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*Sexual Practices and
Behavior in Jamaica:
A Review of the Literature*

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AIDSCOM

Academy for Educational Development

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This publication is one of a series of occasional papers prepared by AIDSCOM staff and consultants to provide health promotion and behavior change program planners with information that can help guide their HIV/STD prevention activities.

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Day Wilkes, Production Coordinator
Nancy Harding, Editor

PARTNERS FOR A WORLD AGAINST AIDS: AIDSCOM

The AIDS Public Health Communication (AIDSCOM) Project seeks to develop, test, and refine the application of the Public Health Communication (PHC) Framework to AIDS prevention and control. PHC draws upon and integrates the successful experiences of the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) in development communication and social marketing and focuses on planning, intervention, and monitoring and evaluation. Given the challenges of controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), AIDSCOM has worked to increase understanding of the integral role communication plays in effecting behavior change.

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Specific studies of sexuality in Jamaica are few. A great body of information exists, however, regarding Caribbean and Jamaican families and fertility. Family life and fertility represent the most extensively studied aspect of Caribbean life. This review of sexual practices and behavior draws upon the existing literature, but attempts to avoid the debate regarding nature of the family, household structure, and related fertility issues. The review focuses on facts that are directly relevant to issues relating to the sexual behavior of Jamaicans. It also identifies gaps in current knowledge.

Studies of sexual behavior are urgently needed today because of the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). In a recent paper, Dr. R. Finney-Hayward estimated that by the end of 1992 the number of HIV-infected children in Africa will have risen to 300,000, three-quarters of present world estimates, and stressed the importance of understanding the culture-specific aspects of AIDS.¹ Her work centers on the family, the household, women, and children. Specificity of culture also is the focus of this literature review. Without a precise understanding of sexual behavior, HIV/AIDS prevention interventions are likely to prove ineffective.

MATING ACCORDING TO THE CLASSICS²

Caribbean anthropology began in controversy. The central issue concerned cultural aetiology.

- Were the cultures of the islands deformed products of European expansion, or were they products of the African past?
- Were they mixtures of both?

The formulation of these questions and the methods of inquiry were dictated by the focus of anthropology in the United States, which was then dominated by concerns about cultural diffusion and change. This was the central issue that led Melville and Frances Herskovits to conduct a systematic study of Haitian, Surinamese, and Trinidadian life. Herskovitsian theory of African retention in family structure in the Caribbean and African-American peoples started a debate that engaged Frazier (1951), Simey (1946), Henriques (1953), Blake (1961), Roberts (1955), Edith Clarke (1957), R. T. Smith (1956, 1963), M. G. Smith (1962), and others. I have referred to the work of these pioneers as "the classics."

¹Verbal communication read at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Charleston, South Carolina, March 13 to 17, 1991.

²**Mating** refers to sexual intercourse, one of the results of which might be reproduction. That reproduction does not always result may be due to human contraceptive action or to biological conditions. The **mating cycle** is the process whereby mating goes through several forms parallel with the family life cycle. **Sex** is penetrative sexual intercourse. A **union** is the socially recognized congress of some duration between a male and a female for joint sexual, reproductive, and domestic purposes. Three types of unions are recognized in Jamaica and the English-speaking Caribbean: **visiting**, or **extra-residential**; **common-law**, or **non-legally sanctioned marriage**; and **marriage**, which is legally sanctioned.

The ensuing summary statements reflect their work, but do necessarily constitute points of consensus. Some of their work remains controversial.

■ A Mating Pattern Exists

A pattern exists to what at first appears as chaotic or anomic mating. Mating generally begins within unstable relationships and moves toward stable relationships. The earliest studies of the family should be observed against the background of the stereotype that black Jamaican males are sexually irresponsible. According to the stereotype, the source of this irresponsibility was slavery. One result of irresponsibility was deficient family life in which the burden of child rearing was borne by mothers.

Simey (1946), Henriques (1953), and Clarke (1957) were all influenced by the work of E. Franklin Frazier (1951). His study of the African-American family in the United States attributed the "matriarchal" dominance of the female to slavery, thereby rejecting the contention of Herskovits (1941, 1947) that the problems of illegitimacy and matriarchy were related to African polygamy. Clarke, however, felt that the conditions under slavery that Frazier had identified as the source of this pathological state still existed. Her ideas were supported by Cumper (1958).

Whether during slavery or at present, the various forms of mating result from economic and social conditions. Mating forms include "faithful concubinage," "companionate" and "disintegrate" families (Simey 1946), and "maternal or grandmother" and "keeper" families (Henriques 1952). It was not until the anthropological studies of R. T. Smith (1956) and M. G. Smith (1962), and the demographic analyses of George Roberts (1955, 1979), that the different types of families or households made sense when put in a diachronic perspective.

R. T. Smith, who was influenced by the Meyer Fortes school, examined households in terms of their cycle of growth and decline. M. G. Smith studied households from the point of view of cultural pluralism. Both anthropologists concluded that young people first mate extra-residentially, then cohabit consensually, and later legalize their union through marriage. This process was given statistical validation by Roberts (1955), who used age cohort data from the 1943 census.

The existence of a pattern is not the same as the existence of a rule. All people do not follow the pattern, but most do. As Roberts writes, women enter "keeper relationships" around ages 19 or 20. Some of them go on to marry; others go on to cohabit in common-law unions. Most common-law unions eventually result in marriage.

■ Mating as a Cultural Practice

Mating asserts itself independent of changing economic or class conditions. Quite early, Roberts (1955:199) argued against viewing the mating pattern as pathological.

Illegitimacy rates between 50 percent and 70 percent signify the existence of family forms sui generis, distinct from the forms characteristic of European societies.

Later, with Sinclair (1978), he boldly argued that the mating pattern had remained the same since emancipation in 1838, despite economic advancement. This assertion has not been challenged. The effect of this and similar arguments have removed the issues of irresponsibility and illegitimacy from the scientific literature. Even economic support from absent fathers is shown by Stycos and Back (1964) to be far greater than was generally assumed.

■ Mating Forms Are a Function of Acquiring Social Status

Marriage is the ideal union. It confers respectability on a couple and their family. As noted by R. T. Smith (1956), however, women gain the most from legalizing the bond. Both common-law and extra-residential unions are considered transitional. Common-law unions command less respect than extra-residential relationships.

■ Sex Is Independent of Marriage

Roberts (1955:200) wrote:

Sociologically, marriage does not necessarily connote the commencement of a family union; demographically, it does not necessarily connote the commencement of exposure to the risk of childbearing.

In some cultures, marriage marks the beginning and limit of one's sexual relationship. In the Jamaican context, marriage certainly does not begin sexual relations and, for many men, marriage does not limit sexual relations. Mutual consent of an eligible couple is all that is required to obtain social sanction for a sexual relationship. To be eligible, a couple need not be married or even live together.

■ Sex Is Independent of Love

One does not have to love in order to have sex. Cohen (1953:111) cited the case of a male informant who expressed a very low opinion of a girl he was planning to have sex with. "Me no ha fe like her to have connection with her," he told him.

The independence of sex from love was confirmed in a much later study of males, the first of its kind in Jamaica. Of 79 men in a sample who admitted to having had sex before marriage, only three mentioned love as a prerequisite (Whitehead 1976). Following on Whitehead, Chