of scammers by their associates. The boys explained that murders occur when people scam in teams, but scamming alone can be just as profitable, with little or no risk of being murdered. Sam mentioned buying a gun to ward off danger. Another student wearing two rings explained that one ring, a guard ring, is for protection from dangers associated with scamming (voodoo-related practice).

I was particularly struck by the view of businessmen as well-respected and able to protect themselves using guns and money. This provides a window into some of the boys' inner fears. Equally striking is the normativity of their future goals, which suggests resonance with capitalist conceptions of success, and an awareness of the "approved paths" to success. In fact, both Billy and Marlon highlighted the importance of certification and continued education prior to them leaving school. Marlon quit school in 2019 and Billy was expelled in 2020. Even after leaving school, they maintained a desire for vocational training:

[Conversation with Marlon via WhatsApp]

> KW: So what is your plan [for the future]?
> Marlon: *Mi aggo go pon a HEART aaa study electrical and foods. Yuh see y pree. No joke about it. See if mi cyaa get wanna di cerfiticket same way.… Caa yuh seet yah now, if mi get the cerfiticket, mi cyaa go wok ponni ship yuh zimi aa go tun all chef ponni ship. Dem mi cyaa go overseas.… No joke. Electrical a still mi waa it same way yuh zimi … and di banga dem still out same way.* [I plan to go to HEART vocational school to study electrical engineering and food and beverage management. Do you see my idea? I'm serious. I want to get a certificate.… If I get a certificate, I can get a job on a ship and even become a chef on the ship. Then, I can go overseas.… No joke. I also want to get an electrical engineering certificate. And of course, I still have options in the street.]

[Conversation with Billy via WhatsApp]

> KW: *How di HEART ting a go? Or yuh dash weh dat?* [How is your HEART vocational school application going? Or you have changed your mind?]
> Billy: *No sah! Yuh mad man? Mi haffi go back a school* [No way! Are you crazy? I must go back to school]

As previously mentioned, these students are at the bottom of the pile academically, and the souring of their schooling experiences makes it even more improbable that they can enter traditional professional career paths. That must be a sad realization for Dean, who noted that he would like to give back to the school when he becomes an architect. A recent conversation with Dean revealed that he will sit four CSEC subjects in his final school year. He plans to attend another school to prepare to sit additional subjects as most career paths require at least five CSEC subjects, including Mathematics and English Language. Billy's juxtaposition of a desire to pursue remedial education and having options in the street shows how the appetite for deviance intensifies as students move further away from immersion in school. He has already dropped out of high school but seemed willing to give the "conformist route" another shot while keeping "criminality" as a backup. This ties into the point I make later that delinquent values solidify as the boys move away from schooling.

Another point is how the boys' vision of their journeys to professional success blurs the lines separating legitimate paths and innovative paths, including criminal activity. Their plan to use criminal proceeds to establish "legitimate" businesses signals a complexity and fluidity of values and morality surrounding legitimate and illegitimate means to success. Their preferred method, the lottery scam, has become a bloody affair in recent years. Many of its participants (usually young males) were killed by their scamming partners, family members, and even the police (Blake, 2018; Radio Jamaica, 2009). In addition, the United States government has been cracking down on scammers, and several Jamaicans have been extradited to the US for trial

since 2017 (US Department of State, 2022). However, the boys believe they can somehow succeed at scamming and use this success to chart more conformist entrepreneurial paths.

However, the central theme is the importance of money to the boys, a common trait among Jamaican men corroborated by previous studies (Chevannes, 2002; Hope, 2006). This focus on money aligns with the hunter-gatherer, breadwinner ideal that frames Jamaican manhood, as discussed in Chapter Two.

5.5 The Nemeses: Good boys, Bright boys (Nerds), and *Likkle bwoys*

This chapter describes the West Hill Boys as the rulers of the Courtyard, who occupy the top tier of that space's social hierarchy and power structure. However, other groups share and often wrestle for recognition within the space. Willis' *Hammertown* study described the *ear'oles* as the *lads'* archrivals, who embodied different values, behaviors, and power compared to the lads. I have added more nuance to Willis' characterization to capture subtle differences that characterize the West Hill Boys' nemeses. Thus, I describe three categories of boys that are rivals to the WHBs: good boys, bright boys, and *likkle bwoys*.

5.5.1 The 'Good Boy'

The "good boy" is the student that teachers love. He studies hard even if he is not "bright" and follows his teachers' requests ardently. Good boys never skip classes; they bring all their books to school and use them in class; they do their homework or attempt to, and they speak "properly," that is, Standard English or the closest they can get to it. A good boy is a student that teachers can rely on for the truth about an incident like a fight. Good boys do not initiate fights and likely back away if challenged to one. They also do not violate the dress code; they do not wear tight-fitting pants or handkerchiefs tied around their heads. A good boy's shoes and bag are likely not branded, and he does not wear jewelry. For his diligence, he gets to take the

names of "talkers" or "troublemakers" when the teacher is away from class, and of course, he gets the label of "good boy." He is likely to be a class monitor and is expected to contend for head boy if he also is academically brilliant. However, at West Hill High, good boys are unpopular. The following is an exchange with a student about the head boy, who is typically the ultimate good boy:

[Exchange about the WHH head boy]

> Student: *A battyman*[17] *dat. Nobody cyaa tell mi nuttn. Man a fuck him* [He's gay. Nobody can convince me otherwise. Men are having sex with him.]

This sentiment mirrors that of one of Ms. Cameron's students who told her he does not want to sound like a "faggot," so he does not speak Standard English.

The "good boy" label conflicts with hegemonic perceptions of masculinity. Good boys' sexuality and masculinity are constantly being questioned, and their status comes with the risk of being labeled a *battyman*, which is the ultimate social disgrace for a Jamaican man. In fact, prominent Jamaican broadcaster, the late Ian Boyne, once characterized being gay as the only real crime in Jamaica. Therefore, it may be difficult for boys from subcultural backgrounds to reconcile the good boy label with their values and realities. Here another of Hope's 'Gs'—Gays, is exemplified.

Jamaican hegemonic masculinity, or "toxic masculinity," as Ivey (2020) calls it, encourages men to be rough and tough. This form of manhood extols violence, intimidation, and machismo and has been blamed for recent increases in violence (Loop Jamaica, 2020).

The expectation of an exaggerated masculine demeanor also applies to male teachers, which can make non-conformist male teachers the target of student ridicule. Students consider

[17] Battyman is the local term for gay or effeminate men. Being gay is considered a cardinal sin in Jamaica, which is extremely homophobic.

well-dressed, well-mannered, soft-spoken, and or even well-spoken (articulate) male teachers to be *battyman*.

Moreover, besides the masculinity issue, many boys do not perceive themselves as capable of fulfilling the good boy label because of their academic deficiency. Good boys are usually bright or trying to be bright, which is a futile fight for some students. Rick sums it up by saying, "Anno all a wi aggo brite [Not all of us will be bright]." This sentiment is often accompanied by a diminished sense of ability and an unwillingness to embrace academic excellence lest it is perceived as unmasculine. Therefore, repurposing schooling experiences as an outlet for entertainment is very common. This is like Willis' lads, who spared no moment to have a "*laff* [laugh]" often at the expense of the "*ear'oles*," or the "good boys" in the WHH case

5.5.2 The 'Bright Boy'

The "bright boy" is usually a good boy who also excels academically. He is usually in the first stream of the grade (class with the "smartest" students), he is usually good at most, if not all, subjects, and he usually places in the top ten rankings of academic ability in his class. In addition, he is usually a good orator who can speak good enough English. Therefore, he is usually one of the first picks to represent the school to outsiders. Since bright boys are usually "good boys," their popularity is usually low. However, some bright boys are liked by girls. Since attention from girls is one way to affirm one's worth, bright boys have a distinct advantage. However, being bright alone is usually not enough to impress girls. Therefore, bright boys who hope to attract girls must learn to accentuate their smarts with a sense of style or "swag."

Keith is one of the 13 West Hill boys. He placed first in his class and was known as one of the brightest boys in the grade. This brought him much fame (among girls) and notoriety

among his male peers, who labeled him a nerd. He loves the attention he gets from girls as it helps to dilute his "nerd" image. However, he works hard to project a "non-good boy" image, even though he is committed to studying and excelling academically.

[In a discussion with Keith about going to college]

KW: So what's going to happen to you and your girlfriend if you leave for college?
Keith: Which one of my girlfriends? I have a couple of them now.
KW: Really?
Keith: Yup. Many of them started taking an interest in me recently.
KW: Why is that?
Keith: Well, it is because I am neat at school. I started changing my shoes often.
KW: [Do you wear] Clarks?
Keith: Yeah. And Reebok. I even had to turn down a few girls as well.

Keith is in a strong position as he is not only a "bright boy," but he is sought after by girls, which compensates for the otherwise negative "nerd" image that comes with the bright boy and good boy labels. Thanks to his emphasis on being stylish, or "neat," as he puts it, he can use his academic prowess to his advantage.

Bright boys and good boys are the pride of the official school system. They collect the most trophies (along with athletes), are shown off to the school's distinguished guests, and are propped up as examples worth emulating. They typically do well in external examinations and have an actual path to matriculation into college or university. They are not summoned to the Dean of Discipline's office, suspended, or threatened with expulsion. Their parents are never called to the school to "discipline" them, often by embarrassing them in front of their peers. They are never dragged before School Resource Officers[18] (SROs), the police, or the juvenile justice system. They are ideal students who check all or most official boxes. Delinquent boys do not match up and will likely be forced into a process of reflection, self-inspection, and tacit assimilation and stripped of the right to be accorded "official dignity."

[18] Police officers that work closely with schools in guiding at-risk students

5.5.3 Likkle bwoys

Likkle bwoys form another category of the boys' rivals. However, their power is significantly diminished because they are perceived as weak. A *likkle bwoy* is an amateur, a novice with little exposure, knowledge, and maturity. Likkle bwoys do not know how to fight, how to chase girls, how to smoke weed, or how to hold liquor. Therefore, likkle bwoys are a kind of unworthy opponent who should mostly be ignored. They differ slightly from "*dem bwoys* [those boys]," who might be equal to the boys in prowess but occupy different ideological spaces or are disliked for reasons such as prior conflicts, therefore making them "othered." *Dem bwoys* are formidable opponents who, from my observation, tend to be boys from upper school. Likkle bwoys, however, are not even worthy of consideration. This makes the phrase *likkle bwoy* extremely powerful, given its ability to repudiate and subjugate those against whom it is used. The following extracts demonstrate the dismissive power of the *likkle bwoy* classification:

- *Move from yasso likkle bwoy* [Get away from here little boy]
- *A waapen to dem likkle bwoy* [What is the matter with these little boys!]
- *Mi no ramp with likkle bwoy* [I do not play with little boys]

For these reasons, the boys dislike being referred to as *likkle boys*. As demonstrated, Paul lost his temper when a senior classified him as a *likkle bwoy*. Paul often uses the term to instantly dismiss "trespassing" in the Courtyard by good boys, as the *shirt pocket boy (Bill)* narrative mentioned below shows.

The West Hill Boys compete with other groupings of boys as they navigate schooling. One set of boys is the darlings of the official school system. They are the kings and princes of the *Classroom* space, where acquiescence and dedication to learning earn them accolades and recognition from teachers. As rulers of the Courtyard, the West Hill Boys must wrestle with the

good boys and bright boys to maintain their relevance and dominance in the school environment. They must also outshine another set of boys who occupy a similar position on the behavioral spectrum as they do. For this, the *likkle bwoy* label effectively dismisses those who threaten their supremacy.

5.6 *Badman*: A Quasi-Identity

Low-achieving schooling threatens the boys' physical safety (mainly within the Courtyard) and their emotional security (within the Courtyard and the classroom). In response, they take on a *badman* persona or quasi-identity that helps buffer their humiliation, lessen their feelings of ineptitude, and project strength. As Crank (2018) points out, an individual's identity is intertwined with their self-concept, a multidimensional construct of an individual's perception of themselves. Identities are formed by complex sociological processes, including internalizing the normative expectations of the labels attached to the identities. Adopting an identity suggests a commitment to these expectations and reconciling one's self-concept with such expectations (Crank, 2018). With *badman*, I call it a quasi-identity because, from many indications, it is not always reinforced by conviction but often by circumstance.

Like many of the traits described in this chapter, the term *badman* also originates from the Jamaican dancehall, or at least, it is most readily recognizable within the dancehall. Dancehall music is replete with references to the term, covering discourses on violence, self-sufficiency, masculinity, femininity, politics, and economic stature. Take, for instance, a hit song by a local dancehall group called TOK, entitled "*Man a badman."* A section of the lyrics goes: "*Man a badman, bad to the bone, anything dem bring we can defend we own* [I am a *badman*, bad to the bone/core; we can defend ourselves against all adversaries]," referencing an ability to use violence to defend oneself. A song by another local dancehall artiste, Jahvillani, takes on the issues of female sexuality, discussing women's desire for *badman*. The first line

of the chorus goes, "*mi a real bad man, dats why she love me* [I am a real bad man, that is why she loves me]." Dancehall also discusses dress standards for *badman*, adding to the discourse on expected forms of masculinity. Harry Toddler's 1990s tune entitled "*Badman nuh [don't] dress like girl,*" for example, refers to men with nose piercings, bleached faces, and synthetically curled hair as "freaky freaky," and implores them to desist. While more modern conceptions of the ideal *badman* image have softened somewhat, dancehall still maintains standards for and offers commentary on various aspects of social life among urban Jamaican youths, especially males.

Badman is, therefore, an ideology with an accompanying persona and lifestyle that is emblematic of the ethos of the Jamaican dancehall. Accordingly, there are codes of dress, codes of speech, dos and don'ts, gendered expectations, and corresponding benefits, consequences, and penalties. Many of these codes were observed among the West Hill Boys and described previously in this chapter. However, *badman* is also rhetoric. It is so commonplace that it often comes across as empty posturing. This is perhaps why dancehall music makes multiple references to "real *badman*" in a kind of demeaning reference to other users of the term, who do not fully embody its fearlessness or possess the will to move beyond talk. At West Hill High, *badman* is a mixture of rhetoric and lifestyle, as many users of the term follow through on the dress and behavioral expectations (at least the posturing). In contrast, many use the term but do not seem to embody the lifestyle.

I sense that *badman* would lose its luster if it were not so utilitarian to the low-achieving boy. From a student perspective, a *badman* does not have to do homework or tests, he does not have to wear the prescribed uniform, nor does he have to participate in class or show respect for authority. For instance, students who "do not feel like doing tests" find *badman* useful as a justification, as do those who refuse to do homework. Joseph, who was locked out of school for

wearing inappropriate pants, told me, "*Mi have pants weh mi cyaa wear inno, but mi nah wear dem* [I have suitable pants that I can wear, but I refuse to wear them]." "Why?" I asked. "*Cos man a badman* [Because I am a *badman*]," he replied.

Moreover, my interactions with parents suggest that while many boys' subcultural disposition share commonalities with the dancehall, the values that drive the *badman* image are not necessarily demanded by the home. Paul's mother, for example, mentioned that while she allows him to go out and play, he must return home by a certain hour, and in response to reports that Paul was truant, she noted that she wakes him up very early to ensure he is never late. In a meeting about Billy's involvement in a robbery, Billy's stepmother mentioned that he knows better and should have insisted that his friend (the robber) return the victim's property. When called about his participation in the jerk chicken project, Chris' mother said she thought the call was about a behavioral issue, expressing frustration with Chris' repeated behavioral issues, despite her attempts to steer him along the right path. Therefore, *badman* is a tool that allows the boys to lessen the burden of navigating the low-achieving school environment.

Badman also facilitates inclusion in the classroom. Social inclusion has been described in the literature as offering people on the fringes opportunities to join the mainstream. Robo (2014) notes that socially included people feel valued and have fewer unmet needs. Providing free education for prison inmates and health insurance for the poor are examples of social inclusion (Agboti & Nnam, 2015). In the case of students, social inclusion[19] relates to academic competencies and students' physical, social, and emotional needs (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), which is especially crucial for students with special educational needs (SEN). These students find learning more challenging compared to others in their age cohort. For them, inclusion from

[19] Early studies used the term to refer to the integration of students with physical and learning disabilities (see Bossaert et al., 2013), more recent usage of the term refers to an education system that meets the needs of a wide diversity of students

their peers is crucial to their emotional security and can also be important in warding off physical attacks and bullying (Savage, 2005). Therefore, SEN students value peer acceptance, friendships, and the perception of peer acceptance. Farrell (2000) adds that "for such children to be fully included they should take a full and active part in the life of the mainstream school; they should be valued member[s] of the school community and be seen to be integral members of it" (Farrell, 2000, p. 154).

For the West Hill Boys and many of their peers, *badman* helps them to achieve this value. *Badman* students can match up to their intelligent classmates, who do their homework or know all the answers by piggybacking on their *badman* image. *Badman* students can project an image of the unrestrained agency, suggesting that they "choose" not to do homework or answer questions in class. In other words, they can, but they "choose" not to. This image of "can" is very inclusive for *badman* students and helps them negotiate their challenging classroom experiences, as discussed in Chapter Six.

5.7 Dignifying Delinquency

The previous section described how students perform *badman* to negotiate their power, stature, and control of the Courtyard and secure a sense of inclusion when necessary. A *badman* has a distinctly violent profile, often leading to student conflicts. This section offers examples of these conflicts, arguing that they register as tokens of respect for the West Hill Boys. The sections also demonstrate how material possessions can enhance the boys' standing through their representation of maturity and adulthood.

5.7.1 Respect from Peers

Being respected by one's peers helps to boost self-esteem and can help students feel good about themselves (Staff & Kreager, 2008). While the official system offers good boys and bright

boys numerous opportunities to earn respect, for delinquent boys, respect must be earned elsewhere. Accordingly, respect is one of the most identifiable benefits the boys receive from their dominance of the Courtyard.

Respect can also come as praise, which in the official system is heaped almost exclusively on good boys, bright boys, and sometimes talented boys–students with athletic or artistic prowess. While not as explicit, delinquent students create opportunities to acquire praise through invoking fear in other students whom they perceive as weak – *likkle bwoys*, for instance.

The following narratives show how boys celebrate their ability to instill fear, command respect, and gain popularity:.

[While hanging out on the corridor with boys kicked out of class]

Bill, a student who habitually asks me for $50 every time he sees me, passed by. His bush jacket's right pocket was hand-sewn and looked rather messy. The area around the pocket was also severely wrinkled and had a tattered look. He approached me, and we made our usual thumb gesture (a form of greeting). He asked me for $50, perhaps jokingly, as always. Paul noticed the boy's bush jacket and commented.

> Paul: Sir, yuh nuffi hail dem man deh inno...look pon ee shirt pocket, look like some mad man [Sir, do not say hi to boys like these. Look at his shirt pocket. He looks like a "madman"]

Bill fired back with an insult, and in no time, Paul was on his feet and inches away from Bill's face. They taunted each other verbally before Paul shoved him. Bill pushed back, and Paul grabbed his neck and pushed him toward the railing. After a minute of wrestling, Leo rose to Paul's defense:

> Leo: Yow! Likkle bwoy, tek weh yuself! [Hey, little boy, leave the area!]

This did the trick. Bill left soon after. It was my first time to see such a violent side to Paul. He always came across as a playful and perhaps provocative boy, but I had not seen him assault anyone. Paul beamed with pride when I asked him about the incident. However, Leo took credit for Paul's "*badman* potential:"

> Leo: A wi bring him, man [We are the ones who trained him]

Leo was suggesting that he and the others (in their peer group) had groomed Paul well. Leo continued, bragging that he was the first boy to fight in the 7th grade:

> Leo: Mi wipe out Marlon inna 7th grade, man [I completely floored Marlon when we were in the 7th grade]

Respect, or fear, can also be earned by merely projecting strength. This means never backing down from a fight and never tolerating disrespect. To do this successfully, the keyword "badman" is a boy's best friend. *Badman* is not just a catchphrase but also a lifestyle and a commitment to an image of fearlessness. To supplement the discussion of badman offered previously, the following anecdotes demonstrate how boys perform badman and the conflicts that result:

[A conversation with James and Leo]

Students were leaving the classroom for lunch. James had a $500 note rolled up behind his right ear.

> KW: *Yuh nuh fraid dem tief yuh money Dean?* [Aren't you afraid that someone will steal your money?]
> James (assertively): *Which bwoy cyaa tief my money* [No one can steal my money]".

James walked away, and Leo, who overheard our conversation, engaged me:

> Leo: *A soh dem bwoy deh gwaan like dem a badman, Sir* [Sir, that is how these boys like to pretend like they are 'badman']

[An explosive exchange between two badman boys]

Alan came and asked me for money, which he claimed he needed to pay the fine for his cellphone, which was confiscated by a teacher.

> Alan: *Dem tek whe mi phone and mi waa money fi get it back* [They took away my phone and I want the money to get it back".

As we conversed, James came along flashing two $100 notes.

> KW to Alan: *See James have two hundred dolla deh. Beg him one.* [James has two one-hundred-dollar notes. Ask him for one]
> James: *Dem boy yah cyaa beg mi money* [These boys cannot beg me money]".
> Alan: *Go suck yuh madda, pussy! Yuh hear mi beg yuh money?* [Suck your mother, pussy! Did you hear me begging you for money?
> James: *Go suck back yuh madda..Yuh tink yuh cya hype pon mi? Mi know seh a Sir tell yuh fi beg mi.* [Suck your mother, too. Don't you dare think you can disrespect (insult) me! I know it was Sir (KW) who told you to ask me.]
> Alan: *Suh weh yuh a come talk like mi beg yuh money. A chue yuh a par wid dem bwoy de yuh get hype. Mi no fraid a none a unnu inno. Unnu aggo dead, pussy!* [So, why are you behaving as if I asked you for money? Because you are hanging out with those boys, you feel powerful. I am not afraid of any of you. All of you are going to die!]

Good students and bright students are first in line for receiving "official dignity" from the school system which heaps praise on them in exchange for conformity, academic excellence or effort, and acquiescence. This section has shown how delinquent students, who are denied access to "official dignity," acquire respect and popularity by instilling fear in their peers, projecting an image of fearlessness, and using *badman*, which can either cause, quell or prevent conflicts.

5.7.2 Symbols of Maturity - Material Possessions

Material gain has become a symbol of success across Jamaican society and perhaps across much of the capitalist world. Hope (2006) points out that status, respectability, and legitimacy in Jamaica have become increasingly defined by the acquisition and conspicuous consumption of symbols of wealth. While materialism can be described as relatively muted in an educational institution such as a secondary school, where students are focused on educational goals, it is a critical weapon in the low-achieving student's arsenal.

Material possessions allow the boys to demonstrate a level of maturity. It aids them in augmenting their sense of style ("swag"), earning them popularity among their peers, especially among females. This popularity translates into sexual attractiveness and can earn boys the envy of their less fortunate peers. The more fortunate ones might end up with two or three "girlfriends" and several other suitors, strengthening their stature among peers.

Material possessions typically include branded shoes and bags, cell phones (iPhones and Samsung Galaxy smartphones are particularly desirable), expensive cologne, wristwatches, jewelry, and cash. These items are immediate symbols of wealth and maturity.

Some boys use the power of intimidatory tactics to acquire material possession from students perceived as weak. For example, Marlon, Billy, and Paul were implicated in an alleged robbery of a "good boy," Brent, who was robbed of money and his iPhone and threatened with

violence if he dared to report the incident. Bad boys also gain the compassion of teachers who want to "rehabilitate" them. These teachers sometimes buy them lunch or give them treats to coax them into being "good" boys. At that time, the boys promise the teachers to behave so they can get what they want before defaulting to being "bad" soon after. Unlike conformist students who usually only get praise and the "good boy" label, bad boys also get material things, like lunch tickets, alongside praise.

5.8 The Fluidity of the Peer Group

Delinquency scholars emphasize the salience of the peer group to deviant conduct. Paul Willis' elucidation of a school counterculture, for example, centers on the informal group - the basic unit of resistance to the formal institutional structure. Willis believes that the counterculture could only exist and thrive because of the informal peer group. While the West Hill Boys developed similar dependencies on their peers as Willis' lads did, there was a key difference. The WHBs did not demonstrate seamless relations and interdependence as the lads, which makes the story of the lads and the WHBs a tale of cohesion versus fluidity.

5.8.1 Solidarity, Loyalty, and Friendship

A defining trait of peer groups is time spent together, which is significant because it influences beliefs and behavior, individually and collectively, and helps to carve out distinct identities that regulate their navigation of the school environment. It also determines the labels that get attached to the boys by teachers and staff.

The thirteen boys comprise multiple peer groups across four classes. Marlon, Paul, Billy, and Leo comprise the larger subgroup, Subgroup A, while Subgroup B comprises three boys from the same class, Dean, Keith, and Bob. The other six boys are spread across two other classes. Since this section discusses the rigidity of the group dynamic or the lack thereof, most

narratives and discourses relate to these two subgroups, as the other six boys do not exhibit any distinct group formations.

The boys in subgroups A and B spend considerable time together, which is circumstantial since the boys are in the same classes and mostly take the same lessons. They also regularly eat lunch together, hang out in the same spots, and in Keith and Dean's case, they sometimes walk home together as they live in the same neighborhood. Paul, Marlon, Billy, and Leo sometimes leave school together, often stopping by in the bushes on their way home. Paul, Marlon, and Billy are in the same class, and Leo is from a neighboring class. From the surface view, the West Hill Boys appear as a collection of tightly knit units bound by commonalities in behavior, beliefs, and mission. However, this is a snapshot of their relations, which are elastic and sometimes fickle. While the boys spend a fair amount of time together, they also spend considerable time apart. In addition, the prevailing circumstances and the boys' will equally modulate their time together.

5.8.2 Coming Together and Splitting Up

Subgroups are naturally delimited by physical proximity. It is, therefore, natural that boys who belong to the same class become close friends. However, outside the classroom, the courtyard offers opportunities to form new groupings and associations based on shared interests, values, behaviors, and needs. Likewise, numerous factors and situations inhibit peer grouping, some organic, others based on choice.

The following are themes, behaviors, and values around which the boys gather:

[Defrauding lunch tickets] → Subgroup A, except Billy

[Going to the bush to smoke] → Subgroup A except for Leo. Leo is not interested in smoking at school. Paul often goes to the bush, but only if he perceives he is unlikely to get caught. In addition, at the time of my fieldwork, he had not taken up smoking actively.

- [Chasing, Cornering Girls] → All interested.
- [Skipping Classes for Corridor Time] → All interested. However, Keith will choose not to join depending on the teacher and whether he likes the subject.
- [Defending each other against peer attacks] → All participate. However, this depends on the violation. Keith and Bob are not interested in violent profiling.
- [Stealing Lunch Tickets or Lunch] → Subgroup A.
- [Begging Money] → All except Bob. Keith only in jest.
- [Using Profanity] → Subgroup A.

A natural delimiter of subgroup interaction is school attendance. Roy is a very close associate of Subgroup A. Given his authority and the respect he demands from the subgroup's members, he becomes a kind of de facto leader whenever he attends school. Whenever Roy is around, Subgroup A becomes a band of at least 5, and a band of 4 otherwise. However, Roy is hardly around, attending school fewer than ten days a month. In his absence, Marlon is the leader of the subgroup. His attendance is also sporadic but much better than Roy's. Interestingly, in the absence of both Roy and Marlon, the subgroup still exists but in a more loosely structured, almost ad hoc way.

Paul attends school regularly. He is by far the most consistent within his subgroup. He attends school virtually every day as his mother is very vigilant:.

[Discussion with Paul's mother at a PTA meeting]

> Paul's Mother: *Mi mek sure mi wake him up early and mek sure him get ready and leff out before the rush and the traffic* [I make sure to wake him up early, sees to it that he gets dressed and leaves out before the rush and traffic]

Paul occasionally skips classes to loiter with his friends or head to the bushes to hang out. Despite this, he is usually present for morning and evening registration and some of his classes. Whenever the other boys are not at school, he is forced to hang out with new boys and spend

his time in unusual spots. Even when his boys are around, he sometimes ditches their company, opting to attend classes or do other obligations. For this reason, Paul is often less likely to get implicated in disciplinary issues, even though he spends a significant amount of time with the other boys. He is very comfortable separating from the others in the subgroup.

For the jerk chicken project, Paul was often the only one from his subgroup to participate. For example, at the first project meeting, Paul was the only one among his friends to attend. The same was true for the day we prepared the chicken. In addition, in a firecracker incident involving Paul's subgroup, he was the only one not caught by the security guards. He ditched the others just when he thought the situation had become dangerous and they would likely be caught.

Leo and the other boys from Subgroup A also share fluid relations, partly because Leo is in a different class but also because he seems to have a strong relationship with the primary school security guard, Mr. Anglin. Unlike other students who challenge Mr. Anglin or try to evade him, Leo almost always yields to Mr. Anglin's requests. I later discovered that they live in the same community and Mr. Anglin knows his guardians. Like Paul, Leo rarely misses school but spends considerable time outside class.

Subgroup B's boys' reshuffling is another example of fluidity. At one point, Keith and Bob became angry with Dean and decided to cut ties with him. Their rationale was that Dean was threatening to shoot other students, and they did not want to be associated with that kind of image. They also found it distasteful, as they claimed to be "certain" Dean did not have access to a gun. For a few days, Dean was on his own. He made new friends with boys from other classes and even referred to his old friends as "pussies" with whom he did not need to hang out. After a few more days, the wounds were healed, and the trio was reunited. However, a recent discussion (via WhatsApp) with Keith reveals that he and Dean no longer associate

with Bob following an incident where Bob disrespected them. The incident concerns a girl in whom Bob was interested and to whom he thought the other boys were getting too close. Bob thought Keith had "violated him," which required severance of ties.

Keith then shared his feelings about Bob, describing him as lazy and always sleeping in class. An even more recent discussion revealed that Keith had been promoted to the top stream in the grade and had new friends. His values and orientation seem to have changed slightly compared to the time the fieldwork:

> ***[Chat with Keith via WhatsApp]***
>
> Keith: *Mi hardly deal wid ppl now a days. Me father tell me fi always be a leader so mi naah go make nobody lead me a stray* [I hardly associate with people nowadays. My father always told me to be a leader so I won't allow anyone to lead me astray]
> ...
> Keith: *Me find girl from different school, me just a switch up everything.* [I found a girl from a different school, I'm just switching everything up]

In sum, the micro peer groups among the West Hill Boys are constantly being constructed and deconstructed. They are void of strict standards and solid shared values; there are no group names, unique symbols, or slogans, just a loose agreement of mutual sharing and association. While I acknowledge the potential for these subgroups to scale and become more formal and structured with time and certain stimuli, their present constitution is akin to friendships of convenience and circumstance that also serve a therapeutic purpose. For these reasons, I consider the boys' relations fluid, contrasting the idea of peer group uniformity as a basis for delinquent conduct.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the West Hill Boys and their domain within the school environment. The chapter discussed the salience of money, girls, and guns; and the relationship boys have with violence, drugs, and serious crime. The chapter described the values, norms,

and behaviors that the WHBs embodied, situating them in Jamaican dancehall and *badman* cultures, which reinforce standards of contemporary Jamaican masculinity such as aggression, violence, threatening behavior, womanizing, and the rejection of femininity. Many of these standards were present in the narratives of the Courtyard.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Jamaican schooling is said to be more attuned to female tendencies, given the predominance of sit-and-learn, wait-your-turn, and teacher-centered approaches that correspond to dominant notions of female socialization. This contrasts with typical hyper-masculine behaviors—outlined earlier in this chapter—common among low-achieving males from subcultural backgrounds. Considering schooling's mandate, I take issue with Evan's suggestion that successful child-rearing is one that, through chores and home-based responsibility, produces a child that can adapt to "feminized" schooling. Such a perspective overlooks the realities of the urban Jamaican male and switches the blame to the home. Instead, I argue that the lack of feminized socialization of boys is not the villain but the inflexible nature of middle-class schooling imposed on students who do not conform to dominant cultural values. In addition, existing discourses often demonize parents from working-class backgrounds for being inattentive to students' academic needs, morally deficient, overworked, and prone to unstable relationships, which negatively impact youth. These are credible claims, given the precarity of the working-class lifestyle and the negative socioeconomic realities it creates for working-class families. Against this backdrop, the support of the state is crucial in steering children away from class reproduction. Instead, what currently happens is a blaming of the "subculturally socialized" parent/home for not socializing their children to middle-class standards. As the saying goes, "those who know better should do better," and conversely, those who do not, cannot.

Given Jamaica's "respectability and rectitude"-clad middle-class status quo, there is no denying that the West Hill Boys embody anti-social, non-dominant, self-sabotaging behavior. However, this highlights the importance of ensuring they co-opt dominant values or at least become vested in the process of values negotiation, over which schooling is currently the most suited arbiter. Moreover, I found the boys to possess seedlings of normative social values. For example, albeit inconsistently, they were trustworthy, reliable, loyal, honest, persevering, hardworking, smart, expressive, creative, kind, caring, brotherly, team-oriented, and obedient. Therefore, it is unacceptable that an inclusive education system fails to optimize these positive traits when low-achieving schools are meant to offer differentiated learning opportunities to help every child achieve their full potential.

The chapter also discussed the boys' dreams and aspirations, highlighting the counter-intuitiveness of its normativity and congruence with wider society while highlighting what appears to be naivety about the ease with which their dreams can be achieved. I also highlighted a complex web of moralities surrounding legitimate and illegitimate means to success wherein "bad" money can start "good" businesses. The boys' nemeses, the good boys, the bright boys, and the *likkle* boys were described to emphasize the divide and "otherness" that shapes the boys' conceptions of their power within schooling.

As Liu and Xie's (2017) ethnography of deviant students in urban China shows, students can acquire various (deviant) skills and benefits from delinquency. This was also true for the WHBs. Whether it is material gain, access to vices or a "high," physical safety, access to sex, or popularity, the boys' dexterity in the Courtyard offers them stature. Coupled with physical benefits that accrue in the domain, this provides a sense of worth, accomplishment, security, and respect, making their delinquency dignifying. It is important to understand that dignity is not absolute, and while we might not consider deviance as dignified behavior, it is dignifying

for those who use it. The dignifying delinquency thesis ties into existing discourses that describe how the Jamaican poor and stigmatized have embraced the "rejection of bourgeois, civic morality, in favor of the cultivation of a radical otherness," which empowers and secures them status, honor, and respect (Gray, 2004, p. 1).

The chapter demonstrated the fluidity of the boys' relations, challenging the perception of closely knit ties and unanimity of values among delinquents as a basis of their deviance. While there were moments of group bonding, group action, and mutual influence, there were also instances of group fluidity and individual agency for and against deviant actions.

The chapter demonstrates the embeddedness of popular culture in the boys' interactions and the complex and evolving nature of Jamaican maleness and its preoccupation with the 'feminine.'

Chapter 6
Delinquency within the Schooling Orthodoxy

Chapter Five offered a micro-ethnographic exploration of the West Hill Boys and their domain, describing their tendencies, fluidity, and the seedlings of deviant ideation. As I get closer to a macro-ethnographic analysis of delinquency, this chapter explores another equally consequential domain in consolidating delinquent identities, the Classroom. The Classroom refers to dominant schooling policies, practices, and standards, the boys' interaction with them, and how this interaction characterizes their schooling experience. This chapter also explores other forms of conflict that arise during the boys' interaction with power hierarchies within schooling.

First, I would like to provide a context for these conflicts' origin, salience, and inevitability, a viewpoint that the official system does not tolerate. Many of the conflicts and general behavioral dispositions depicted in Chapter Five arise from imperatives that either align with students' sociocultural orientation or the adapted personas used protectively to navigate their school environment. In the low-achieving school environment, dignity, respect, and adulation are reserved for the good boys, bright boys, and talented boys (from the official system) or bad boys (from their peers). Resultantly, there is little room for boys who cannot adapt to either category. Therefore, the boys excluded from official forms of dignity must build their repertoire among their peers and earn street credits and notoriety. This imperative prompts many of their actions, which become classified, perhaps misconstrued, by the official system as "delinquent" conduct in line with the system's normative orientation. This chapter's narratives illustrate these dynamics. Before describing classroom conflicts, the chapter analyzes teachers' concepts of delinquency and pedagogy.

6.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Delinquency and Pedagogy

It is important to understand teachers' perceptions of delinquency and pedagogy to set the stage for the analysis of conflicts depicted later in this chapter. Therefore, the following are excerpts from interviews conducted with West Hill High teachers.

6.1.1 Notions of delinquency

The parameters of what constitutes delinquent conduct are consistent among teachers and authority figures within the school. However, how they perceive its origins, causes, and effects and how they handle it is more complex and nuanced:

[Interview with teachers on defining delinquency]

> Mr. Bowen: [A delinquent student is] a student who completely disregards authority, partakes in illegal activities, disregards rules and is constantly absent.... Some of these students don't know how else to behave.... It is important that we try and understand what is happening at home.
>
> Ms. Cunningham: I'd say [a delinquent student is] a student who knows and understands [the rules] but refuses to comply.
>
> Ms. Senior: Students who have no respect for authority, and who break rules and regulations...have no purpose, no aim. These students know better but don't do better.
>
> Ms. Burke: [Delinquents students are] rebellious, ill-mannered...disrespectful, [they] talk out of turn, [wear] tight pants
>
> Ms. McDonald: [Delinquent students] consistently do no work; [are] disruptive...Some of these students think the rules don't apply to them and so punishment results in more problems.... This stems from non-existent or inconsistent discipline in the homes, which poses problems for these students when confronted with the consistency of rules in the school environment.

For teachers, delinquency seems to be a fusion of students' agency and adherence to sub-cultural values. On one hand, delinquency has been described as acts of volition that occur despite the knowledge of what is correct, which suggests a recognition and resistance of the formal, official system. On the other hand, teachers also blame the social environments from

which students originate. This two-fold definition suggests some misalignment of values between the dominant culture and that of delinquent students.

6.1.2 Pondering Causality

Teachers often criticized dominant pedagogy as a source of the learning and behavioral challenges confronting low-achieving boys. Moreover, several teachers expressed sympathy for students' plight, blaming agents outside of the academic realm, most notably the home:

[Teachers' explanation of delinquency]

> Ms. Cunningham: A lot of the issues we face with student behavior stem from competency issues. The Ministry needs to recognize the needs of these non-traditional students.
>
> Ms. McDonald: The system is still structured in a way that if they [students] cannot pass a written exam it seems as though they are a failure. We are not at the stage yet where we can change certain things about the academic climate of the school because in essence the curriculum and the mandates that they [the government] have for us [teachers] are academically based.... The government [needs] to take a deeper look at what is going in the education system to see that it is not the students who are failing but the system that is failing the students.
>
> Mr. Bowen: Many students are lacking the basics [primary level competencies]. A little more than 50% [of them] would be better off in a vocational institution. I have seen how enthusiastic Grade 11 students are about plumbing and electrical [installation].... Students are also motivated by the prospect of financial gain.
>
> Ms. Hill: The keyword that we need to look at is inclusion. The focus has always been on academics, but non-academic stuff is also learnable. We have to evaluate how useful what they learn is to their realities. For example, a student who got zero is not stupid. He probably just was not motivated or able to regurgitate what was being tested.
>
> Ms. Wright: The system has to take some of the blame for the students' performance. Schools have no resources or are ill-equipped.... Education doesn't cater to low-level students.... There are too many short-lived programs that were made to realize short-term results.... The education process [amounts to] a scam as the process is too slow and doesn't fix deeper issues like the stratification of society.
>
> Ms. Senior: I blame the parents and the ministry. Traditional standards won't work for these students, [so], more human resources [are needed].

Ms. Cunningham: Most of the students have learning disorders, which means the work is too advanced for them.

Ms. Jennings: The problem stems from their low academic and social skills. This results in an inability to reason effectively. Therefore, disagreements often end in conflict ...Their dunceness does not bother me as much, it's their behavior. If they would just behave, I am sure I can get them to learn something.

Mr. Bowen: Because of my character, I usually take a passive approach to misbehavior. I have had occasions in the past where I exploded...overreacted and got in trouble (laughter). But I just talk to them. Sometimes it's simple things, they probably had too much sugar, or they went to a party the night before. Some of them are smoking, too. So, I always say, let me investigate...find out what is going on.

Ms. Jones: I sometimes pull them [misbehaving students] away and try to reason with them. Sometimes when I ask why [they are behaving badly], they say "Nuttin, Miss [Nothing, Miss]"; "Mi head hot today [I'm not in a good mood today]. So, they have their bad days, and you have to pity them sometimes.

As the narratives depict, the Ministry of Education has earned the ire of teachers for its inattentiveness to low-achieving students' needs. The issue of learning disorders or the general incompatibility of the level of work given students' ability was also brought up. These views are supported by demonstrating strong linkages between delinquency, learning disabilities, and school frustration (Siegel & Welsh, 2014; Wright, 2000). However, there is a coinciding view that the Ministry is now moving in the right direction toward a more inclusive system that will allow more students to experience success:

[Conversation about inclusive education]

Ms. McDonald: There is a focus on academics because that's how the system is set. It's just recently that alternative ways for students to learn have been gaining popularity, as we know that not all students are going to be academically inclined and we have witnessed firsthand where students began to display deviant behavior, not because they were like that necessarily, but because of the frustration that the academic part of the school put[s] on them. There are various initiatives that are coming about now that are geared toward identifying the particular skillsets of the child, identify how he or she learns, so if the child is a hands-on person, you would not give the child excessive writing and reading tasks because that will make it difficult for him or her to achieve success in school. So, success is not seen as achieving ten subjects, as a sign of brilliance. Success is beginning to be viewed as your ability to achieve, irrespective of what the achievement is and what job it leads you toward pursuing.

Against the backdrop of teachers' perceptions, expectations, and theorizations of students' abilities and behaviors, the following sections discuss the conflicts (clashes) that occur between official schooling and students.

6.2 Humiliation in the Classroom

The low-achieving school environment lends itself to an endless stream of conflict both in *the Courtyard* and *the Classroom*. Chapter Five has laid out the conflicts in the Courtyard and the boys' fluency in navigating and manipulating that space. Their navigation of the Classroom, however, depicts significantly lower levels of dexterity.

The Classroom refers to the interactions students have with the official school system. These include relations with teachers, school rules, and dominant academic and sociocultural standards. The section highlights and discusses these interactions and the resulting conflicts they precipitate. This section is weighted toward the discussion of academic standards, policies, and practices, as well as sociocultural impositions and expectations such as the linguistic and grooming standards described in Chapter 4. The discussion also looks at how the official system highlights, promotes, and rewards middle-class "talent" and conformity, inevitably leading to the exclusion of low-achieving students.

6.2.1 Streaming, Testing and Ranking

So far, I have discussed the academic expectations of students in Jamaican high schools. In line with that discussion, this section offers anecdotes that show how schooling policies and practices affect students and how students navigate them. The section will focus on streaming, testing, and ranking. However, students' responses are not always confined to a single practice. Therefore, the analysis will include general strategies that students use in response to other classroom-related obligations and stimuli that they perceive negatively.

Streaming is widely contested in the literature, with proponents arguing that it gives low-achieving students a chance to learn in an environment that caters to their learning needs (Fiedler et al., 2002). Evans (2001), citing Oakes, notes that streaming is premised on the assumption that students with higher academic abilities will be held back if placed with lower-ability students. In addition, students with lower abilities feel more comfortable not having to encounter their higher-performing peers daily. However, Johnston and Wildy (2016, p. 13) point out the that most international research finds streaming to be "disadvantageous for students academically, socially and psychologically." Opponents argue that it excludes low-achieving students, confining them to inferior education and socialization only with their low-achieving peers (Ansalone, 2003). This exclusion, some argue, affects low-achieving students' confidence and chances for academic improvement. Emler and Reicher (2005) add that whereas,

> childhood distinctions might be made between slower and faster learners, the language in which these differences are discussed implies that the slower children could eventually catch up. In the early teens, the labeling shifts toward more explicit references to success and failure. (p. 222)

This argument suggests that streaming's remediating effect diminishes at the secondary level.

As previously described, the Ministry of Education employs a policy of streaming, whereby students are placed into one of three "pathways" under the ministry's Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education (APSE) program. At West Hill High, students are not necessarily opposed to being placed in lower pathways, but they also did not appear encouraged to improve their results to move up. In addition, the boys from lower and middle streams were evasive when asked about their pathways. Niel noted, "*a chue mi nah study inno* [It is because I do not study hard]." Another typical response was "*when mi reach nine grade mi aggo settle*

down [I will settle down in the ninth grade]." These views demonstrate students' awareness of their inferior positioning and what needs to be done to remedy it. Teachers also categorized students based on abilities and admitted to tempering their expectations and tutelage based on students' streams. Ms. Henry, for instance, in reference to the lowest stream in the 8th grade, explained that the students "cannot do much, so I just give them basic things to do."

Lower-stream classes had noticeably poorer attendance, fewer desks and chairs, and less academic activity. The lowest stream often seemed disorganized and out of sync with the academic rhythm of the grade. This was so distinct that one of the hangout spots for the extreme subgroup of the WHBs was the lowest-stream classroom. In contrast, the highest-streamed class was usually neatly arranged, had high attendance rates, fewer loitering students, and a more robust academic orientation. The differences between the streams were not linear, but the contrast between the highest and lowest streams was stark.

I also found that the lower stream classes of the 8th grade at West Hill High had the most challenging students and the most severe behavioral issues. As a result, teachers spent much time asking students to be quiet, sit down, and pay attention. In addition, they regularly needed to chase away students from other classes who would enter classrooms randomly to interact with their friends. These challenges ended up shifting teachers' focus away from remedial help toward behavior management, which supports McDermott's (1977) findings that classroom organization around ability levels results in more time spent controlling behaviors than on actual learning support (cited in Ogbu, 1981). In addition, Evans (2001) found that students in lower streams of an elementary school in Jamaica were taught differently; physically and verbally abused more often than their higher streamed peers; and expected to perform worse by their teachers. These realities contradict the rationale for streaming, which is partly to improve academic performance.

The boys did not voice strong opposition to their class placement or seem too preoccupied with it. However, they strongly resented testing, as outlined below.

The Jamaican education system and society are "examinations-driven" (Stewart, 2015, p. 22). **Testing** is commonplace in Jamaican education, with standardized testing beginning at the primary level. Testing is also the primary means of determining a student's "pathway" under the Ministry of Education's APSE program. The ministry notes that "as … [students] progress, they are advanced to the suitable pathway based on their achievements" (Ministry of Education and Youth, 2017a, para. 3). These achievements are evaluated primarily through testing. At the secondary level, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) administers simultaneous standardized testing in 16 Caribbean territories and prescribes qualifications (CSEC) based on test scores (Caribbean Examinations Council, 2019). The benchmark of academic success at the secondary level is passing five CSEC subjects, including Mathematics and English Language. Unsurprisingly, this is relatively easy to achieve for most students at Jamaica's top-performing high schools. However, it is no easy feat at low-performing schools, which explains the gap between high-performing and low-performing schools, as discussed in Chapter 4. The tumultuous relationship students have with testing is shown later.

Few studies have captured students' interaction with testing, particularly how it frames the low-achieving students' schooling experience. Moon et al. (2007) highlighted the pressures of high-stake state-wide tests on students and teachers in the United States, concluding that testing impacted both teachers and students negatively and was particularly grave for students of low-socioeconomic backgrounds. The authors emphasize this disadvantage in terms of lost opportunities to teach students content in which they might be more engaged. However, I would like to emphasize the psychological stress that testing places on low-achieving students. The narratives presented in this demonstrate student frustration at testing and other obligations like

homework, which, from their perspectives, highlight their weaknesses and humiliate them. In response, students use *extraction*, *distraction*, and *deflection* tactics to escape these unpleasant situations.

6.2.1.1 Frustration Unleashed

I co-invigilated an end-of-term English exam for one of the lower-stream classes in the eighth grade. Several minutes after the test began, a group of boys came to the door and asked if they could enter. Ms. Norris, the main invigilator, asked them to present their IDs, but only one student had his ID. The others claimed to have left their IDs at home. The student with his ID was let in, and the others were sent to get an exam slip, which cost $100 per student per day. They complained that they did not have any money before adding that the school only implemented this rule to "mek money [profit off students]." However, it is widely known that IDs are required for sitting exams, and students were reminded multiple times before the exam period. It is likely that some students intentionally left their IDs at home to be legitimately excused from sitting the exams, at least temporarily. I refer to this strategy as *extraction* (removing oneself from an uncomfortable situation), which I have seen numerous times and corresponds partly to what Markova and Nikitskaya (2017) call disengagement.

As the test went on, students became rowdy, and several of them began yelling "Sir" and "Miss," indicating that they needed assistance. Their calls for help were shrouded in frustration. They sighed heavily, banged on the desks, and dragged the metal chairs squeakily along the floor. Most of the queries were basic but loaded with symptoms of irritation and humiliation. For example, "*Sir, wha da word yah mean?* [What is the meaning of this word, Sir?]," "*Wha mi fi do ere soh?* [What am I expected to do in this section of the paper?]," "*Sir, minno understand da part ere* [Sir, I do not understand this part]." Some students asked me to read questions aloud as they shamefully admitted to their inability to read. Others, including Dean,

explicitly asked me for answers to questions. One boy only wrote his name and the date on his test paper and sat staring blankly at the chalkboard. I asked him why he was not writing anything else, and he told me he did not know what to write.

As the exam wore on, students began talking openly with their neighbors, complaining aloud, hissing, standing up, throwing objects across the room, and asking to be let out for restroom breaks. Some students even began hitting others with paper missiles and other objects. The test was on the brink of chaos, and even Ms. Norris' threats to "rip up" the papers of misbehaving students, which would essentially equate to a failing grade, were ignored. I occasionally asked rowdy students to settle down, but when they obliged, it was short-lived. I call this tactic *distraction* - creating chaos to diffuse the intensity of an unpleasant situation.

[During an end-of-term test]

Joseph, who was sitting at the back of the room, had nothing written on his test paper. He looked quite perplexed, so I engaged him.

KW: What's the matter?
Joseph: *Nuttin* [Nothing]
KW: So why aren't you doing the test?
Joseph: *Minno feel like do no test today* [I don't feel like doing a test today]

His response reminded me of another student's reply, a few weeks earlier, to his teacher asking why he had not done his homework. He said, "*Man a badman. Mi no do homework* [I am a *badman*. I do not do homework]."

Approximately 40 minutes into the test, the students began asking about the time. "*Sir, hummuch time leff?* [Sir, how much time do we have left?]", "*Sir, wha time yuh have?* [What time is it now, Sir?]" they asked. I told them to worry less about the time and focus on completing their papers. However, they grew increasingly irritated.

In another test, students tried to use bathroom breaks to diffuse their frustration, which led to even greater frustration and acting out when denied:

[In an end-of-year Spanish exam]

Ms. McDonald is invigilating. As the grade coordinator, Ms. McDonald wields significant power to punish students for misbehavior, so students fear her. Nick and Chris are restless and seem unable to contain their frustration with the test. Nick asked to be let out for a restroom break. Ten minutes after returning from a restroom break, Nick made a similar request. Ms. McDonald denied his request, to which he protested.
Ms. McDonald: Nick, didn't you just come back from the bathroom?

Nick: *But Miss, mi waa use di bathroom agen.* [But Miss, I'd like to use the bathroom again]
Ms. McDonald: Nick! No! The test will be over soon.

Nick muttered something under his breath in protest of Ms. McDonald's decision. He was not alone. Chris, Tina [a female student], and three others were subsequently denied. Their requests and protests of their denials broke the relative calm Ms. McDonald had brokered.

Ms. McDonald: Okay. Since you guys want to play tough. I will add 5 minutes to the end time for every outburst.

She had earlier promised to let them out early if they behaved well.

A student (from outside the class) came to see Ms. McDonald. She left the classroom to attend to him. The students quickly seized the opportunity to misbehave. Chris grabbed a girl's shoe and began spinning it on a pencil. The shoe fell to the ground and made a loud thud, prompting laughter from the entire class.

Ms. McDonald: Okay! That's 10 more minutes

Students protested angrily.

Student A: Miss, yuh cyaa do dat! Mi neva a gi no chubble. [Miss, you cannot do that. I was not misbehaving]

Others joined Student A in protest.

Interestingly, extending the length of the test was punishment. Typically, insufficient time is an examinee's weakness. However, at West Hill High, having too much time for the test was a problem.

While the rigor of testing is frustrating for the boys, the general pace and atmosphere of the classroom also cause them stress. Here, "just for fun" is another *distraction* tool:

[Bob and Sam at the back of a math class]

Sam entertained his peers by spraying cologne on a desk and setting the desk ablaze. The flame was light blue and faint and ran across the desk's surface. He sprayed more

cologne onto the flame, keeping it alight. He sprayed his shirt and lit it before writing his name in cologne on the wall and lighting it. The students surrounding him were enjoying the show.

KW: *Why unnu a do this?* [Why are you guys doing this?]
Bob: Just for fun, Sir.

Even in class, boredom is unwelcome. Therefore, another dimension of the boys' distraction strategy becomes useful. The goal was to distract themselves by creating another source for their attention, invalidating the need to pay attention in class. Jason and Sheldon even used a stuffed drink box as a makeshift ball to play soccer in the back of Ms. Hamilton's class while she marked students' workbooks. Although they were supposed to be doing their classwork, they found horse playing more exciting.

In sum, standardized testing frustrates, irritates, and humiliates low-achieving students. While they try to endure the pressures of testing and other obligations, they often release their frustration through various tactics.

6.2.1.2 Masking Incapacity

Cheating is a way students cover for perceived inadequacies, which testing inevitably highlights. When confronted, students often used aggressive reactions to defend their actions. Unlike the case of perceived injustice (discussed later), where students genuinely believe their retaliatory actions are justified and necessary because they have been wronged, masking incapacity with aggression is quite the opposite. In the latter's case, students know, or at least accept, that their behavior in such instances is inappropriate, but they consider aggression necessary to stave off embarrassment about their incompetence.

[In an English Literature end-of-term test]

Approximately 30 minutes into the test, Ms. Norris caught Paul with a piece of paper, which he tried to conceal upon discovery. The handwriting on the paper differed from Paul's handwriting. Even the ink used was a different color from the pen Paul was

using. Nevertheless, Paul claimed it was scrap paper and had only written on it moments earlier. Ms. Norris seized his test paper and stapled the slip of paper to it.

> Paul (angrily): *Wah yuh a do Miss?* [What are you doing, Miss?]
> Student A (shouting): *Gi back di man him paper! Yuh noh see a scraps him a use it fah!* [Give the man his paper back. Don't you see he is only using it as scrap paper?]
> Ms. Norris: Oh! *Unnu tink mi stupid?* [Oh, do you guys think I'm stupid?]
> Student B: *But a chue, Miss! Mi see when him write ponni likkle piece a paper. Him just write ponni while ago.* [But, it's the truth, Miss. I saw him writing on the slip of paper. He only wrote on it moments ago.]

After a stern warning, Ms. Norris returned the paper to Paul, who immediately removed the stapled slip of paper concealed it. However, Ms. Norris noticed and scolded him before seizing his paper again.

In addition to cheating, students often asked me directly for answers, which some students considered acceptable, as shown in the narrative below:

[In an English test]

> Student A: *Sir, minno know wha fi do yasso* [Sir, I don't know what to do here]
> KW: *Wha yuh nuh understand?* [What don't you understand?]
> Student A: Everything
> KW: Read this section and then answer these questions.
> Student A: *Sir, yuh cyaa tell mi di answer?* [Sir, can't you tell me the answer?]
> KW: *Mi cyaa do dat.* [I can't do that]
> Student A: *Gimme a hint man…A 'a' sar?* [Give me a hint, then. Is the answer "a"?]

I shook my head to indicate that the answer was not "a," and a neighboring student who was keenly watching chimed in:

> Student B: *Unnu no see Sir a geem y ansa dem.* [Don't you guys realize that Sir is giving Student A the answers]
> Student A: *Yow, tappi naise man…wha wrong iffy man gimme waa wan ansa. Sir, wha yuh she, A 'b'?* [Shut up! What's wrong if he helps me with a single answer? As we were saying, Sir, is "b" the answer?]

In a different scenario, Dean asked me to complete a writing assignment for him. He also admitted to sharing answers with Bob so that Bob could pass his tests.

Delinquency, painted as a rejection of achievement ideology, would dictate that students show no interest in getting high test scores, let alone cheat to achieve higher scores. However, this was not the case at West Hill High. While some West Hill Boys were habitually missing from classes and tests, the above narratives show that some boys (and low-achieving students,

generally) are not as disengaged or rejective of schooling's achievement ideology. Conversely, they go to great lengths to cheat or get help via questionable means to mask and compensate for their incapacity.

Deflection, which involves diverting the blame, is another tactic to mask incapacity. For Joseph (mentioned above), it was not that he could not do the test; he did not want to do it. After all, admitting that he could not do the test would be admitting to incompetence, an image of himself that he would prefer not to portray. It is also notable that students sometimes mask their incapacity by claiming dislike for the teacher, dislike for the subject, or simply "not being in the mood:"

6.2.1.3 Outright Anger and Indifference

Even in a low-achieving school with many delinquent students, teachers' authority is maintained to a degree. However, students occasionally lashed out in anger and displayed nonchalant "don't care" attitudes out of frustration:

[In an English Literature end-of-term test]

Students demanded to see Ms. Dunn, their English Literature teacher who had set the paper they were writing. Some of them were slightly abusive.

> Student: *Unnu nah call di ooman? Mi noh know how she expect wi fi do dem yah question yah and she never teach wi.* [Aren't you guys going to call the woman? I don't know how she expects us to answer these questions and she didn't teach us.]

In another situation, Joseph challenged a teacher's authority, ultimately walking out of the class in a show of indifference.

[Joseph in an end-of-year test]

Chaos was spreading rapidly in the test, prompting Ms. Norris to call for help. She left the classroom briefly and returned with Mr. Watson, a stern Math teacher. He walked in, and the students quieted down briefly. However, they began making snide remarks that drew chuckles and giggles from their peers.

> Mr. Watson: *Bill! Unnu bill! Cos if mi haffi come back over here* [Settle down! Everyone settled down! Because if I have to come back over here…]
> Joseph: *Wha aggo happen?* [What's going to happen?]

Joseph's tone challenged Mr. Watson's authority and subtly suggested that Mr. Watson could do nothing about their behavior.

> Mr. Watson (to Joseph): *Yuh waa start it?* [Do you want to start it?]
> Joseph: *Start wah?* [Start what?]

Mr. Watson walked over to him, and they had a brief exchange. Eventually, Mr. Watson asked him to leave the room. He grabbed his things and left, nonchalantly, hissing on the way out.

As with many behavioral trends highlighted in this dissertation, dancehall music and culture mirror similar sentiments. *Rawpa Crawpa*, a popular Jamaican social commentator on YouTube, posted a video entitled "What Do You Think About the Fully Dunce Slang." He comments on another video of a freestyler exhorting "dunceness" and decrying the humiliation of schooling. In the video, the rapper reflects on some frustrations noted above. Here is an excerpt from the song:

> *Tell dem mi slow pon reading, mi neva get as much teaching, and das y mi soh daark and fool and no know how fi bomboclaat reason … mi a di dunciss one … dem gi mi wrong all wen dem know mi right, a force mi fi read tings all when dem know minno bright* [I am slow on reading, never got as much teaching, and that's why I am so stupid and cannot (expletive) reason … I am the slowest one … they tell me I am wrong even when they know I am right; they force me to read even though they know I am not bright]

Here, this lyricist captures the sentiment of frustration with dominant elements of schooling, which subjects students to constant humiliation and the suppression of individual expression. The lyricist also notes:

> *A nuff yute go a school as johnny cake and come out as dumpling* [many students go to school as johnnycakes and come out (complete school/graduate) as dumplings.]

These sentiments criticize the education system, noting that many students leave school not much better off than they entered (johnnycake versus dumpling[20])

[20] A johnnycake is a fried flour dumpling eaten in Jamaica and is popular in Jamaican folklore (sometimes referred to as slave food). A *dumpling* is a boiled flour cake eaten as a staple food in Jamaica. They are different forms of the same thing.

Ranking is another school practice that characterizes Jamaican students' schooling. Students are ranked among their classmates based primarily on their performance on tests. As the ministry promised, a high rank gives students a chance to move up to a higher-level pathway. At West Hill High, the top three students in a stream are almost guaranteed automatic upward placement in the subsequent school term. Therefore, ranking first, second and third place in a class is outstanding and praiseworthy. However, as one's rank moves further away from the coveted top spots, praise gradually becomes condemnation. Interestingly, this condemnation often comes from parents who highlight their sacrifices to afford students an education. This explains why some students feel anxiety on report day when parents come in to collect report cards and consult with teachers about their children's performance. Leo told me, "*Mi doah even waa si mi report* [I do not even want to see my report]," while Dean (with Keith's help) devised an elaborate scheme wherein I would collect his report instead of his father from whom he wanted to hide his results. However, unlike testing, ranking can be a source of pride for students at the top, like Keith.

[In a conversation with Keith and Dean about their ranking on report day]

> Keith: *Sir, a first mi come inno* [Sir, I placed first]
> KW: *Well mi know seh yuh a bright boy already so no surprise. Dean hummuch yuh come?* [Well, I know you are a smart boy so that was expected. Dean, what is your rank?]
> Dean: 5th, Sir
> KW: *But dat good man* [That's a good rank]
> Dean: *Sir, no chue yuh see mi soh, mi cyaa do mi work inno.* [Sir, I am a capable student even if it doesn't seem that way]

Dean's story highlights a paradox. Even though he considers himself a capable student, he was eager to have me collect his report card instead of his father, highlighting the psychological pressure of the uncertainty of his performance.

Ian placed 8th out of 26 students in his class (the second lowest stream in the grade). His grandmother was overjoyed. She kissed him repeatedly on his cheek while stating how proud

she was of him. Many of the other boys were absent that day. Marlon told me afterward that he did not tell his guardians about report day, while Billy said his parents were busy and could not make it to school that day.

While ranking is standard in many schools across Jamaica, it does not tell the true story of a student's aptitude. Even a student who places first in a top-stream class at a low-achieving school is likely to have low academic ability compared to students at traditional schools. Moreover, as demonstrated, students openly cheat on tests and other evaluations, and teachers sometimes "water down" tests and evaluations to match students' levels. Therefore, although high ranks can be a source of pride for students, there remains ambiguity about what ranks represent and how they can increase student motivation and remediation.

In sum, streaming, testing, and ranking are fundamental components of the student experience, even in a low-achieving Jamaican school. I have shown students' negative relationships with these practices and how they negotiate them. Students' experiences were characterized by frustration, which sometimes was released as anger, indifference, and efforts to mask their incapacity.

I also discussed the higher concentration of low-achieving students in lower-streams coinciding with higher incidences of misbehavior, resulting in teachers focusing more on behavior than remediation. This leads us to question the purpose of the APSE program's "pathway" approach to improving students' academic abilities as well as the purpose and effect of standard practices such as testing and ranking among low-achieving students, given the largely negative effect they have on the students they are intended to support.

6.2.2 Language and Respect

As discussed in Chapter 4, there is a linguistic standard to which Jamaican high school students are expected to adhere. I found that most WHH students are neither competent nor

comfortable using Standard Jamaican English and have grown accustomed to speaking Jamaican Creole, which, in many cases, is widely used in their milieu. Evan's ethnography of primary school children confirms this.

Of the 13 West Hill Boys, only Keith, who happens to be the most achieved academically, could speak English relatively well. Even so, he rarely did. In fact, he often exaggerated his use of Jamaican Creole and urban slangs to blend in. The other boys mostly spoke Jamaican Creole daily, and many did not even try to use English. Moreover, as the narratives in Chapter Six showing the interactions between students and teachers demonstrate, Jamaican Creole was the most common language used, accounting for over 70% of spoken interactions.

Existing studies often highlight the importance of mastering the official national language because of its implications for achievement and inclusion in education. However, an under-explored aspect of the linguistic standard relates to how it is intertwined with the show of respect in Jamaica. For example, a teacher shared an exchange between another teacher and a "disrespectful" student. The story starts with two students conversing about the news that a particular teacher would be leaving the school (resignation).

> Student A: *Yuh noh hear seh di short fat teacher a leff* [Have you heard that the short fat teacher is leaving?]
> Student B: *Which teacher dat? Wha she name?* [Which teacher? What's her name?]
> Student A: *Minno know but she use to teach wi last year* [I'm not sure, but she taught us last year].
> Student B: *Mi hope a no da woman deh inno* [I hope it's not the woman I am thinking of].

The teacher who overheard the students' conversation interjected, reminding Student B that referring to a teacher as "*da woman* [that woman]" was disrespectful. However, if we carefully examine the conversation, we see a discrepancy. Given that Student B hopes that the departing teacher is not the person she is thinking of, we can assume that Student B has some affection or admiration for the teacher she has in mind and would regret seeing her leave.

However, the term "*da woman* [that/the woman]" is widely perceived as disrespectful in Jamaican Creole and clouded the essence of Student B's utterance, as more emphasis was placed on the form than on the substance of the exchange.

In another scenario, Ms. Brown, a teacher, in mediating an issue involving a group of boys, asked one boy a question. He responded, "*how yuh mean*" with a questioning tone. This response means "Sure" or "Yes" in the Jamaican language. Ms. Brown, however, scolded the boy for his improper language, which she perceived as disrespectful. "Boy, don't you dare talk to me like that. You do not answer an adult like that. Say 'Yes, Sir' or 'Yes, Miss'," she said. These scenarios remind me of what Evans (2001, p. 107) calls "prescriptions about correctness." It is not enough to be understood as "form" of speech is just as important as "substance." While it is arguable that this is a part of learning mores and values that will become necessary in the wider society, students are often confused by their supposed transgressions, as the following narrative shows:

> ***[At the Student Help Center[21]]***
>
> Mario (a WHH student) was sent to the center for behavior modification training after being involved in a fight. Students gathered in the yard with their belongings, waiting on the go-ahead to leave.
>
> Mario (seated): *Miss wi cya leff?* [Miss, is it okay for us to leave?]
> Facilitator: *Yuh cyaa always gwaan. Nobody nah stop yuh* [You can always leave. Nobody is stopping you]
>
> Mario stood up after hearing that he was free to leave but sat back down after the facilitator said nobody was stopping him from leaving. He seemed displeased.
>
> Facilitator: *Unnu fi have some mannaz man* [You guys need to have manners]
>
> Mario's frustration turned to confusion.
>
> Mario: *Wha mi do Miss?* [Miss, what did I do?]
> Facilitator: *Yuh waa leff, so unnu gwaan. Yuh no haffi stay here. Unnu come fi bad behavior and unnu nah learn.* [You want to leave, so go. You don't have to stay here. You came here for bad behavior and you are not learning/improving]

[21] *Student Help Center* is a pseudonym

Mario defended himself, noting that he was respectful by asking her if he could leave instead of walking out.

Besides causing misunderstanding, Evans (2001) notes the use of Jamaican Creole to denigrate students, which was also the case at West Hill High. The slightly more aggressive undertone of the Jamaican language results in its use when a show of force is deemed necessary. Also, because Jamaican Creole is universally understood among students (as opposed to SJE, which students have not fully mastered), its use removes any ambiguity about what the authority figure wants to convey or what behavior students are being asked to produce. This complicates the ongoing discourse about recognizing Jamaican Creole as an official language of instruction in Jamaican schools.

It is reasonable that by recognizing Jamaican Creole as an official language of instruction, students' unfamiliarity with Standard Jamaican English would no longer become a hindrance to learning. In addition, students would likely not be indicted nearly as often for misunderstandings resulting from the complexity of language and the show of respect in Jamaica. Professor Emerita of the University of the West Indies, Carolyn Cooper, along with several of her colleagues, local academics, and political commentators, has been clamoring for this. However, maintaining the position of the English Language as the primary language of instruction seems to be the position of the Jamaican government. The current Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, as Minister of Education back in 2011, said English should be the predominant language of the classroom, noting he does not believe that SJE marginalizes some children (Budd, 2011). However, the case of the West Hill Boys proves otherwise.

Beyond the argument that all Jamaicans have the aptitude to master the English language, subcultural allegiance and gender allegiance are also relevant. Carpenter and Devonish (2012) note that Jamaican men across all groups reported lower use of SJE compared to JC, and likewise, men had a less favorable view of SJE compared to JC. This is consistent with the West

Hill Boys' case and that of students like those in Evan's study. Therefore, while we strive toward more progressive models of Jamaican masculinity, the fact remains that the current profile of urban Jamaican manhood is anti-SJE and considers it feminine. Therefore, we can either wait until Jamaican masculinity evolves further or provide education using the language we know resonates with Jamaican boys and men. It is that education that will probably lead to the much-anticipated evolution of Jamaican masculinity.

This sub-section demonstrated the pervasive influence of the dominant language in school and how the requirement to speak Standard Jamaican English oppresses low-achieving students who do not master it and feel discomfort when forced to use it.

6.2.3 Not Good Enough: Prize Giving and Graduation

As noted in Chapter 3, the school has an annual prize-giving ceremony where students are awarded for excellence. Students can attain gold, silver, or bronze awards based on their grades. Awards are also given for good behavior and participation in sports and other extracurricular activities. I asked Bob about plans to attend the prize-giving ceremony:

[Conversation with Bob about attending the prizegiving ceremony]

KW: Will you be attending the prize-giving ceremony tomorrow?
Bob: No, I won't
KW: Why not?
Bob: What is the purpose of coming? I will stay at home.
KW: Do you have something specific to do a home?
Bob: No, but I can watch Netflix and play video games.

Bob's tone suggested much more than disinterest and could almost be read as disdain for the proceedings. I soon discovered that none of his close friends would attend the ceremony, and even though they all knew a few of their peers who would receive awards for athletic involvement, this did not sway them toward attending. In a low-achieving school setting,

attaining an average of 60% is challenging. Many students cannot read, many can barely write, and many have severe challenges with Mathematics and reasoning skills.

The requirements for graduation are no less severe. To graduate, a student must have a near-perfect behavioral record in the last year of school, which requires tremendous self-restraint in a harsh school setting. In addition, students who hope to graduate must also have five exam passes. This goal is quite difficult for low-achieving students since, unlike school-administered tests set by teachers who can adjust the content to match students' abilities, the tests used to determine eligibility for graduation are standardized across Caribbean countries. Therefore, low-achieving students must compete with the smartest in the region, with little consideration for the baselines from which they began.

The gap in performance between low and high-achieving students has been magnified by the ranking of schools based on the number of benchmark passes[22] obtained in regional examinations. Given that a top-performing school is considered a "bright" school, and a low-achieving school a "dunce" school, the repercussions transcend the schoolyard as students are judged by the public as they walk through the town in their uniform.

Perceiving their abilities as too far below par, many students give up on graduating as early as the ninth grade. It is clear, then, that these policies and requirements humiliate and exclude students, many of whom never stood a real chance at graduating. Moreover, despite knowledge of their low academic abilities, even at the time of their admission to secondary school, inadequate provision is made to bring them up to par or create new criteria that would allow for fairer evaluation. Sports and extra-curricular activities are a means of recognition for which low-achieving students may qualify. However, not all low-achieving students are athletically inclined. Besides, the policy of the Inter-Secondary Schools Sports Association

[22] A benchmark pass is passing five regionally administered exams, which must include English Language and Mathematics.

(ISSA), the governing body for high school sports in Jamaica, is that to represent one's school in sporting events, students must maintain a good academic record. This means academically weak students cannot depend on their athletic abilities as a premise for recognition. Moreover, to suggest that academically weak students must resort to sports or non-academic means for recognition would be equally exclusive.

The preceding sections detailed the boys' discomfort with dominant schooling practices. The boys were particularly wary of testing, which irritated and humiliated them. In contrast to normative thinking, the boys tried to cheat or ask for help to mask their low abilities and tried to extract, distract or deflect to counter their discomfort. The section also showed how language standards exclude students who predominantly speak Jamaican Creole and misrepresent their manners for disrespect. The following section details other forms of conflicts with the official school system that the boys endure and how they respond.

6.3 Classroom Conflicts

As depicted above, the mandate of schooling revolves around the maintenance of strict rules, standards, and practices that low-achieving students must negotiate. The following section describes the characteristics of classroom-based conflicts and the dynamics of the interactions that both frame and rationalize students' responses and their conceptions of schooling.

6.3.1 Indirect and Non-Verbal Aggression

It might seem counter-intuitive, but even in a delinquent school environment, student expression of aggression toward teachers and authority is seldom direct, face-to-face, or explicit. In fact, most aggression or bad-talk about teachers that I witnessed was done behind teachers' backs. Before my acceptance by the boys, I was also denied access to such displays of

aggression toward authority. This exclusion arose from the suspicion that my actual status was either an undercover police officer, a Ministry of Education official, or a trainee teacher, even though I had explained that I was a researcher. However, as students warmed up to me, such displays of disapproval of and aggression toward teachers became more commonplace in my presence.

Labeling and name-calling are common forms of aggression used by students. While this is seldom used against teachers and almost never used directly to teachers, there have been instances where students lash out by labeling teachers:

> ***[Conversation with Sheldon near the school building gates]***
>
> Security guards search students upon entering the school building. There are two gates, one manned by two male security guards, which male students use, and the other manned by a single female security guard, which female students use. Teachers are not searched but still use one of the two gates to enter the building.
>
> Sheldon: *Mannaz*… [Manners]
> KW: Good morning …
>
> A male teacher passes.
>
> Sheldon: *Battyman dat inno..* [He's gay, you know]
> KW: *Wha mek u seh dat?* [Why do you say that?]
> Sheldon: *Him no grab di bwoy batty di odda day. Look how him a walk, yuh no see how him a walk an moggle! Alright watch deh, him a walk chue di girl dem gate. Wha mek him no go thru the boy gate? A battyman!* [He grabbed a boy's ass the other day. Look at the way he walks; don't you realize that he walks like a female model? Alright, look at that; he's walking through the girls' gate. Why doesn't he go through the boys' gate? He is gay!]

Here, battyman is used to demean a teacher the student dislikes. Among very close friends, battyman is used jokingly. However, the term often evokes an emotive, violent response. Students, being fully aware of the contextual significance of the term, use it against opponents, even behind their backs, to boost their positioning and perceived strength.

While not as effective as verbal aggression, non-verbal aggression is also an effective strategy used by the boys and their peers. Non-verbal aggression includes disregarding teachers'

requests, walking away, or excusing themselves from the classroom without permission, often despite teachers' scolding:

[In a Spanish class]

Teacher (yelling frantically): Sit down and do the work!

Students were given a worksheet with mathematical equations. They were supposed to complete the equations and write the answers in Spanish. However, many students were frustrated that they could not complete the worksheet and began walking around the classroom.

Teacher (talking to Billy): I am not going to tell you again to sit down. You have work to do!

Billy then grabs his bag and exits the classroom, prompting other boys to do the same.

While this exchange did not result in a verbal confrontation, the result was just as powerful, if not more powerful, than a verbal response from Billy would have been.

In sum, the boys label and demean teachers and authority figures and display other forms of aggression, such as walking away or ignoring teachers' requests, subverting their authority.

6.3.2 Gauging teacher tolerance

The student-teacher dynamic, in general, is quite complex. However, it is even more complicated for teachers and the boys, who always seem to be on show. Teachers and staff (security guards, in particular) epitomize authority and control. As agents of the formal system, they can rein in dissent and command conformity. For the boys, conformity constrains their ability to defend their dignity and maintain their desired image of rulers of the Courtyard. It becomes advantageous, therefore, for the boys to temper teachers' authority by gauging the limits of teacher tolerance. This means that even though they might be quick to confront a teacher, they just as readily back down. Teachers, too, being fully aware of the need to preserve the optics of their authority, have no incentive to tolerate bad behavior.

Since most aggression toward teachers is indirect, direct confrontation between students and authority figures (teachers and security guards) is a rarity. However, the delicate teacher-

student relationship is sometimes aggravated, lending to explosive exchanges between the two. In such exchanges, authority is outrightly challenged and sometimes subverted. This is exacerbated by students banding together in solidarity to defend their peers, tempering the authority figure's power:

[A HFLE/Guidance class]

Student X: *Whe da lady yah a provoke me fah. She kno seh minno like har inno. She know seh she nuffi talk to mi inno. Lef mi alone...mi doah like yuh* [Why is the lady provoking me? She knows I don't like her. She knows she is not supposed to talk to me. Leave me alone! I don't like you!].
Ms. Cunningham: Get out of my class. I am the teacher. This is my class and all I did was ask you to go to your seat.
Student A: *But yuh know seh yuh nuffi deal wid mi* [But you know you are not to deal with me].
Ms. Cunningham: *Mi and you not size* [We are not equals]
...
Student B: *She nuh do nothing. Wha yuh a provoke her fah?* [She did nothing wrong. Why are you provoking her?]
Ms. Cunningham: She's rude. This is my class and I like to see my class in order.
Student C: Your class? I thought this was family life class. *Yuh too nuff* [You're too much]
Student B: *A soh yuh love trouble people pickney.* [That's how you are…you like to provoke people's children]

Ms. Cunningham left the room to report the incident to the school administration. While she was away, a discussion ensued about what happened.

Ms. Norris: But look how you guys are behaving...defending her (Student X) bad behavior
Student B: *So wah wrong wid dat Miss, di whola a wi a student so wi haffi tek up fi wi one anedda... Unnu see?...all when we tek up fi each adda dem have a problem.* [What's wrong with that, Miss? We are all students, so we have to defend each other… Do you guys realize? Even when we defend each other, they have a problem.]
Student D: *Wha she do Miss? Nuh di ooman provoke har? Wha wrong if she waa siddung a front?* [What did she do wrong, Miss? Isn't it the woman who provoked her? Is something wrong if she wants to sit at the front of the class?]
…
Student E: *Dats why nobody no like har. If wi go a devotion an ask people fi put up dem hand if dem like har, hummuch hand she wudda get?"* [That's why nobody likes her. If we go to the devotion assembly and ask people who like her to raise their hands, how many hands would she get?]
Student F: Nobody.
Student E: *Nobody nuh like har* [Nobody likes her]

In intimate settings like a classroom, banding together is spontaneous. However, there seems to be an even greater impetus to display aggression in the presence of large numbers of students. These situations offer attackers stature-building opportunities among peers:

[Request from Leo near the canteen]

> Leo: *Sir, yuh cyaa buy waa patty and box drinks fi mi?* [Sir, can you buy a patty and a box drink for me?]
> KW: *A summn mi a do yute...why yuh cyaa buy it yuself?* [I'm busy. Why can't you buy it yourself?]
> Leo: *She nah sell me, dawg* [She (the tuck shop staff) refuses to sell me anything, man]
> KW: *Wha yuh do?* [What did you do?]
> Leo: *Mi tell har badwud. She come a hype up herself pon man. She fi know seh she cyaa try diss mi.* [I told her an expletive. She was getting testy with me. She needs to know that I won't allow her to disrespect me.]

Using expletives to an authority figure is the ultimate test of authority and is undoubtedly a well-calculated move on Leo's part. Moreover, considering it was done in the presence of his peers, it likely boosted his appearance of strength. A chat with Ms. Wright substantiated this finding:

[Conversation with Ms. Wright about teenagers]

> Ms. Wright: They [students] don't listen well. Also, they are in the teenage years where their sense of identity is being carved, so they mirror other influences … [Students say things like] "mi tek no talk [I refuse to comply]"; "mek mi do wa mi waa do [allow me to do as I please]" ... Students will push your buttons because that's what they are used to.

In sum, testing the limits of teacher tolerance is a tactical move by the boys and allows them to discover new avenues through which to project strength and maintain their stature in the school environment. These tactics sometimes result in explosive exchanges with authority figures that can bolster the boys' appearance of strength among peers.

6.3.3 Perceived Injustice

Students' aggression toward teachers is sometimes a response to feelings of injustice or unfair treatment. The earlier anecdote from HFLE class demonstrates this. In that case, the main

student was a female. However, boys are also sensitive to this perceived injustice and often lash out:

[In an HFLE class]

Ms. Norris is leading a discussion on marijuana use. While she tries to elicit student participation, some students are misbehaving. Some students were playing on the corridor and repeatedly entering and leaving Ms. Norris's class, provoking other students. For example, Johnathan (a student from another class) walks in with a long stick and mimics hitting students. Students laughed and yelled at him. Ms. Norris tried to take back control of the class with little success. Amid the commotion, a student hits Otis in the head (playfully). Otis retaliates aggressively, bringing the lesson to a halt.

Otis: (turned around and shouted angrily) *A who just do dat?* [Who just did that?]
Ms. Norris: *Young man! Turn around and stop disrupting the class.*
Otis: *Miss, wha mek yuh always a see mi?* [Miss, why do you always notice me?]

He then grabs his stool and moves to the window, turning his back to the teacher while peering out the window, angered by the teacher faulting him and not the student who hit him.

[In the English Literature test]

By the middle of the test, there were repeated bouts of rowdiness as students began openly displaying their frustration. Students were standing, walking around, shouting, provoking others, and, most of all, ignoring Ms. Norris' requests. She got into an argument with Chris, whom she tried to scold, but he got angry at her, asking her why she did not ask others to be quiet. "Miss, why me? Why Chris? *A chue yuh know mi name mek yuh a pick pon mi? Look hummuch adda pickney a chat!* [Is it because you know my name why you are picking on me? Look how many other students are talking", he yelled angrily.

[Discussion with Leo and Marlon on the corridor]

Leo: *Y pree, Sir?* [What's up, Sir?]
KW: *Mi deh ya. Wah unnu a do out ere?* [Not much. Why are you guys out here?]
Leo: *A Miss Swaby wi have now, but shi nuh waa wi inna har class* [Why have Ms. Swaby's class now but she does not want us in her class]
KW: *Whammeck*? [Why?]
Leo: *Chue waa likkle ting did gwaan inna di class wan time. And wi tell har sorry inno and promise har seh it nah go happen again but she still nah let wi een.* [Because there was an incident in her class once. Even though we told her sorry and promised not to let it happen again, she still refuses to let us into her class]
...
Marlon: *A soh dem teacha ya stay Sir...aaa one time she use to run joke wid wi inno.* [That's how these teachers are, Sir. Imagine that she used to joke with us]

[In a discussion with Chris about being kicked out of class]

Chris was standing near the staircase seemingly perplexed.

> KW: *Waapen to yuh now?* [What's the matter with you?]
> Chris: *Nuh Mr. Watson sen mi out! A Ms. McDonald mi a wait pon fi tell har bouty* [Mr. Watson sent me out of the class. I am waiting on Ms. McDonald to make a report about this]
> KW: *Wah yuh do mek him run yuh out?* [What did you do to cause him to send you out?]
> Chris: *Minno do nuttin...Eee just always a pick paa mi, but a chue mi no waa diss him inno Sir* [I did nothing...He's always picking on me, but (I'm restraining myself because) I don't want to insult him]

Ms. McDonald arrives, and Chris explains that he had been sent out of class:

> Ms. McDonald: You are an annoying little boy Chris, so if the teacher doesn't want you in the class, what am I to do?
> Chris: *But Miss…Him always a pick paa mi* [He's always picking on me]
> Ms. McDonald: Chris, you need to check your behavior. There's nothing I can do!
> ...
> Chris: *Mi warn mi madda bout him already inno. Mi tell har seh di man a tek set pon mi* [I've already told my mother about him. I told her that the man is picking on me]

Being kicked out of class can be a source of embarrassment, even for bad boys, especially if they are singled out. Therefore, the "victim card" becomes a useful strategic weapon to defend one's pride. Chris is not a professed *badman* but skirts around the fringes of the *badman* persona. However, he is known to teachers as a troublemaker. Nonetheless, he thinks he is being mistreated by always being kicked out of class. He, therefore, tries to rewrite the narrative surrounding his behavior, attempting to invalidate his sanction.

The perception of unfair treatment sometimes results in an open expression of disdain:

[English Literature test]

> James and "Birdie" (a female student) walked in late. They sat down and were given test papers. Shortly after, Mr. Anglin (WHH's main security guard) entered the class and asked them to leave. Ms. Norris explained that before I arrived, the two students were throwing books at each other, and Ms. McDonald chased them out of the exam as punishment. As they left, they complained angrily, James saying, "*Dats why mi doah like Ms. McDonald inno* [That is why I dislike Ms. McDonald, you know]."

There is sometimes an acute sense of persecution, victimhood, and presumed guilt:

[Later in the English Literature test]

James was let back into the test. However, within minutes of receiving his paper, Mr. Watson entered the classroom and called out James's full name. Mr. Watson looked around, trying to find him. James remained quiet, not volunteering to deliver himself. Eventually, Mr. Watson found him, took away his paper led him out of the classroom.

James: What mi do dis time? [What have I done this time?]

James' use of the phrase "this time" emphasizes a tendency or trend of victimization, which is a perspective often shared by his peers.

[At the Student Help Center]

Mario, two other boys, and I were chit-chatting. A girl walked by, and Mario shouted "pretty girl" before saying something about animals unrelated to the girl. The center's director was nearby and overheard him. She yelled at him, reminding him that "bad behavior" and "disrespectful attitude" were part of the reason they were sent to the center. After she left, Mario turned to me for an explanation. "*Sir, wha mi do wrong? Mi do nuttin wrong. Mi call the girl pretty. No somen positive that*? [Sir, what did I do wrong? Did I do something wrong? I called the girl pretty. Isn't that something positive?]." He hissed his teeth and turned his face away. He continued to mutter to himself, adding that adults tended to exercise unnecessary force over children, even when they (children) do nothing wrong.

Though rare, the boys sometimes discussed the politics of the school and what they perceived as unfair treatment:

[Conversation with Billy about the school and Mr. Anglin]

Billy: *Yuh know how Anglin dem tan areddy. Love dig wi up. Wi different yuh zimmi. … Like deh adda people dem special dan wi. People dem ponny school fi run y school. If a school dem a run, dem run y school and tap gwaa like seh a no buy out ting. Like dem a buy out Anglin dem. Cos Anglin dem a beer money dem a tek from likkle pickney dem, a some like punk dem inno.* [You know how the security guards (Mr. Anglin and his associates) are. They like to search us and treat us differently. They treat the others as if they are more special than us. The people should run the school [impartially] and stop displaying unfair behavior like buying out the security guards. Especially since the security guards are already exploiting the students. They are a bunch of punks.]

The phrase "the people" refers to school officials, specifically school administrators like the principal and vice principal, whom Billy accuses of being unfair. The parallel that Billy draws is interesting, too. Here, school authorities are being accused of upholding a rules-based system while currying favoring the security guards who are persecuting and defrauding students.

Such behavior can be added to the unwritten list of unfair practices that students construct about their schooling, which includes trying to "profit off students," as mentioned earlier. Students have also complained about the school's reluctance to "fix up" buildings despite collecting copious student fees. After widespread flooding following heavy downpours, a student noted, "*the school too tief...yuh know how much money dem get fraa wi and dem cyaa even fix di roof* [The school is a thief … do you know how much money they get from us and they would not even fix the roof]." Another added, "*dem fi fix up di school* [they should fix up the school]." Bob also mentioned that "[classrooms are] too hot ... we need a ceiling fan". He added that the classroom needed a broom, garbage bin, nicer desks and chairs, and electrical outlets for charging laptops and tablets. Here, students are partaking in political discourse by decrying the unfairness of their treatment and denouncing the school authorities, whom they perceive as acting contrary to students' interests.

To summarize, the boys often feel unfairly targeted by school authority figures. In response, they rebuff teachers' attempts to reprimand them and openly express their disdain for the status quo.

6.3.4 Wit and Charisma (Earning Street Credit)

Witty responses that earn laughter or to which teachers cannot respond swiftly and decisively are huge point earners for the boys. They often seek these opportunities to be dismissive of teachers and sometimes disappear before teachers have even had a chance to digest what was said. This wit is especially effective in the presence of an audience of fellow students:

[In a HFLE class]

Marlon who is poking his head through the door

> Ms. Norris (to Marlon): Young man! Aren't you in this class? What are you doing outside?
> Marlon: *Mi nah go a yuh class. Yuh class too boring. Is like a finaral yuh a keep inna di class* [I'm not going to your class. Your class is too boring. It's as if you are holding a funeral in the class]

Students in the classroom laughed wildly.

Even in the absence of student spectators, humor and wit are used to rebuff teachers' attempts to exert control or authority over students, which embarrasses them:

[In a parent-teachers meeting]

> Ms. Cunningham [referring to Paul]: He is bleaching.
> Paul's Mother: Well, not anymore. *Unless him still a hide and dweet* [unless he's hiding and doing it]
> Ms. Cunningham [turning to Paul]: How old are you?
> Paul: 13, Miss.
> Ms. Cunningham: You're still a kid. You know someone is a child when you can count their age on your two hands.
> Paul: *But mi age cyaa count pon two han, Miss* [But, my age (13) cannot be counted on two hands, Miss]
> Paul's Mother (angrily): *Dat means yuh a man?* [Are you suggesting that you're a man?]

Paul reveled in his repudiation of the teacher's belittling, even in the presence of his mother, a strict disciplinarian. Perhaps he could not resist the opportunity for a confidence-boosting victory over the teacher's attempt to belittle him.

As previously discussed, students dislike boredom. Therefore, boredom is an excuse they use to justify aggression and negative communication with teachers. However, boredom also gives way to distraction and digression into other (usually more interesting) topics and discussions, even during a lesson:

[A group of boys on a tangent discussion in an HFLE class]

Ms. Norris is leading a discussion about the adverse effects of drugs. She elicits ideas from students. Ms. Norris points out that drug use results in "low grades." The boys were enjoying their side discussion until Ms. Norris yelled at them.

> Ms. Norris: Hello boys!
> Ian: *Miss, a dat wi a chat bout, Miss* [Miss, we are talking about that topic].

Ms. Norris acknowledged their enthusiasm but urged them to speak so that all the students could hear, one by one, in turns.

> Arnold: *Alright Miss, mek mi tell you...wi seh wi no bun low grade, wi bun high grade* [Alright Miss, let me tell you...we said we don't burn low grade (marijuana), we burn high grade]

There was an outburst of loud laughter.

> Ms. Norris: Well, it's because you smoke high grade ganja why you get low grades.
> Female student: That means if you smoke low grade [ganja] *you wi ge*t [will get] high grades

There was more laughter and uproar.

Such wit earns students a lot of "street credit." Witty students are seen as cool and fun-loving. Teachers, though, must navigate students' wit and disruptive behavior cautiously as students dislike overly strict teachers:

[Morning conversation with students in Subgroup B's classroom]

> Female Student: *Sir, Ms. Swaby deh ya?* [Sir, Is Ms. Swaby here?]
> KW: I don't know
> Female Student: *Sir, a cuddn yuh a go teach wi. Ms. Swaby can tan weh shi deh* [Sir, why couldn't you be the one to teach us. Ms. Swaby can remain where she is].
> KW: *Why you seh dat* [say that]?
> Female Student: *She gwaan too much. Shi always a ruff we up...all when a joke wi a joke* [She is too strict. She's always punishing us...even when we're joking].

This section discussed the boys' use of wit to strengthen their popularity among peers, repudiate teachers who try to belittle them, and quash boredom. The section also demonstrates the boys' dislike of teachers who are overly strict or intolerant of their humor.

6.3.5 Values Misalignment/Misunderstanding

Some incidents between teachers and students emphasize a clash of values and norms. Students often misunderstand teachers' expectations of their behavior and vice versa, leading to conflicts. These cultural misunderstandings, reinforced by the dominant system, may lead, sometimes falsely, to the conclusion that behavior is intentionally disrespectful:

[Guidance counseling session]

A Rastafarian boy complained that one of his classmates removed his headgear. Ms. Cunningham was mediating the dispute with both boys in her office in the presence of an eyewitness student from the same class.

> Ms. Cunningham: Why did you do that?
> Accused Male Student: *Miss, a ramp di whole a wi did a ramp. We always a play wid one anedda. Him even did a trouble mi hand and him know seh it wi hot it up. But chue wi always a play, mi neva seh nuttin.* [Miss, we were just playing. We're always playing with each other. He was even playing with my cast (broken arm) even though he knows he could aggravate it. But because we're always playing, I didn't even say anything about that]

Ms. Cunningham scolded him harshly, admonishing him about respecting people's religious symbols and rituals.

> Ms. Cunningham: If a Muslim student comes to this school, you dare not touch or remove her headgear. So how dare you?
> Accused Male Student: Wha yuh mean, Miss? [What do you mean, Miss?]
> Ms. Cunningham: Do you know if he likes to be a Rasta? Do you know if he wants to wear a headgear every day? Maybe he would like to go to the barber every week like you, but he cannot because his dad says he cannot. How do you think that makes him feel? And for you to go and remove his headgear, you are aggravating his feelings. Can't you feel his pain?
> Accused Male Student: No, Miss
> Ms. Cunningham [in shock]: You are heartless, son...if you can't feel his pain.

The boy remained silent while maintaining his indifference (unapologetic straight face), even though he seemed slightly embarrassed or annoyed as he looked away and played with his fingers.

Teachers' accounts verify the existence of misunderstandings and divergent values:

[Teachers' opinions on disrespect]

> Mr. Bowen: [What I consider disrespect] depends on the knowledge of the students. I don't know if they know that's not the way to speak. Students will ask you "*wah mi do* [What did I do wrong]?... "*Yow mi dawg* [Hey my dog]" is actually a sign of respect.... We shouldn't try to revamp their culture.

> Ms. Jennings: We [teachers and students] are not synchronized in terms of values; we [teachers] grew up learning disrespectful phrases and these students don't know our system. They should be taught the correct way, but teachers should not be blinded by the elements of their culture.

The boys' values system does not always match perfectly with that of their teachers, which leads to misunderstandings. While teachers acknowledge these differences, they remain intolerant of the boys' values, owing to the expectation that schooling should be the means of imbuing proper values.

6.3.6 The "Dis"

Disrespect or insults, referred to in the local language as "dis," is a significant cause of aggression, conflict, and negative communication, even between teachers and students. Students, particularly *badman* boys, are intolerant of the "dis:"

> ***[Discussion with Dean about Ms. Cunningham]***
> After completing the jerk chicken project, Ms. Cunningham agreed to help the students sustain it if they agreed to write an essay on what they learned through the project and why they wanted to keep doing it. Dean agreed to write the essay and occasionally asked me for help. However, on the day of the submission deadline, I met him on the corridor and asked if he had submitted the essay to Ms. Cunningham.
>
> Dean: *Mi nuh deal wid da ooman deh inno*. [I don't deal with that woman, yuh know]
> KW (shocked): *Wha yuh mean? Wha happen?* [What do you mean? What happened?]
> Dean: *Di ooman dis mi so mi nah write nuttin* [She disrespected me, so I refuse to write anything]
> KW: *Wha she dis yuh wid?* [How did she disrespect you?]
> Dean: *She see man and come tek weh man tings and dashi inna y gyabij* [She saw me and took away my thing and threw it in the garbage]
> KW: *So dat mean yuh nah bodda wid the chicken ting?* [So that means you won't bother pursuing the chicken thing]
> Dean: *She diss mi...mi nah deal wid har. Mek she goweh!* [She disrespected me...I refuse to deal with her. She should go away!]

The "dis" is sometimes weaponized and used threateningly to ward off attacks or elevate one's stature. A common way this is done is by demeaning or denigrating others, which, when used against teachers, disparages their knowledge or teaching abilities:

[Conversation with Dean outside the school building]

Dean was sitting under a tree with some upper-grade boys when I arrived at school at about 9 a.m.

KW: What are you doing out here, Dean?
Dean: *Sir, dem nah let wi een*. [Sir, they are not letting us into the school building]
KW: Why?
Dean: *Wi pants too tight.* [Our pants are too tight]
KW: *So look how yuh aggo miss out pon class because you woah stop wear di tight pants dem* [See how your insistence on wearing tight pants will cause you to miss out on your classes]
Dean: *Mi nah wear no big pants. Afta mi noh nerd. And, mi no care, cah minno haffi go a Ms. Taylor class* [I am not going to wear loose pants. I am no nerd. And, in any event, I don't care because staying out here means I don't have to go to Ms. Taylor's class].
KW: *Whaapen. Yuh no like Ms. Taylor?* [Why would you say that? Do you dislike Ms. Taylor?]
Dean: *Har class too boring. She cyaa teach. Soi betta mi stay out yasso wid mi niggaz.* [Her class is too boring. She doesn't teach well. So, I'm better off staying out here with my close friends].

[Conversation with Dean about Ms. Burke]

Dean: *A eediat dat man...Him only gwaan like him know everything. And ee cyaa even spell. Wan time inna class ee rite waa word ponni board. Aaa all y tell wi a tell him seh di word spell wrong, him a look pon wi funny. Den she ask mi if mi cyaa spell y…* [She's an idiot. She only pretends to know everything. And she cannot even spell. There was one time she wrote a word on the board. Despite us telling her it was spelled incorrectly, she kept looking at us weirdly. Then she asked me if I could spell it.]
KW: *So yuh cuddaw spell y?* [So, could you spell it?]
Dean: *How yuh mean*. [Of course!]

[Otis in a discussion with other boys about Mr. Anglin]

Otis: *Yuh see how di bwoy Anglin a drape up people. Yuh tink Anglin cyaa put ee han pon mi? Mi see how him a hangle dem bwoy yah. Him cyaa do mi dat.* [Do you see how the boy Anglin is collaring people? You think he could try doing that to me? I see how he handles those boys. He could not do that to me]

[Conversation with Keith, Dean and Bob after a jerk project session]

The boys returned to their classroom after participating in a preparation session for the jerk chicken project for half of a period (approximately 30 minutes). The teacher refused to let them into the lesson, so they returned to the workshop, where I was supervising a different set of boys.

KW: *Weh unnu a duh back roun ere?* [Why have you guys returned?]
Dean: *Ediat ooman noh waa let wi een* [The idiot woman doesn't want to let us in]
KW: *Unnu never tell har seh a di project unnu did a do?* [Didn't you tell her you were participating in the project?]

Keith: *She seh she noh know nuttn bout no project. Eee fool.* [She says she knows nothing about the project. She's a fool]
KW: *Soh wah unnu waa mi do now?* [So what would you like me to do?]
...
Dean*: Sir, y betta yuh come wid wi come tell him cos mi wi dis him inno* [Sir, it's better if you come with us and explain to her because [otherwise] I might have to disrespect/insult her]

Here, we saw accounts of conflicts between students and authority figures arising from classroom obligations, factors like students' perceived sense of injustice, and intolerance of being disrespected. These conflicts often subvert teachers' authority through belittlement and threats of verbal violence. Otis' reference to the head of security as "a boy" does precisely that. Such an expression used by a minor to or in relation to an adult is considered highly disrespectful by local standards. Nonetheless, it was used tactically by Otis to subvert Mr. Anglin's position and gain accolades from peers. Calling teachers "fools" or "idiots" has a similar effect. While these conflicts are primarily student-initiated, they speak to students' state of mind in a challenging environment. By teachers' admission, the students have numerous challenges and inhibitors to learning and "good" behavior. Nevertheless, apart from slightly adjusting the difficulty of lesson content, there seemed to be little room to offer students a more immersive and fulfilling learning experience. I felt that even though the school is geared toward remedial study, the teaching methods, resources, and core student experience did not differ from a "regular" school, which is understandably frustrating for low-achieving students.

6.4 Harmony amid Discord

This chapter's purpose is to demonstrate elements of discord and conflict during students' interaction with schooling. However, it would be disingenuous to disregard harmonious relations that also occur, albeit rarely, within these interactions. Therefore, this section describes positive relations between teachers and students.

6.4.1 Jokes

Making jokes with teachers is the most common symbol of warm communication:

[Group of boys talking as Mr. Whitmore passes by]

Marlon: *A nuff gyal wi have inno*. [We have a lot of girls]
Mr. Whitmore: *And unnu cyaa buss Paul. Unnu cyaa gi him one, even one!* [And you guys would not even share them with Paul. Can't you give him one (of the girls),? just one!]
Paul (laughing): *Sir, wah yuh a talk bout? Mi have mi ooman dem* [Sir, what are you saying? I have my women]
Mr. Whitmore: *Lie yuh a tell man. No ooman yuh nuh have* [You're lying. You don't have any women]
Paul (laughing): *Just cool nuh Sir.* [Say no more, Sir!]

Interestingly, an ordinary teacher telling one of the boys that he has no girls or suggesting that he is incapable of attracting females would likely be greeted with dissent. However, Mr. Whitmore has developed a bond and rapport with the boys. This kind of intimacy between teachers and students is not rare but confined to a few, usually male teachers, with whom the boys can relate. These teachers are from or identify with working-class or inner-city backgrounds, making them familiar with students' subcultural tendencies. Mr. Whitmore is one such teacher. Even though he maintains a tight grip on errant behavior, he still maintains excellent relations with students, including the boys. Unlike more traditional teachers, he is not afraid to have mature conversations with students, including discussions about romance.

The relationship between teachers like Mr. Whitmore and students typically takes on a more casual tone, wherein the usual formality of titles and salutations is removed. Less formality leads to terms such as "big man/bad man" being used in place of "young man," "boss" in place of "Sir," and "y pree" in place of "How are you doing?" While unconventional, this approach makes these teachers more relatable to the boys than ordinary teachers.

Nonetheless, even with the more orthodox teachers, the boys sometimes have warm interactions:

[Teacher and group of boys on the corridor]

Paul is on the corridor and moving about erratically. As the teacher walked by, Paul moved into the teacher's path, and the teacher accidentally stepped on Paul's well-cared-for Clarks shoes.

Paul (frantically): *Sir!! Yuh haffi pay $50 fi dat inno* [You have to pay $50 for that]

The teacher apologized with a hand gesture and continued walking. Paul dismissed the infraction. After all, he was mostly joking.

Even students who are not on good terms with teachers have opportunities for warm exchanges. Ms. Swaby, for instance, has banned Leo from her class but still converses with him warmly as he roams the corridor next to the classroom:

[Conversation between Leo and Ms. Swaby]

Ms. Swaby: Leo, you called Sanjay out of my class and now he's walking around downstairs. You'll have to teach him because he cannot come back into my class.
Leo (laughing): Me, Miss? *Yuh know mi wouldn do dat* [You know I wouldn't do that]
Ms. Swaby: [chuckle] Right! (sarcastically)

Asking teachers for favors and money (often in jest) are other examples of warm interactions:

[Niel to Ms. Hamilton in an end of year test]

Niel: Miss, mi cya go di bathroom [Miss, can I go to the bathroom?]
Ms. Hamilton: Yuh promise seh, you're gonna go to the bathroom and come right back, Chris? [Do you promise to go to the bathroom and return right away, Chris?]
Niel: Yes, Miss. Trust mi man. [Trust me, please]

[Group of boys to Ms. Clarke on the corridor]

Leo: *Miss, beg yuh a money noh!* [Miss, can you give me some money?]
Ms. Clarke: I would *tek a* [love to get some] money from you right now.
Paul: *A soh yuh a deal wid wi, Miss?* [That's how you are treating us, Miss?]
Ms. Clarke: Well, maybe if you were coming to class regularly, I would consider it.
Paul: *Nuh worry Miss, yuh aggo see wi man.* [Don't worry Miss, you'll see us (in class) soon]

In sum, the boys' relations with the school system and authority figures are not always unpleasant. They use jokes and light moments to enjoy friendly interactions with their teachers, especially those from working-class backgrounds.

6.4.2 Empathy and Forgiveness

Overlooking minor infractions by students is another way teachers build rapport with students, which leads to warm exchanges and positive communication:

> ***[Conversation between Sanjay and Ms. Swaby]***
>
> Sanjay (mentioned above) returned from downstairs, where he was loitering. Ms. Swaby said he would not be let back into the class. However, he pleads with her and wins her forgiveness.
>
> > Sanjay: *Miss, mi cyaa come een?* [Miss, may I enter (the classroom)?]
> > Ms. Swaby [guarding the door]: Why are you outside?
> > Sanjay: *A sommn mi go collect Miss.* [I went to collect something, Miss]
> > Ms. Swaby: During class? Couldn't it wait? Besides, I saw you walking around downstairs.
> > Sanjay: *A di bwoy mi didda look fah Miss. Let me een noh Miss. Please…* [I was looking for the boy (from which I needed to collect something), Miss. Let me in please].
>
> Sanjay slowly squeezed his way past Ms. Swaby while she was distracted by another student. A few minutes later, Leo tried to lure him (Sanjay) out again, but Ms. Swaby realized.
>
> > Ms. Swaby: How did you get in? I told you to stay outside because that's where your interest is.
> > Sanjay: *No man, Miss. Mi aggo behave*. [That's not the case Miss. I will behave (from now on).]
>
> Ms. Swaby gave him a questioning look before letting him be. He laughed with Leo, who was watching from the corridor.

6.4.3 Affection and Respect

The expression of affection is one of the positive gestures the boys make toward teachers. This expression typically takes the form of professing respect, like, or even love for specific teachers. However, this display of affection is modulated by dominant standards of masculinity and femininity, which makes intimacy among male students and male teachers a rarity, except when shrouded by masculine posturing. Female students and female teachers readily display affectionate gestures such as touching, hugging, and mutual praise. It is, therefore, not uncommon for female students to comment on teachers' appearance and vice versa, using

flattery and adjectives like "pretty." The same does not apply to male-male (teacher-student) relations. Nonetheless, there were affectionate overtures from the boys to female teachers.

Ms. McDonald, as the Grade 8 coordinator, is one of the most respected teachers at West Hill High. Her down-to-earth persona makes her a favorite of numerous students. However, her role as a disciplinary authority has earned her the ire of many others. For Marlon, however, Ms. McDonald is undoubtedly his favorite teacher, as shown below:

> ***[At jerk day rehearsal]***
>
> To give the boys a chance to practice making jerk chicken before the official selling day, I organized a rehearsal where we prepared and consumed chicken among ourselves. In appreciation for the support certain teachers offered, the boys were asked to reserve pieces of chicken for four teachers. Marlon selected a 'nice-looking' piece of chicken for Ms. McDonald, which he protected vigilantly, threatening others who attempted to take it.
>
> Billy [jokingly]: *Eh, da pesa chikin ya look good inno star*. [Hey, this piece of chicken looks really good]
> Marlon: *Yow! Tek yuh yeye offa Ms. McDonald chiken no yute* [Hey! Take your eyes off Ms. McDonald's chicken]
> KW: *Mi notice seh yuh a guard da piece deh fi Ms. McDonald* [I notice you've been guarding this piece of chicken for Ms. McDonald]
> Marlon: *How yuh mean man...Dis cyaan gwaan a Miss McDonald noh get a nice piece a chiken* [Yes, of course. We cannot allow Ms. McDonald to not get a nice piece of chicken]
> KW: *So waapen to di adda teacher dem?* [So, what about the other teachers?]
> Marlon: *A Miss McDonald piece mi a pree. Miss McDonald me rate* [I am only taking responsibility for Ms. McDonald's piece. I respect Ms. McDonald]
> KW: *Why yuh rate Ms. McDonald soh much?* [Why do you respect Ms. McDonald so much?]
> Marlon: *Miss McDonald real, yuh zimi. Miss McDonald look out fi di yutes dem. She understand wi* [Ms. McDonald is real, do you know what I mean? Ms. McDonald looks out for us boys. She understands us.]
>
> (Later) We brought chicken for the four teachers who supported the project. Marlon insisted that he be allowed to deliver Ms. McDonald's chicken personally. He wrapped it nicely in aluminum foil.
>
> Marlon: *Yow! A mi a bring Ms. McDonald piece go gi har inno.* [Hey! I will be the one bringing Ms. McDonald's piece of chicken to her]

Ms. McDonald was not in the staffroom at the time Marlon attempted to deliver the chicken.

> Marlon: *Sir! A Ms. McDonald piece dis. Mek sure yuh no mixxy up inno. Mek sure she getty tomorrow.* [Sir! Here is Ms. McDonald's piece (of chicken). Make sure you don't confuse it with the other pieces. Make sure she gets it tomorrow.]
> KW: *Ya man. Mi aggo put y inna di fridge fi har and send har a message so she kno it in deh.* [Sure! I will put it in the fridge for her and I will also send her a message, so she knows it's there.]
> Marlon: *Yeh, and tell har seh a me deal wid it fi har.* [Okay, and tell her I was the one who prepared it for her]

Male-to-male display of affection comes in the form of "respect," a word that strips affection down to its barest, most masculine form. In the local language, respecting someone is expressed as "rating" them. Hand gestures (while greeting) are a common way to express such "rating," especially among male students. Occasionally, such gestures are used between teachers and students. However, like jokes, these gestures are typically only used by teachers who identify with or are compassionate to working-class and inner-city values:

> ***[Leo greeting Mr. Golding]***
>
> Leo (while doing a hand gesture): *Y pree, Missa G?* [How are you, Mr. Golding?]
> Mr. Golding: *Mi deh man. Yuh good?* [Nothing much. Is everything all right?]
> Leo: *Yah man* [Yes]

In summary, the boys sometimes verbalize their admiration and affection for teachers. These are typically the teachers with whom they can communicate freely or whom they perceive as acting in their interest or sympathetic to their struggles.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter explored the boys' navigation of the Classroom—the formal spaces and interactions within schooling. The literature indicates that comfort in the classroom is positively correlated with higher levels of class participation, which is more likely to produce positive learning outcomes (Martin et al., 2017). However, the WHBs' experience of the classroom is best summarized as humiliating. They are forced to assimilate into a system of practices that

are culturally foreign or counterintuitive, given the imperatives of their learning environment. These include language requirements that are onerous for many students and lead to misunderstandings and conflict. In addition, while well-intentioned, streaming, testing, and ranking hurt low-achieving students, exclude them, and paradoxically disregard the very right to achieve their "full potential" that the ministry espouses. To counter their negative experiences, the boys used *extraction*, *deflection*, and *distraction* strategies, challenging the school's authority directly and indirectly. While these challenges are often perceived as opposition to authority, a key element of what Willis calls a school counterculture, there is a difference. While the *Hammertown* boys saw authority as inherently antithetical to their freedom, the WHBs' relationship with authority is more nuanced. The WHBs seemed wary of authority that threatens, belittles, or embarrasses them. However, they seem to understand the dynamics of authority. After all, they perceive themselves as rulers of the Courtyard, a space where they are virtually unchallenged and can manipulate weaker students. Similarly, the boys perceive teachers as being in charge of the Classroom, deserving of the right to control that space, so long as they do not make the boys victims of their domination.

The chapter also demonstrated teachers' understanding of students' situations and difficulties. Nonetheless, teachers seemed unable to make changes that could unilaterally improve students' schooling experiences. Chin's (2018) study on boys' education in Jamaica corroborates this. She notes that the education sector stakeholders in Jamaica face structural and cultural obstructions to solving male underachievement in high schools, reinforced by local traditions, customs, beliefs, values, and practices. As shown, despite instances of harmonious relations between teachers and students, teachers' insistence that students conform to dominant expectations despite their understanding of the students' situation demonstrates the complexity

of the dynamics of schooling, in which they must navigate systemic and institutionalized constructs.

It is arguable, then, that the ministry's idea of "full potential" is skewed against low-achieving students, questioning the extent to which the current dominant and class-based schooling practices are necessary or appropriate in low-performing secondary schools. Moreover, such practices may have the unintended effect of incentivizing deviant innovation: rewarding students for their craftiness and ability to evade, ridicule, and outwit teachers and renege classroom obligations, distorting their latent curiosities and aptitude for learning.

As Miller (1986) pointed out, male exclusion from education led to the marginalization of the Jamaican working-class man. The West Hill Boys' experiences show that this exclusion continues today. The Jamaica National Development Plan aims to make Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, and raise families by 2030. If Vision 2030 is to be realized, the education system must consistently produce highly optimized human capital. However, education excludes a significant portion of the Jamaican population under the status quo.

Moreover, the incentivizing of deviant innovation, coupled with an exaggerated eagerness for wealth and a preoccupation with money among working-class boys, has implications for crime, violence, and the Jamaican Dream and social order. I argue, therefore, that to become inclusive, schooling for low achievers must move toward a model that defies dominant expectations of academic success and aims to satisfy students' interests and talents. Such a model would corroborate Frederickson and Cline's (2009, p. 71) idea of inclusion, which requires "the introduction of a more radical set of changes through which schools restructure themselves so as to be able to embrace all children."

Chapter 7
Delinquency and the Agitation of Social Order

We know that delinquent behavior has historically been partially the result of harsh schooling (Wertlieb, 1982). As the previous discussion demonstrated, the characteristics of a low-achieving school setting in Jamaica necessitate the use of male students' agency to navigate and avert harsh, humiliating experiences. It has also been shown that the instincts that guide students' navigation of schooling are inspired by local subcultural influences, such as dancehall music and "toxic" notions of masculinity. This chapter expands the discussion to show that the boys' behaviors can be mapped to dominant social values and shared conceptions of social success in Jamaica. To set the stage for this, I describe the Jamaican Dream and social order.

The chapter then discusses the resistance thesis as it applies to deviance. Existing discourses have framed delinquency as "resistance," a function of subcultural coding that opposes the status quo. This chapter makes a case for decoupling deviance from the political meaning that would make it resistive, arguing instead for a more contextually accurate characterization. Finally, as required in a macro-ethnographic analysis, the chapter discusses the implication of teenage boys' delinquency for the wider Jamaican society, social order, and status quo.

7.1 Protective Delinquency

Abowitz (2000) describes resistance as a form of communication that necessitates dialogue around power imbalances and inequalities. Against this backdrop, protective delinquency represents students' signaling of endangerment and discomfort. It is the by-product of the state's inability to coerce students toward dominant social values, despite having gained

the platform and legal terms of engagement via schooling. Schooling in Jamaica faces the enormous task of being inclusive, pluralistic, and non-discriminatory while simultaneously producing productive citizens who can propel Jamaica toward its goal of economic and social prosperity. Nonetheless, it seems that schooling in Jamaica is unintentionally overpromising and underdelivering. A significant subset of Jamaicans—who conform to subcultural standards of speech, dress, and manners—experience school negatively. They are forced to constantly negotiate their right to occupy the increasingly morally safeguarded territory that schooling has become. This negotiation is more taxing at a low-achieving school like West Hill High, where most students have comparatively lower academic abilities and possess subcultural rather than cultural capital. Therefore, we must question the degree to which the state bears culpability for students' failure.

For this primary reason, I argue that delinquency among low-achieving students, like the West Hill Boys, cannot be considered "resistive" since their delinquency is a response to a kind of "breach of contract" between the state and working-class people. To support this concept, I will add that "resistance" would require a commitment to delinquent values, which was not the case for the West Hill Boys.

To elaborate on the idea of commitment or lack of commitment to delinquent values, I will start with the case of Willis' "lads." For them, delinquency was ingrained in their socialization, reinforced by the home, and facilitated by the peer group. Moreover, the lads knowingly disobeyed and rejected school, even though they were just as capable (according to Willis) as conformist students. This shows commitment to delinquent values underpinned by their cultural background and agency. The lads rejected school because they thought schooling was a waste of time given their inflated perception of the value of their labor power, which in

1970s England was in high demand. However, the Jamaican boys do not demonstrate the same commitment to delinquent values. They also do not have the same abilities/capabilities (based on dominant standards) and are, therefore, primarily acting in response to perceived attacks on their dignity. These attacks come in two main ways: victimization in the Courtyard and humiliation in the Classroom, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six. Their lack of commitment to delinquent values is also signaled by the following:

(1) The fluidity of the boys' relations, as discussed in Chapter Five. The West Hill Boys' relations were loosely structured compared to the lads who subscribed to a more rigid form of group ideology

(2) The boys were younger than Willis' lads were and did not have a strong sense of the consequences of school failure

(3) Boys demonstrated and embodied many of the mores of the dominant culture, such as loyalty, honesty, perseverance, hard work, kindness, brotherhood, and team-orientedness

(4) The boys' willingness to participate in the jerk chicken project showed their receptiveness to appropriately-formulated learning objectives.

(5) The boys' acceptance of me signaled their openness to new perspectives

(6) For most West Hill Boys, their family environments, though situated in subcultural settings, did not seem to promote resistance to the status quo or extol *badman* values.

Delinquency for the West Hill Boys is not a way to upstage capitalism. On the contrary, many of them (typical of working-class families) have high hopes of achieving success and fulfilling capitalism's goals of wealth and status. This process has traditionally been funneled through formal schooling, which kind of sifts the extraordinary student from the rest. However, there is an inherent bias in this sifting process, as social, cultural, and economic factors corrupt

it, determining who can become "extraordinary," even before effort is factored in. This traps the poor into thinking they, too, can be "great" if they go to school and "work hard." However, the reality of the West Hill Boys shows that low-achieving students' experience of schooling is quite harsh and hostile. It does not inspire them to "work hard" and be "great," but one that victimizes and humiliates them. This victimization and humiliation are partly caused by the universal education model that uses standards of achievement that marginalize low-achieving youth. Importantly, this system is not just the school as we know it but also the societal expectations and customs reinforced by schooling, which also thrive on the mentality of academic achievement and winner-takes-all. As a result, even though they might be committed to schooling, they do not experience success and achievement in a typical way.

It is a paradox, then, that schooling, contrary to its mantra of inclusivity and non-discrimination, is experienced negatively by a subset of Jamaicans based on class. Schooling is, therefore, selective in the values and subcultural capital it recognizes and, by extension, the students it allows to succeed.

7.2 The Jamaican Dream and Social Order in Context

The world has long heralded the idea of the American Dream - the notion that "all men are created equal with the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and all people can achieve success regardless of their background or origin if they "work hard." The American Dream has been the democratic world's motto for centuries and has made its way into every crevice of the globe, including Jamaica. Graham (2017) notes,

> [The] dream is not about guaranteed outcomes but about the *pursuit* of opportunities. The dream found a persona in the fictional characters of the 19th-century writer Horatio Alger Jr—in which young working-class protagonists go from rags to riches (or at least became middle class) in part due to entrepreneurial spirit and hard work. (para. 2)

It is not coincidental that acquiring "riches" made the dream more resonant. I would even argue that wealth is neither a byproduct nor a consequence of the dream but the dream itself.

Perhaps a function of Jamaica's geographical proximity to America, and the fact that Jamaica's most significant economic and cultural influences over the last few decades have come from America, the Jamaican Dream mirrors its North American counterpart. Vision 2030 is perhaps the most salient piece of official literature that captures the essence of this dream. Vision 2030 aims to make Jamaica "the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business" by 2030. It can be considered a strategic plan to afford citizens access to the Jamaican Dream (Smith, 2018b). However, if the current indicators are to be believed, the Jamaican Dream also pivots on wealth.

Jamaicans' subscription to Christian teachings, which warn about the dangers of riches, may have curtailed the ambition of the ordinary man to become wealthy. However, as religious teachings have evolved, the message of "money as the root of all evil" has slowly been replaced by "God wants you to prosper ." Accordingly, wealth is conceivably the single most "concrete" life goal for Jamaican youth. Indeed, among the West Hill Boys, as Chapters Five and Six describe, wealth is a preeminent cultural value. Jamaica's financial sector now drives this messaging, with all major banks having investment arms that offer products for the "average man" to "invest and grow wealth." The government, too, has aggressively promoted the idea of wealth. In a post on Facebook made April 10, 2019, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Andrew Holness, noted, "Jamaica is destined to be a rich country and we must never be afraid of wealth or making a profit. I believe this is the best way of giving back to the people of the country and achieve the goal of the socialization of wealth" (Holness, 2019). To this end, the government has embarked on further liberalization of the financial sector. It has divested several state assets through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) targeted at "ordinary Jamaicans."

Homeownership is another pillar of the Jamaican Dream. Prime Minister Holness has often repeated that it is the goal of every Jamaican to own their own home, a reality that his administration has committed to help them realize. However, ownership alone does not tell the whole story. As Frater (2015a, para. 2) pointed out, the Prime Minister stated that "it should be the ambition of every poor man in Jamaica to build a big house … [as] a man's house is his castle". In addition, cars, a family, good standing in the community, and money in the bank seem to be what Jamaicans consider the embodiment of the "pursuit of happiness."

Like most neoliberal ones, Jamaican society is built on the backbone of schooling followed by gainful employment as the gateway to the Jamaican Dream and its accompanying wealth and success, at least for the masses. It is the epitome of meritocracy, where hard work results in success. This social order, which is predicated on the respectability and rectitude that Mortley and Senior (2022) and Lewis (2020) describe, is reinforced by state apparatuses and institutions such as schools, certification, the police, and the justice system, which have the power to reward conformity and sanction dissent. State sanctions can also extend to the social and economic realm as the ruling classes (for whom the status quo is most resonant) have significant gatekeeping power and leverage over the masses. Therefore, not having a school leaving certificate or vocational accreditation, for instance, could result in confinement to menial, exploitative jobs. Likewise, partaking in illegitimate means of earning could lead to incarceration. It is a barebones version of the mechanism behind control theory, where the fear of sanctions makes us accept otherwise undesirable social conditions.

The idea of the working-class and the poor "rejecting" education might suggest that their ideas of prosperity, wealth and the Jamaican Dream are dissimilar to those of the dominant classes. However, there are notable similarities. The Jamaican dancehall is replete with evidence of this convergence of desires, as demonstrated by the lyrics and lifestyles of dancehall

artists. Vybz Kartel, the Jamaican de facto king of the dancehall, in his hit song "Reparation," chants:

> *Every ghetto youth fi a [should] live like the big man, [with a] mansion [that is] bigger than Hilton, [or] Wyndham [hotels]… Anno [Not] everybody can run like Bolt or sing like me or dance like Ding Dong.*

Kartel's lyrics highlight the perceived inaccessibility of the acceptable routes to success for urban youth amidst the desire for the results that acceptable routes guarantee. Even the legendary Usain Bolt, of whom Kartel sings, has his own tune entitled "Living the Dream," where he mentions the "house on the hill with a nice city view" and "pushing the wheels" as he encourages youth to "never give up." Also, as the findings of this study have indicated, the West Hill Boys' dreams (as a proxy of working-class people's dreams) mirror those of the dominant class, at least as regards the Jamaican Dream.

Neoliberal ideology (discussed in Chapter 4) can help us make sense of this. While neoliberal ideology emphasizes self-blame in the face of failure to achieve social goals and symbols, it also emphasizes self-action or the necessity of "taking matters into one's own hands." Therefore, while urban youths' proximity to dancehall culture orients them around blaming their fate on "the system," it also urges them to "survive"—which is a call to, through one's actions, adapt, achieve, and succeed.

Interestingly, dancehall music does not ardently push the message of education as it does the message of prosperity and "mek it inna life [social success]," which creates ambiguity about the ethos that should guarantee success. This ambiguous, somewhat conflicting message adds a layer of complexity to what appears to be a fading preoccupation with the *school-work-success* model, especially among working-class Jamaicans. Moreover, this trend coincides with a relative rise in deviance and crime, which is increasingly less sanctioned, progressively

justified, and appealing. Hope (2006, p. 23) corroborates this, noting: "as economic wealth through formal channels becomes more difficult and less financially rewarding in many instances, the once ideal careers of lawyer, doctor or teacher are facing obsolescence as generally accepted models of success." This emergent "new normal" is what I call the *normalization of delinquency*, which has implications for the Jamaican status quo, social order, and Jamaican Dream.

7.3 The Normalization of Delinquency

The previous section highlighted the commonplace nature of schooling, academic excellence, gainful employment, and eventual financial success as the conformist path to social success among the masses. Though useful in amassing riches, delinquency is widely seen as antithetical to social success. Throughout this dissertation, I have shown the linkages between delinquency and the middle-class-based education imposed on youth from subcultural backgrounds. However, a critical argument to be made is that the stature of delinquency, as evidenced by its potential to permeate "dominant cultural values," is increasing. Thus, it is becoming an emerging mainstream value, which has the potential to unseat or become equivalent to traditional education – the foundation of the current *school-work-success* model and the bedrock of the Jamaican Dream and social order.

Education has long been the ordinary man's primary route to social success in post-independent Jamaica. In order of diminishing value, athletic talent, artistic talent, vocational skills and occupations, and manual labor were official "backups" but dignifying alternative routes to success. Respectable routes to success have always coexisted with delinquency, deviance, and crime in a sort of unstated rivalry. However, delinquency was not a valid alternative to academic excellence. Now, it arguably is. The shunning of these glorified alternatives and the respectability they require has, thus, moved deviance into the mainstream.

Lewis (2020, p. 177) describes this "eschewing respectability" as liberating, as the oppressed escape their "sufferation" in pursuit of "survival."

It is not that delinquency did not exist a route previously. In fact, *donmanship*[23], drug trafficking, and extortion have been used throughout Jamaica's recent history to enrich and "empower" the ordinary man. However, Jamaicans, particularly those in the middle-class bound by "respectability," were resolutely opposed to these routes. However, Jamaica is now witnessing more and more indifference to and passive and active partaking in these once-abhorrent routes to wealth. Moreover, there is an erasure of the class-based nature of participation in innovative routes to success.

Delinquency is becoming more acceptable and celebrated, even as outlaws are becoming more emboldened and less contrite. The brazenness of the rejection of the traditional way and the subscription to delinquency, euphemized as "survival," is very apparent. Here is a good place to note that the West Hill Boys, at the time of my fieldwork, had not seemed to have solidified a commitment to delinquency and were, from all indications, moldable, given the right stimuli. Hence, the classification of their delinquency as "protective" and not "resistive," like the Hammertown lads. However, several years after first meeting the boys, Marlon and Billy have dropped out of school, and Paul took up marijuana smoking and drinking. Others seem to be getting more invested in the culture of deviance as manifested in dancehall music and culture. I know these facts from my continued interactions with them via social media. Based on these realities, it seems likely that as the boys age, they solidify their commitment to delinquent values and, like trying to bend a grown tree, reaching them becomes increasingly difficult.

[23] A system of localized political controlled by a well-connected, usually self-declared local leader who wields power, status, and prestige derived from multiple sources and activities often encompassing criminal routes. It has been likened to the Italian Mafia or Godfather (see Johnson & Soeters, 2008)

A worrying wave of dancehall influences is currently sweeping across Jamaica. It involves the glorification of drugs, guns, sex, and crime. As the literature shows (see Elsass, 2015), most teenagers, as a tenet of their transition to adulthood, dabble in delinquent behavior, which might include temporarily subscribing to popular (negative) trends. However, most abandon delinquency before the onset of adulthood. This abandonment is likely because of the exclusivity of the *school-work-success* model in generating social bonds which internally constrict and regulate behavior. Also, traditionally, rejecting this preferred model led to class reproduction, as Willis' study showed.

While there is insufficient data to draw thorough inferences about the Jamaican situation, the literature shows that delinquency and youth crime continue to pose a considerable threat to national security despite decades-long interventions (see Jarrett, 2020; Levy, 2012; Smith & Green, 2007). Therefore, I theorize that more youth are becoming drawn into long-term delinquent behaviors due to the popularity of delinquency and the growing opportunities for financial gain through illegal schemes that shortcut the *school-work-success* model. Traditionally, the narcotics trade was the preferred alternative means. Now, scamming has become the default mechanism for the current breed of dissatisfied youth.

The bloodiness and precarity of the scam seem no deterrent for young people involved in scamming. Moreover, the moral imperatives that rendered such a trade deeply abhorrent, thus thwarting widespread adoption, have seemingly turned to indifference. While empirical data and research are still lacking, the lottery scam in Jamaica has transformed the lives of thousands of ordinary Jamaicans, making them "somebodies" with "mansions on hills" and nice cars. It has also made them the centerpieces of their social circles and communities in some instances.

The Jamaican dancehall has also come out in full support of the practice, which Vybz Kartel's tune frames as "reparations" for the ills of slavery. Another song entitled

"Scamma[24]" by the former queen of the dancehall, Lady Saw, frames the practice as a prerequisite among females when choosing a male partner, while yet another tune by Stamma Gramma entitled "Scammer Anthem[25]" frames the scam as the way to achieve life goals like money, house, and land.

The nature of the lottery scam makes it difficult to quantify its financial impact on an individual, his/her family, community, and even the country. Nonetheless, Mortley (2017) cites estimates that suggest that Jamaican scammers swindled more than a billion USD over a four-year period from Americans. This amounts to about a quarter of Jamaica's annual GDP per year. Mortley (2017) adds that scammers are also said to earn as much as 50,000 USD per month, which is more than the annual income of a medical doctor in Jamaica. As scammers often build large houses, the construction industry is also said to benefit immensely from the influx of tainted money, which has a ripple effect on other sectors.

However, it is the contagion of the practice that is most worrisome. Mortley (2017) notes that scamming has infiltrated various traditional and "morally upright" professional fields, including education, information and communication technology (ICT), retail business, law, the police force, and the private security sector, among others. Local news reports also offer accounts of the involvement of law enforcement officers, religious leaders, and politicians in the scam (Frater, 2015b; Silvera, 2022). He notes that scammers relate that before joining the trade, they saw other persons improving their socioeconomic statuses and wanted a similar lifestyle. Benefits also accrue to communities where scammers are known to contribute to local events or do "good deeds." Anecdotal evidence also shows instances of religious families that have turned a blind eye to the proceeds of the scam and a growing sense of indifference among

[24] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pauVhUgA4rk&ab_channel=DancehallReggaeTV
[25] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2IvXUxljdg&ab_channel=PriinceMuzik

persons close to scammers. A career day video[26] at a *basic school* (early childhood institution) in Jamaica, which was widely circulated on social media, showed a group of young students voicing what they wanted to be in the future. There was the traditional doctor, teacher, police officer, and soldier, but one boy dressed in business attire and carrying a briefcase wanted to be a scammer. The video might have been popular on social media simply because it is entertaining. Nonetheless, it speaks to a cultural shift and the slow infiltration and normalization of the practice. The narratives in this study have also shown the WHBs' preoccupation with scamming and its earning potential. The trade has gradually infiltrated once guarded territory of Jamaican values and morality. This, coupled with the simultaneous devaluing of education, is emblematic of a society-wide cultural shift away from a values system that highly espouses educational attainment as the primary means of social success. I attribute this shift to a "fluidity of morality," where moral absolutes disappear and traditional values are contested. Moreover, the growing ubiquity of wealth as *the* primary symbol of success in Jamaican society sustains these trends. Furthermore, deviant trends are reinforced by the popularity of the Jamaican dancehall, which is a vital component of contemporary Jamaican culture and is keenly adhered to by young people (see Bolton, 2015; Cooper, 2004).

"Dunce and *boasty*," "fully dunce," "dunce thugs," and "fuck education" are some recent buzzwords in the Jamaican dancehall. "Fuck education" is particularly alarming, considering that previously, even the uneducated would have needed to embrace some willingness to learn, as this was directly tied to their ability to sustain their livelihoods. Thus, many sought vocational training or apprenticeships, which are common avenues for people who failed in academics to redeem themselves and gain the means to become *boasty* (acquire dignity). The idea of being boasty is how the poor might describe the lifestyles of the rich and famous and perhaps the

[26] https://www.youtube.com/shorts/O4mfQ2L7RFc

well-educated and influential – what Vybz Kartel referred to as "living like the big man." Now, *boastiness* is not necessarily a function of education. Hence, people can be dunce and still *boasty*.

The phrase "fully dunce" expresses a similar sentiment with a tacit threat of irrational, unreasoned behavior. Someone who is *fully dunce* is proudly illiterate and showcases his self-ascribed lack of capacity for reasoned, rational behavior. It is feared that the phrase will be used to justify heinous crimes (such as murder), which has landed it on the radar of local Jamaican law enforcement authorities (Loop Jamaica, 2018).

Unsurprisingly, many of the lifestyle traits observable among the West Hill Boys mirror those of the proponents of "dunce and boasty," which is regrettable given the commitment that the boys have, or had, to attending school and participating in the process of cultural values negotiation, which is one of the main functions of schooling. Even more concerning is the fact that the boys' experience of harsh schooling happens against the backdrop of an education system that aims to help each child achieve his/her full potential, insisting that "every child can and must learn."

If the perception that one can access success even without an education persists, what implication does that have for the social status of education going forward? This is significant because schooling serves a much broader purpose than merely equipping students with the technical skills needed for future financial success. Schooling should be the mediating institution that allows us to negotiate and transfer values between different segments of society and across different timeframes, ensuring our ability to coexist and thrive in harmony, even as our values and culture evolve. Besides, we already know that in the case of Jamaica, risky behaviors appear to be less common among educated youth and those who have benefited from proper parenting (Moncrieffe, 2012). Therefore, we must seriously examine the attacks on

educational value, especially considering that some of these wounds can only be described as self-inflicted, given how unwelcoming and unsuited dominant education is to people from marginalized or subcultural backgrounds.

A state of normalized delinquency is reminiscent of Standing's (2011, p. 24) musings about the "Precariat," an emergent class of citizens that are "alienated, anomic, anxious and prone to anger." They are willing but unable to earn a decent social standing and living and are teetering on the edge of populist sympathy. A similar situation has also been documented in Angola, where a culture of violence took hold in the local domain and slowly but steadily became engrained in the local subculture, in which children were socialized and resultantly viewed as normal over time (Cole & Chipaca, 2014). Dancehall culture embodies this "precariat" message but with its own neoliberal-inspired "*haffi mek inna life* [must succeed in life]" solution, which is a relentless, radical pursuit of social status. This disposition is also reflected in the mindsets of Jamaica's unattached youth, who, despite being undereducated and underprepared for the workplace, still view themselves and their prospects favorably (Saxon et al., 2012). Dancehall culture seems to bolster this positive self-prospect and zeal, which renders ordinary outcomes insufficient. As a result, the Jamaican Dream must be enlarged – the big house (on the hill), flashy car, fancy lifestyles, and much cash. As Vybz Kartel's song suggests, ghetto youths should strive for not just a house but a mansion.

Another dimension of the argument concerns the inherent meaning of wealth and why it is worth attaining even through delinquent means. Here, I draw on Matsoga's (2003) work on violence in Botswanan secondary schools. Matsoga argues that school-based violence is primarily a microcosm, or replica of violence in the broader societal context, exacerbated by peculiarities of the education system that inhibit positive outcomes for vulnerable students. He writes that modern education has lost the focus of the traditional communal education in Africa

such that the system can no longer effectively inculcate necessary social skills in the students as the traditional education used to.

Likewise, violence in Jamaican schools reflects the broader societal context, including violence in the home, community, and media (Grant, 2017). Nonetheless, the Jamaican situation has some peculiarities. Since Jamaican society emerged from slavery and a colonial system that notoriously suppressed a sense of personhood for black bodies and a sense of community, Jamaica's traditional communal values have lacked stability, continuity, and legitimacy. Instead, they have been whitewashed by Eurocentric values, which devalued the African body and a black man's sense of self and worth. Matsoga notes that traditional education was about preserving cultural heritage, the family, and the individual, which emphasized personhood as a tenet of community. Compare this with modern education, which only emphasizes the individual in relation to their positionality in the community. As a result, schooling highlights the brightest, best behaved, most athletic, and the like, as opposed to resonance with a set of shared communal values. Thus, the dignity that schooling guarantees is largely incompatible with the Jamaican working-class youth, underscoring the preoccupation urban school-aged youth and urban Jamaicans in general have with appealing to one's personhood and claiming dignity. Although sometimes viewed as contemporary fashion, I would argue that skin bleaching is a temporary form of this personhood reclamation effort. The more permanent form is the accumulation of wealth (money) and power, which currently act as proxies of social success in Jamaica. This is the epitome of the "*haffi mek it inna life*" ethos, which emphasizes individual accomplishment through material possessions such as the house on the hill, flashy car, and money, but also the validation of personhood and its accompanying cultural capital.

7.4 Conclusion

Chapter Seven discussed how the dignifying power of delinquency breaks the dominant system's monopoly on the conferral of dignity. The chapter started out making a case for delinquency being "protective" rather than "resistive" owing to a kind of contractual breach by the state, which mandates students to attend school and promises pathways to achieve the Jamaican Dream, but too often fails. Next, the chapter discussed the centrality of wealth to the Jamaican Dream and the power of neoliberal ideology in entrenching the desirability of, and personal responsibility for, acquiring wealth. Wealth, however, is essentially a symbol of people's true desire for dignity, which by definition is an inherent and inviolable attribute that each human possesses but is often socially constructed as honor and validation conferred in exchange for acquiescence to positive cultural values and norms. It is what Nordenfelt and Edgar (2005) call "dignity of moral stature" or what Valentini (2017) calls "status dignity." In the Jamaican context, dignity is activated by proving oneself honorable. In a low-achieving school, this involves conforming to middle-class-based rules, achievement benchmarks, and behavior. To this end, people from subcultural backgrounds, who form the bulk of the cohort of students in low-achieving schools, have had to find alternative, so-called "delinquent" means of claiming their dignity. It is another dimension in the transition of the working-class from "hustling" or "survival" to prosperity.

However, the chapter emphasizes the severe risk of delinquency becoming so mainstream that it displaces the prominence of schooling as the entry point to success in society. It appears delinquency is becoming less about the survival of working-class youth and more about prosperity and supremacy, which is a real threat to the Jamaican status quo. More importantly, under a system of normalized delinquency, delinquents do not necessarily become trapped at the base of the social pyramid but, through their success at attaining wealth, are able to influence

conformist segments of society toward a kind of moral fluidity that is conducive to delinquency, or at the least indifferent to non-conformity.

Despite this, delinquency is also an outlet for claiming personhood, which has historically been suppressed among black Jamaicans. Therefore, we must be careful not to characterize delinquency (and crime) as mere manifestations of toxic culture resulting from the eschewal of respectability and rectitude for money among Jamaica's urban youth *precariat*. Alternatively, delinquency should be seen as a neoliberal response to urban displeasure with the process of conferring dignity—a claiming of personhood that demands innovation, urgency, and self-remedy but is nonetheless on a collision course with the dominant ideology.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

This study's overarching objective was to understand the affinity low-achieving boys have with "delinquent" behaviors and academic underachievement in Jamaica. Based on the study's research objectives and questions, the following insights have emerged:

(1) Delinquency among low-achieving high school boys is emblematic of a clash between mainstream and subcultural values as they vie for control of the Jamaican status quo. Delinquency is an agentive tool that expresses working-class frustration with the situation surrounding class positioning and the recognition of subcultural values in Jamaican society. Delinquency is, thus, an act of claiming the dignity and personhood of the urban Jamaican youth.

(2) Delinquency in a low-achieving school mirrors urban Jamaican male culture, which revolves around the 6Gs: Guns, Gal (girls), Ghetto, Gays, Ganja, and God. However, this study emphasizes a 7th G among the low-achieving boys - Gold (money), which proved to be the most salient.

(3) Contrary to the portrayal of schooling as feminized, low-achieving boys experience both masculinized and feminized schooling. On one hand, they experience schooling that appeals to their subcultural values and offers opportunities to acquire, reinforce and refine deviant skills while earning respect from peers and validation from females. On the other hand, they must also endure "feminized schooling," which subjects them to counter-intuitive norms and requirements that humiliate and emasculate them, resulting in conflict.

a. Educational success embodied by feminized schooling is still symbolically incompatible with the Jamaican male working-class identity and notions of masculinity.

(4) Schooling, particularly feminized schooling, paradoxically facilitates *protective delinquency* by subjecting working-class youth to negative schooling experiences.

a. Male delinquency in a Jamaican low-achieving high school can be seen as reflective of a society-wide cultural shift away from a values system that highly espouses educational attainment as the entry point to social success.

b. The idea that deviance and resistance to education are socially reproductive seems culturally contextual. In the contemporary Jamaican context, working-class deviance (delinquency) is not necessarily self-victimizing amidst what appears to be a cultural shift in its encapsulating social values system. Contrarily, delinquency's rapid normalization poses threats to the Jamaican status quo.

The study captures and explains delinquency (and underachievement) from the perspective of thirteen low-achieving urban males, detailing how schooling policies, subcultural adaptations, and normative expectations influence their navigation of schooling, the value they attach to their abilities, and their behaviors. In Jamaica and the wider Caribbean, delinquency, male underachievement, male marginalization, and criminal involvement share many commonalities that center on images of masculinity and notions of social success. Thus, any investigation of delinquency warrants a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics that produce the Caribbean male. This study's analyses examine one node in the complex mechanism that frames Jamaican manhood—low-achieving schooling.

Schooling is the most common mode of education across the globe and teaches more than just technical skills. It prepares students for life as productive and responsible citizens by

inculcating pro-social values. In keeping with ambitious goals for national development by 2030, Jamaican schooling aims to create students who complete secondary education with proficiencies in the English language, a foreign language, Mathematics, a science subject, and information technology; participate in sports and the arts, and gain exposure to vocational training. These expectations, along with cultural, historical, socioeconomic, and other factors, result in the operationalization of schooling around competition, cultural assimilation, and the *othering* of non-dominant values. This orientation, as shown throughout this study, results in a negative schooling experience that erodes the dignity and personhood of working-class youth.

The study explored various theoretical perspectives on delinquency, male underachievement, and deviance and found them lacking in several ways. Firstly, studies on delinquency tend to emphasize a criminological perspective that does not give as much credence to cultural dynamics or the subjective experiences of offenders. Instead, deviance is reduced to a collection of numerical probabilities. These tend to highlight typical factors such as race, poverty, parental absenteeism, early exposure to violence, inferior parenting, and the influence of deviant peers. Criminological perspectives also overemphasize legal violations, which results in a focus on juvenile detention facilities and youth whom the justice system has formally indicted. Therefore, the period and circumstances leading up to such indictments remain under-explored.

Furthermore, qualitative accounts also suffer weakness, as there tends to be too much focus on individual behaviors that are not extrapolated to broader social contexts. Qualitative studies, particularly those conducted in Jamaica, do not focus enough on schooling and the intersection of class, gender, structure, agency, and deviance. Such an intersectional approach

is crucial in an age of neoliberal ideology that emphasizes individual responsibility for failure or success, even among non-dominant classes.

To compensate, this study used an ethnographic approach, which through carefully negotiated intimacy between the researcher and the research subjects, produced nuanced accounts of the schooling of 13 West Hill boys as they navigated their confinement to a low-achieving school environment. The study captures their beliefs, behaviors, interactions, and the meanings they attach to the social phenomena they encounter in schooling. This is insightful in a school environment where structural and agentive factors mesh to form complex constructs which cannot always be captured numerically. Therefore, personal accounts of students' experiences are needed to patch the gaps in our understanding. However, school ethnographies have been criticized as mere exoticized caricatures of schools (Ogbu, 1981). Indeed, schools do not operate in vacuums but are at the intersection of broader local and even global social phenomena, which should be captured by or mapped to research data. To this end, a macro-ethnographic approach was used to ground the localized findings in the broader social context by drawing references to Jamaica's most popular urban cultural scene, the dancehall.

The study maintains that the goals of Jamaica's education system are sincere. However, paradoxically, the current operationalization of the low-achieving school causes it to facilitate delinquency when the goal is to inhibit it. Chapter Four of the dissertation outlines the mechanism behind what I call a "divide," partially created by the "high bar" policymakers and the status quo set for school achievement, which excludes and denigrates those it needs to reach most urgently. This bar is policed by the ruling classes and guarded by inflexible cultural and achievement standards applied unilaterally in schools. This bar does not cater to the subcultural peculiarities that students possess, their baseline academic abilities, learning interests, talents, or the applicability of a standard high school education to their future career goals. Thus, the

unilateral nature of education ends up problematizing working-class kids, thus exacerbating their exclusion. Language and dress code are at the top of this list of standards, followed by standardized testing, ranking, streaming, and the maintenance of a rift between traditional and non-traditional schools, which creates and sustains the ideal student, and by extension, the delinquent student, who are in essence, embodiments of achievement and failure. More troubling is the fact that the divide maps to the "elite and middle-class" and "underclass" almost seamlessly. The chapter also shows deficiencies in the resources available to "non-traditional" schools, which should arguably be better funded if the goal is to bring students up to par.

The study shows that divides persist even within individual school environments by detailing the daily activities of the 13 West Hill boys and the plethora of subcultural values, behaviors, and themes that they negotiate throughout their schooling. In Chapter Five, one side of the divide within the school is presented, showing the boys' control over the spaces outside of the "official" ambit of the school. I refer to this space as the Courtyard. The narratives show the centrality of urban culture in the Courtyard, the use of violence, the objectification of girls, braggadocio, swindling, gambling, and typical delinquent behaviors such as truancy, smoking, and drinking. I highlighted a subset of Hope's framework of the 'G's that characterize urban culture to demonstrate those which the boys prioritized—Guns and Gal (girls). I added a seventh 'G'—Gold (money), which turned out to be the most salient 'G.' I then show how these Gs coalesce into what I call a *badman* quasi-identity, which is invaluable in navigating the tumultuous Courtyard and even the official space outside of the Courtyard, which I call the Classroom. The chapter also challenges the often-cited salience of the peer group in deviant ideation and conduct, showing a divergent trend among the West Hill Boys. Individual delinquency has been shown to accelerate as grade levels increase (see Lo et al., 2011), which

makes the WHBs' divergence a function of their young(er) ages and noncommittal attitude to delinquent values.

Chapter Six explores the contours of the boys' interactions with the official school system and how these interactions humiliate and denigrate them. The chapter shows the centrality of conflicts centered around testing and other schooling obligations, the insistence on linguistic standards, grooming standards, and appearance aligned with dominant middle-class values. The chapter also showed how boys navigated the classroom terrain through distraction, extraction, deflection, and their *badman* identity. Perhaps most insightful, though, were the perspectives that teachers provided, which highlighted the biases of the education system against working-class students, the underfunding of low-achieving education, and the misalignment of educational imperatives and those of many working-class students. What was appalling was the teachers' unwillingness or inability to make fundamental changes that would enhance the student experience, which highlighted the overbearing nature of structural biases in the education of the Jamaican underclass, for whom the Classroom is mostly a traumatic and alienating experience.

To make meaning of the insight gathered from this research, I have searched Jamaican society for parallels. The Jamaican dancehall space fits the bill. The journey of acceptance of the Jamaican dancehall as a requisite and valued tenet of Jamaican culture has been rife with contestation. Apart from being traditionally viewed as inferior and beneath the dignity of middle-class Jamaica, dancehall music and culture have been accused of espousing toxic values that promote violence, sexism, hegemonic masculinity, criminality, and the like. Nevertheless, the dancehall space shares many commonalities with the West Hill boys, including their de-facto language, Jamaican Creole; dress code and grooming practices; intolerance of disrespect; the glorification of money and violence; the simultaneous desire for and objectification of

women; the bashing of gays and non-heterosexual imagery; idolization of drinking and smoking; and the love for brand name clothing and paraphernalia; among others. These similarities make the Jamaican dancehall the center point of the clash of values taking place in schools. The literature frames this clash as a resistance of the dominant middle-class values system by the underclass, which I challenge in the case of the West Hill boys, whose delinquency I described as "protective" or a mere act of reflex rather than a cognitive internalization of the often-heralded oppression of the ghetto youth that dancehall and the underclass often express. Nonetheless, dancehall's resistance to the mainstream has always existed but seems to be taking on a new dimension.

Chapter 7 describes the emergence of trends that denigrate education and celebrate the achievement of wealth despite academic failure. The chapter describes the traditional significance of schooling and work to social success and the achievement of the Jamaican Dream. However, I show the reduction of the Jamaican Dream to the possession of material symbols, which have become the ultimate goal of an angry, anxious, anomic, and alienated underclass that is frustrated at the pace and means of acquiring "official" dignity. Hence, they have resorted to claiming their dignity through alternative means. For such adherents, the instrumental value of education is transferred to the instrumental value of deviance, supported by a complicit middle-tier of citizens, who are, at the very least, willing to forgive non-conformity and, in many cases, criminality, as they hedge against benefits that may accrue to them in return.

Notions of masculinity are at the heart of theorizations on male deviance. Existing studies highlight the incapacity of males socialized to standards of hegemonic masculinity to adjust to the feminized nature of schooling, which is apparent in Caribbean countries. Among Jamaican theorists, the idea that the underrepresentation of males in the education profession led to male

underachievement has been challenged with an explanation of schooling being too feminine for the urban-socialized Jamaican boy. The contention is not that schooling is unfit but that the homes have not adequately prepared their male children for a school system that is more open to perceived feminine characteristics. While I accept this as a feature of Jamaican schooling and provided numerous accounts of male discomfort in schooling throughout this dissertation, I augmented this idea, demonstrating how "masculine" spaces are created and preserved within schooling, spatially differentiated as the Courtyard versus the Classroom. While the Courtyard is a battleground rife with conflicts, and potential victimization, it is a space for rough and tough bravado, which appeals to hegemonic notions of Jamaican masculinity. The Classroom, however, is where students interact with "officialdom;" where uniform standards are enforced, testing, ranking, and streaming are ubiquitous; and linguistic standards inhibit learning and misconstrue respect. It is here that urban masculinity is "othered" and problematized.

The view of schooling as feminized results from the premium placed on the Classroom space and not on the totality of interactions within the school environment. It is a perspective that emphasizes only the dominant, normative functions and accepted exchanges within schooling. However, schooling is a collection of both spaces and more, as learning is not limited to formal interactions. In fact, a tenet of learning for urban youth inevitably involves the reinforcement of localized conceptions of manhood which are disallowed in feminized Classroom spaces. The boys, therefore, fashion the space outside of the Classroom to align with their notions of manhood, which provide ample opportunities to experience "masculinized schooling." It seems, then, that by excluding males from the feminized Classroom, the system creates and sustains a divide that reinforces hegemonic notions of masculinity. Exclusion explains the boys' conviction in reasserting their dominance over and dexterity in handling the

only space that is not explicitly patrolled and regulated by feminine ideals. I say "explicitly" because I have shown how feminity and validation by females influence the boys' agency.

Figueira-McDonough (1983) warns about the long-standing tradition of focusing on the family to address delinquency, which often leaves policymakers feeling helpless. Instead, she urges greater attention be placed on schooling, considering its weight as a key socializing agent of youth. In a similar vein, I have pushed back on the notion that working-class homes should be the ones to prepare boys to navigate the Classroom space, as working-class homes are likely ill-equipped for such a task. Not that homes should play no role in orienting students around pro-social values and behaviors, but this task is enormous since the expected values are not always intuitive or ubiquitous among the urban working-class. It is akin to asking a painter to bake bread. Therefore, it seems more reasonable that a school system that aims for plurality, inclusivity, and non-discrimination would be better versed and better-resourced to take on such a task.

To summarize, this study sought to rebuff overly simplistic and loaded explanations of delinquency, such as poverty and poor socialization. Instead, by carefully examining the experiences of low-achieving boys from urban backgrounds, the study has brought to the fore the prevalence and biases of structural factors such as middle-class schooling, which acts as a gatekeeper to social success. Schooling appears to grant differential access to success, based on class, despite its mandate of inclusivity and non-discrimination. This study argues that delinquency starts as a relatively benign tool of reflex against harsh schooling but transforms into an appetite for criminality, which is perceived as having instrumental value in acquiring wealth—the de-facto symbol of social success in contemporary Jamaica. The study argues that, at the macro level, delinquency can have a liberating effect on an anomic working-class, which has grown impatient with the status quo. Delinquency in Jamaica, therefore, should be seen as

an urgent and innovative (in Mertonian terms) remedy to the displeasure among urban youths with the process of acquiring dignity. This solution is inspired by neoliberal ideas of self-responsibility. It is a claiming of the personhood of the urban youth that has been undermined by notions of black inferiority, working-class underperformance in education, and a lack of cultural capital among the underclasses. Delinquency is, in part, a social construct reinforced by glorifying middle-class traits and "othering" everything else. Nonetheless, delinquency, as a radicalized form of urban dissent, is undoubtedly on a collision course with the dominant ideology, which demands urgent attention and action.

Recommendations for policy and future studies

The study explored a relatively tiny fraction of Jamaica's delinquency spectrum, which can be seen as the nascence of crime. While these findings cannot be generalized owing to the study's design, they offer insights that might be useful to other locales with similar social, economic, cultural, and historical characteristics, such as post-colonial developing states with subsets of marginalized people. As a sociologist, I am woefully underqualified to offer recommendations of consequence given the complexity of the issues involved in schooling, which may have ethical, financial, and even legal implications. Nonetheless, I humbly offer my opinions on steps that could lead us toward a more enjoyable and productive schooling experience for low-achieving Jamaican youth. I hope policymakers and other relevant stakeholders will consider those they deem promising.

Increased resources for schools and more diverse curricula. West Hill High has a student-teacher ratio that is in keeping with national averages, which is commendable. Most teachers were hardworking and diligent but still seemed under-resourced and overworked. Disciplinary issues are many in this school environment, and teachers are often ill-equipped to deal with the added workloads. Naturally, the turnover rate at the school is high, as teachers get

frustrated and overwhelmed by the nature of the job and the results that are expected of them. This is a perennial request among educators, making it perhaps the least novel of the recommendations offered here. Nonetheless, more human resources are needed in low-achieving schools. It seems even smaller class sizes are appropriate, and a better organization of the classroom structure, the length of time at school, and after-school activities are needed. There were sizeable manpower shortages at West Hill Hill. If the goal is truly to bring low-achieving students up to par, what is on offer is woefully inadequate. The "Education and Crime: Evidence from prison inmates in Jamaica" report published by the Jamaica Constabulary Force in 2012 makes a similar suggestion. The report recommended that "relevant authorities channel more resources to non-traditional high schools to reduce class sizes and have them better equipped to deliver quality education" (Jamaica Constabulary Force, 2012, p. 14). However, a decade later, this has not been adequately addressed due to numerous constraints, including a lack of financial resources. To address this, I believe that a program of school volunteerism as a policy initiative could offer some relief. As a university student, I was mandated to do several hundred hours of community service to be eligible for graduation. Trainee teachers and other post-secondary students should be engaged to offer similar assistance to low-achieving schools. However, this should not be used in place of qualified teaching professionals or to justify not further reducing the student-teacher ratio in low-achieving schools. Evidence shows that volunteerism in schools can negatively impact the motivation and resultant output of trained teachers, who may feel threatened or made to believe less is required of them. This may lead to an overall lowering of educational standards and student output. Therefore, this issue must be scrutinized and implemented only after all stakeholders have been adequately engaged, clear guidelines have been established, and trials and empirical research have been done. In addition, more frequent and diverse training seems

necessary for teachers of low-achieving students. The data presented above shows teacher frustration and ill-preparedness for the low-achieving working environment. Perhaps, there can be custom-tailored courses or specializations offered at teachers' training colleges that expose and prepare teachers for the peculiarities of low-achieving schools. More frequent training and peer exchange sessions could also benefit teaching staff, facilitate the sharing of ideas and approaches, and allow for mutual support. It also seems appropriate that teachers in low-achieving schools be paid higher than teachers in less challenging learning environments. This may help motivate more highly-trained professionals to work in low-achieving schools, which might alleviate the high turnover and staff burnout typical in these environments. Lastly, the issue of teacher migration must be addressed. Jamaica continues to witness the exodus of its teachers to more developed, higher-paying countries such as the United States, Canada, and, more recently, Japan. It goes without saying that while migration helps to ease the employment bottleneck in Jamaica, it undermines the effort to grow talent that can enhance Jamaica's competitiveness. A significant salary increase seems the most promi incentive to keep teachers in Jamaica. However, this creates new challenges, as more public servant groups will also demand similar treatment. However, other small gestures might also be helpful, such as providing teachers with specialized loans for property acquisition and more comprehensive social security benefits for them and their families.

The move to make secondary schooling more equitable and, thus, more accessible to lower-class citizens was the rationale behind the standardization of secondary school curricula in the 1990s. However, 30 years on, the changes have yet to bear their intended fruits. Moreover, the mission of equitable access is overshadowed by the practice of concentrating students of similar aptitude in the same school based on the Ministry of Education's APSE program. This creates the façade of an egalitarian education system, where anyone "can" pursue any career

imaginable. However, the preservation of said egalitarian optics misuses limited resources. Besides, coveted career paths have evolved considerably in the last few decades. The system's current emphasis creates a situation where students are molded to fit the system, as opposed to the system being molded to fit the student, in line with the Ministry of Education's "differentiated learning" principle. To remedy this anomaly, the low-achieving school should be reimagined. Perhaps a reversion to differentiated subject offerings is necessary. In addition, it might be necessary to tailor the school hours, activities, learning goals, and incentives to better meet the student at his level. Arne Duncan, a former US secretary of education from 2009 to 2015, highlights the need for an extended range of student services, including after-school programs that engage and interest students. His writings show that students do not find after-school activities interesting and prefer not to hang out at school once their obligatory learning has ended (Duncan, 2018). This was also true of the West Hill High boys who preferred to spend after-school away from the school compound. The question of how to engage them is difficult, but I believe the boys must perceive it as valuable. Duncan mentioned a Chicago-based program that taught students about "dance, biology, poetry, journalism, sports management, robotics, graphic design, literature, filmmaking, photography, catering, and urban planning" (p. 23). In the Jamaican context, a few additional options, such as deejaying, music production, and entrepreneurship, seem appropriate while being careful not to stigmatize students by assuming, for instance, that working-class kids are better suited for vocational studies or creativity-based learning. However, if most of the students in a class would rather skip and do deejaying in the bathroom, then perhaps, a space to teach deejaying in a structured manner is needed. This, of course, requires the stigma to be removed from deejaying as a valid option for academic pursuit. Nonetheless, diversification of the curricula is necessary and

would alter the inaccurate view that traditional education is exclusionary based on "access" as opposed to "content."

Infrastructure improvement. It is well known that a positive school climate fosters youth development and learning (DeWitt & Slade, 2014) and that even the mere perception of a school environment as negative influences student academic performance negatively (Saputra et al., 2020). While school climate encompasses much more than physical infrastructure, infrastructure plays a significant role. Students should not have to endure leaky classrooms or have their lunches in an open courtyard using makeshift chairs out of staircases and half walls. Students have complained of classrooms being hot, poorly lit, and lacking in technology. Students also do not have access to relaxation or recreational facilities like lounges or play areas. A skating rink, a few table tennis tables, or an area with board games and magazines would lift the morale of students and greatly enhance their out-of-class experiences. Of course, this cannot be the sole prerogative of the Ministry of Education, which has limited resources that must be used to preserve access to quality education. However, while elite schools can draw on their network of wealthy parents and alums, low-achieving schools remain severely under-resourced, feeding the negative cycle of low achievement. It is reasonable that the Ministry of Education guarantees a minimum standard for infrastructure and school facilities, which should preclude a leaking roof. Perhaps, such a standard already exists but needs to be raised significantly. To supplement the basic provisions of the Ministry, I propose the Ministry modifies its school adoption program to offer tax incentives and preferential status to corporations who donate or invest in upgrading infrastructure at low-achieving schools. Some argue that such initiatives are the responsibility of school boards and administrators, such as school principals, which is a

reasonable assertion, but as we say in Jamaica, the more, the merrier, and *every likkle mek a mukkle*[27].

Gradually rid schooling of its classist orientation. This will undoubtedly require a mammoth nationwide effort, as classism permeates all layers and institutions within Jamaican society, from politics to schooling. However, as a first step for the low-achieving school, it is essential to further deregulate linguistic and dress code standards. This means legitimizing the use of Jamaican Creole in schools and disbanding rules that mandate the use of Standard Jamaican English. This already happens unofficially in schools but should be a policy imperative of the government, even for the symbolic value it will likely have. Recognizing subcultural values as expressed in styles of dress and image is also an important step, especially since current grooming standards prepare students for professional jobs that many are neither interested in nor capable of pursuing at this stage.

Moreover, many standards push obsolete gendered norms. Hairstyle rules, for instance, uphold gendered standards which have not evolved in the age of individualism and macho-metrosexuality. Also, they do not recognize emerging gender models and styles. I see no reason a boy cannot grow his hair or wear an earring to school, but a girl can. This does not objectively alter what he learns unless the lesson to be learned is how men should and should not look. Additionally, since these rules do not recognize non-dominant values and expressions, they conflict with subcultural views. Instead, what should be emphasized is empathy, tolerance, and thoughtfulness. Students should learn to make personal decisions, including about their image, that do not cause discomfort to others, which is a better way of administering equity and fairness - by choice, not force. Such an approach is more pluralistic and better acknowledges and optimizes individual agency. Of course, this cannot be achieved over a single school term or

[27] Small efforts add up to something big

even a generation and cannot be a project confined to secondary education. However, education policymakers and practitioners must orient themselves around such progressive ideals. I recognize the potential for the deregulation of these standards to affect student attitude, behavior, and academic output negatively. Nonetheless, what obtains now is skewed toward elitist cultural values, which erases urban subcultural capital. Therefore, there must be a more neutral middle ground.

Employ project-based learning techniques and student-centered approaches. Students were naturally curious and excited about participating in the jerk chicken project. They came up with ideas, cooperated, and showed a willingness to learn. Some of them were motivated by the prospect of earning, which suggests that incentive-based education might be appropriate. Under such a system, students earn credits or rewards for basic things like attendance, good behavior, and the like, which they can exchange for money, scholarships, or other benefits later. As I showed in the narratives, students secretly smuggled snacks and small treats into school, which they sold for profit. Students could experiment with running a pop-up tuck shop, an online art shop, a campus radio station, or a recording studio (many students are interested in rapping and deejaying). By starting with a goal that resonates with students–like earning, students' motivation to acquire other technical skills can be augmented and learning better facilitated. At West Hill High, technology was hardly used in the classrooms. Except for the occasional Information Technology lesson, students were not oriented to search online for information by themselves, taught how to distinguish between valuable and irrelevant information or dangerous information on the web. This seems like an oversight in the 21st century, especially since virtually all the boys are on the Internet. These skills are needed in an age of independent lifelong learning that caters to differentiated learning styles and interests. As with the recommendations stated prior, this one also comes with a huge caveat: it should not

entrench the preoccupation with wealth that is already correlated with some of Jamaica's social issues. These incentives should therefore be used to underscore important cultural values, such as hard work preceding reward. Again, I leave this as a suggestion for stakeholders to explore when formulating policy.

Strengthen parental participation. As a first step, there is a need to bolster online infrastructure and build tools for the digital engagement of parents. In the current age, technology is available to incorporate parents and guardians into the learning process. At the very least, parents should be alerted when students arrive at or leave school, be required to request, or disclose student absences from school, and request help, information, or other resources from schools. Accordingly, schools should be able to communicate readily and request information from parents about students. At the low-achieving school, PTA involvement is lackluster. For example, at West Hill High, PTA meetings were underattended, and parents seemed to visit the school only for disciplinary issues and to collect progress reports. At the heart of this dysfunction is the fact that working-class parents are often forced to prioritize earning and their livelihoods over involvement in their children's learning. Therefore, a system that further incentivizes parents to participate in the schooling activities of children would be ideal. For example, PATH payments could be tied to not only student attendance but also parents' attendance at PTA meetings. Moreover, virtual meetings are a staple of the current era and should be used to expand access and participation. Evidence shows that working-class parents often separate the responsibility for student care, at least symbolically, between the home and school domains, whereby academic success becomes the prerogative of teachers, thus not parents' responsibility. However, we know that homes that provide greater emotional support for their children regarding their education produce more motivated and successful learners. Therefore, we need an approach that brings us closer to the ideal of shared

responsibility for student learning and academic performance and emphasizes the role of parents in school success. However, this is admittedly an ambitious goal in the Jamaican context.

Financial resources are undoubtedly the biggest challenge in implementing even the simplest of these recommendations. It is a reasonable concern, especially considering the laundry list of other social problems that Jamaica needs to tackle. However, crime is much more costly in the long term, and we know that school failure provides fodder for criminal networks. Crime costs Jamaica an estimated four percent of its GDP, around the same amount as the education budget. Meanwhile, the national security budget is being stretched to its limits year after year, and crime is only being suppressed, not addressed. By equipping students with a first-class education, we impart the ability to self-moderate. This moves us closer to a truly neoliberal model of self-control and not state suppression. This requires a sizable initial investment in education and social security. However, it should lead to a significant reduction in the costs associated with suppressing crime over time unless new and unexpected social phenomena emerge.

This study looked at a snapshot of the broader terrain of deviance and delinquency in schools. While it unearthed novel perspectives about how students encounter schooling, it had some key limitations. The primary one is representativeness. More large-scale studies are needed to validate these findings in other contexts, such as basic and primary schools, the family, community, pedagogy, and educational policy. In addition, the moral fluidity thesis should be tested in a dedicated study of Jamaican morality. It would be very insightful to know how much moral fluidity has occurred among Jamaicans, the factors that inhibit and promote such fluidity, and the subjective rationalizations for and against changes in morality. Given the sensitivity of these issues and their possible legal implications, they are incredibly challenging to study.

Nonetheless, understanding the evolution of Jamaican values is crucial and timely, as cultural change inevitably impacts crime and social stability.

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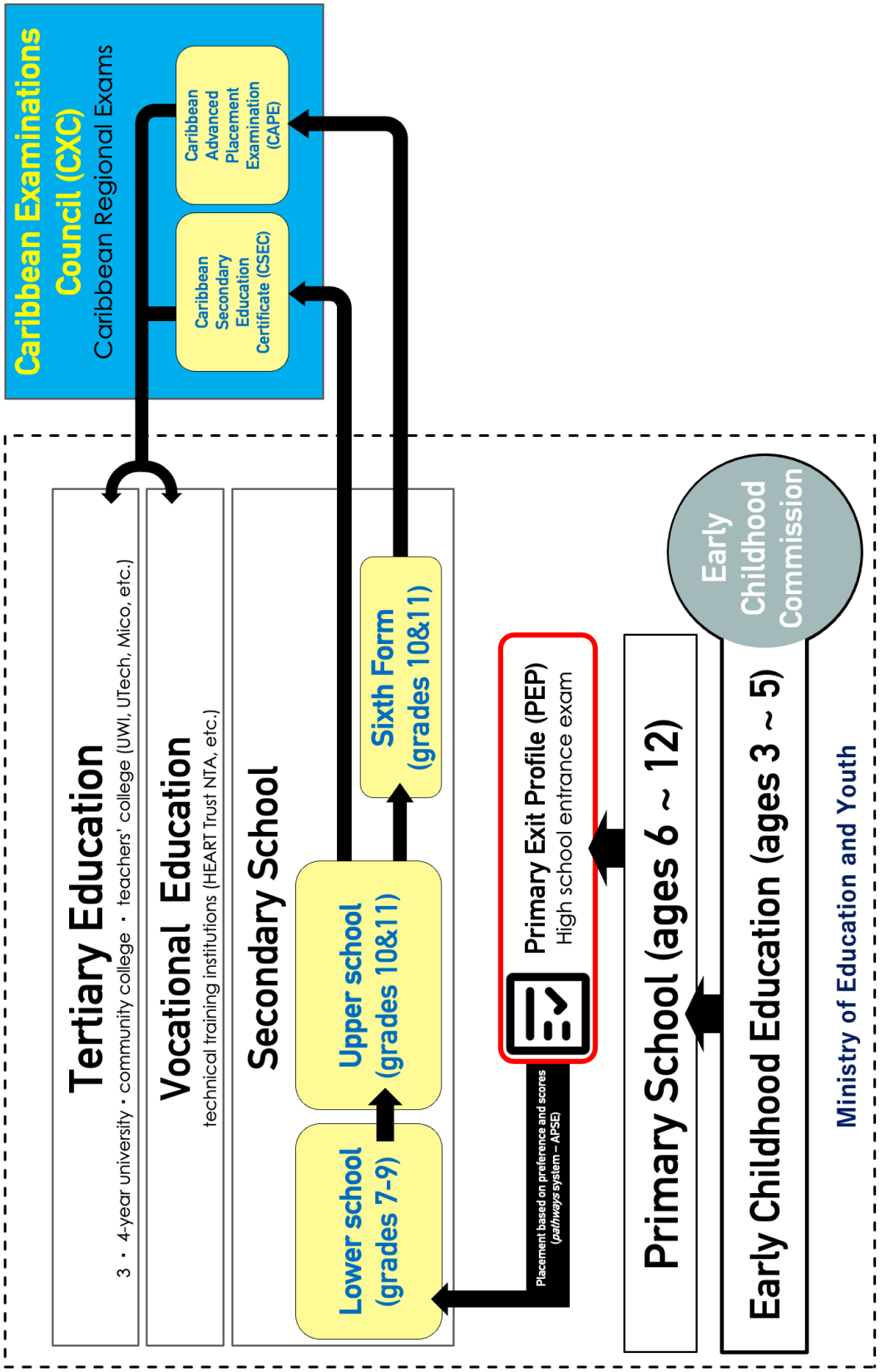
Appendices

Appendix A: Flowchart of the Jamaican Education System (Levels)



Appendix B: Letter Seeking Permission to Conduct Research

September 7, 2018

Karl Wilkinson
PhD Student,
Graduate School of International Development, Nagoya University,
Nagoya, Japan

[redacted]

Dear [redacted],

Please accept warm greetings from Nagoya University in Japan. My name is Karl Wilkinson, a Jamaican citizen currently residing in Japan, where I am pursuing a PhD in International Development, with a specific focus on Social Development and Culture. I have decided to base my research on crime in Jamaica, as it continues to be a significant social issue on the island with severe social and economic repercussions. As such, I have decided to look at the issue of juvenile delinquency among males in high schools and the relationship it has with national crime.

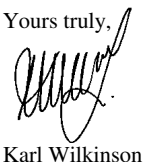
On the recommendation of [redacted] I would like to discuss the possibility of making [redacted] the primary target of my research. As discussed in my research overview (attached), the research method I have chosen requires me to spend three to four months in the natural environment of the research subjects (delinquent high school boys), where I can observe, interact with, and interview them, formally and informally, with the aim of understanding their "culture", and how it influences their delinquency. Of course, a school's disciplinary system (and the work of the dean of discipline) would also be of importance to my research, and so I would need to observe and interview teachers and other relevant staff from the institution as well. Therefore, it is my intention to join an institution in the role of volunteer/researcher for the duration of the data collection period.

Due to schedule limitations, I would like to conduct data collection for my research from November 2018 through February 2019 as I need to return to Japan by March to prepare for the end of the academic year, which ends on March 31, 2019. As I will also need to engage several entities outside of the school environment (such as NGOs, police) as part of my research, I might not be able to attend school every day. However, I would discuss and agree on an arrangement which meets the school's convenience.

I have attached a two-page overview of my research including a brief description of the study's methodology and significance, for your perusal. I would be happy to answer any questions and concerns you may have so do not hesitate to contact me via email at [redacted]. I can also be reached via *Whatsapp* at the following contact number: [redacted].

I hope to discuss this proposal with you in greater detail and look forward to your favourable response.

Yours truly,



Karl Wilkinson

Appendix C: Permission Letter/slip

Karl Wilkinson
PhD Student, Graduate School of International Development,
Nagoya University ・ Furo-cho, Chikusa-ku, Nagoya, JAPAN
[redacted]

名古屋大学
NAGOYA UNIVERSITY

GSID

October 9, 2018

Parents/Guardians of [redacted] School Students,
c/o [redacted] School,
St. James

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Please accept warm greetings from Nagoya University in Japan. My name is Karl Wilkinson, a Jamaican citizen currently residing in Japan, where I am doing research about youth. It is well known that youth face several challenges as they make the transition into adulthood, which sometimes leads to behavioural issues and misconduct. As these challenges evolve over time, it is important to continuously investigate them so we can address them effectively. In light of this, I am trying to understand the recent issues and pressures that Jamaican high school students face. As such, I would like to interact with the students of [redacted] High School over the course of three to four months, starting in November of this year.

Over the course of my investigation, I will primarily observe and participate in the activities of students. This may include joining their classes, eating lunch with them, traveling to school with them (on public transportation), and interacting with them during breaks. This interaction will be informal/casual and the information I get will not be used to incriminate students in any way. The reason I have designed my study in this way is that I want to understand the pressures that they feel by experiencing these pressures for myself. In other words, I want to walk in their shoes and live their lives for a few months. As this may not give me all the answers to the questions I have about modern-day youth challenges, at a later stage (around January 2019), I would like to interview a few of the students to get more detailed information about the challenges, struggles, and worries they face, as well as to inquire about their dreams, goals, aspirations, successes, strengths, and so on.

I want to use this opportunity I have to study abroad to benefit our country's growth and development, and so, I need your help towards these ambitious goals of understanding, describing, and possibly remedying the challenges our youth face. Therefore, I need your permission to conduct my research at [redacted] High, with and among your children. Your kind consideration will be greatly appreciated. Please sign and return the slip below. Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

Karl Wilkinson

Permission Slip

I, ……..…., hereby give permission for my son/ward,……..……..……,

of Grade……., to participate in an investigative research on Jamaican high school youth being conducted by

Karl Wilkinson, a PhD student at Nagoya University in Japan, from November 2018 to February 2019.

Signature_____

Date: _____

Telephone #: _____

Appendix D: Phases of the Jerk Chicken Project

Phase One

The first phase of the jerk chicken project was the most exciting for the boys as they could use power tools to cut the steel drum and steel bars used to support the drum. The next steps of the first phase proved difficult for the boys who were not exposed to welding and could not weld the pieces together. Otis insisted that his father had similar tools, and he helped his father with metal work jobs all the time as he pleaded for a chance to cut and weld. Leo and Dean did not have any sophisticated reasoning but claimed to possess the ability and insisted on being given a chance. In the end, Mr. Dixon and some of his students from the upper school conducted the welding and metal works.

The boys often got into conflicts with the upper school boys, who often called them immature. All except Billy and Marlon participated in the first phase of the project. Several constraints impacted the execution of the project. Firstly, there was no dedicated slot during regular classes for miscellaneous learning, which could have accommodated a project of this nature and allowed all the boys to participate at once. Therefore, their participation was limited to their classroom peer groups except for after-school sessions. As the guidance department facilitated my study, most project sessions coincided with the HFLE class. The guidance counselors and family life teacher agreed to have me take the students to the project site during this time slot. In addition, I also tried to organize sessions around time slots for which teachers were absent, or a substitute teacher was present, which meant the students would miss very little of their core learning. Very rarely, students needed to skip a regular (non-HFLE class) to participate in the project. This required negotiation with their respective teachers to have them specially excused from class.

After-school sessions had limited turnout as students tended to rush home after school since getting a ride to and from school is very difficult[28]. Because of this, only five to six boys, on average, participated in the after-school project sessions. Dean and Keith were regulars as they lived in the neighboring community and did not need to worry about transportation.

With the help of Mr. Dixon's 10th-grade students, the jerk pan was welded successfully. To prevent rusting, the pan needed to be painted. This was done exclusively by the boys. After the painting and curing, the pan was washed and "burnt out," a process used to cure it of any residual chemicals.

Phase Two

The second phase of the project was preparing chicken for grilling. I seeded the project and donated all the chicken to be used. The boys, under the supervision of Ms. Wright, prepared the chicken for grilling. This involved chopping all the vegetables, washing and cutting the chicken, and marinating it. This was done during lunch breaks and once after school. Most boys participated in this phase. However, Marlon was absent on the preparation days, and Otis decided he did not want girls to see him selling chicken, so he ended his participation in the project.

The boys also seemed to enjoy this phase of the project. There was even playful rivalry among the subgroups about which set of chicken would taste the best. The sub-group formation was organic and followed peer group influences and, interestingly, behavioral profiles. This

[28] The school is served by about 5 bus operators who transport students to the town center, which is about 30 minutes away. Taxis often refuse to carry students as drivers consider students ill-mannered and bad behaved. Therefore, students who don't make the first trip have to walk long distances or wait for the buses to return (at least one hour)

means the stronger boys grouped up, the milder boys grouped up, and the calmest set of boys grouped up. This happened without me giving any instructions about grouping.

We rehearsed two days before the jerk chicken sale. The rehearsal was after-school and was intended to bring all the boys together for the first time. However, despite promising to join, Leo went home early. The strongest group of boys (Subgroup A) scared away the mildest group (Subgroup C), who decided to no longer participate in the project. Subgroup A, the middle-tier group (Subgroup B), and a few other boys participated. Without my knowledge or consent, Subgroup A invited a few upper-grade friends to partake in the activities. While the middle tier group was preparing the pan and the charcoal, Subgroup A jumped the fence and headed off to the bushes. They returned nearly 20 minutes later with marijuana. I objected to them smoking, but they insisted, promising to keep their distance from the school building. We practiced grilling chicken, all the boys ate, and some chicken was set aside for teachers who helped with the project.

Phase Three

The project's final phase was selling jerk chicken and splitting the profit. This was scheduled for report day[29] but was postponed due to scheduling issues. The event took place on a Friday during lunchtime. Dean, Keith, Paul, Leo, and Joseph were the most instrumental. Otis had pulled out because he wanted to protect his image with girls. Sheldon, Niel, Jason, and Chris were scared away by the "bad boys" and did not participate in the sale day. Billy and Marlon were absent for the selling event but turned up for the profit sharing. Despite promising that he would, Bob did not participate in the project.

The chicken was a great success and particularly popular among upper-school students. Students came in droves, and the entire batch was sold out in less than an hour. The principal came by to acknowledge the boys' hard work and offered commendations. After cleaning up, we went to the guidance room to calculate earnings and profits. Billy and Marlon suddenly appeared and demanded they be included in the profit share. Leo and Paul, their close allies (and subgroup members), pushed back, insisting that because they did not participate, they should not get any of the profit. Billy and Marlon devised a scheme to grab the money bag from me, which the other boys, including Leo and Paul, fiercely condemned.

After counting and calculating, each boy received about $500 profit. They were expecting more profit, but this was a pivotal learning moment. I explained that we had to subtract all expenses, including the raw materials I bought. They insisted that I should have donated all of that to the project, so it was not fair for me to remove those amounts. I insisted that that is how business works, but they were more interested in increasing their lot, given their effort. Dean mentioned how much work he did and how little the reward felt in comparison. I agreed that as a show of appreciation, I would treat them to a small party (with the seed money I had reclaimed) on the last day. I promised to buy all the food and drinks and to bring some games like dominos (a Jamaican classic usually played by "men"). Billy and Marlon were welcome to join.

The party was held on my last day at the school, and six boys including Billy and Marlon joined. Dennis, one of the boys on the fringes, insisted on participating and I allowed him. Miss McDonald also joined briefly. We played dominos, ate bun and cheese (another Jamaican classic), and drank cola.

[29] The day when parents come to collect students' report cards and consult with teachers

Appendix E: Jerk Chicken Project Permission Letter

[redacted] High School [redacted]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child/ward has been selected to participate in a focus group project as part of a research study on the culture of youth in high schools. The project will be conducted over a four (4) week period from January 14, 2019 to February 8, 2019, and will see students participating in various hands-on activities including food preparation. Sessions will be held after school on Wednesdays and Thursdays for approximately 30 – 60 minutes.

Kindly complete and the return the slip below giving permission for your child/ward to participate.

Yours truly,

[redacted]
Coordinator

.....
Karl Wilkinson
Researcher

[redacted]
Principal

I ..... hereby grant permission for
(Name of Parent/Guardian)
..... of .....to participate in a
(Name of Student)

focus group project to be held after school on Wednesdays and Thursdays from January 14, 2019 to February 8, 2019.

....
Signature of Parent/Guardian Contact # Date

[redacted]

Appendix F: Jerk Chicken Project Photos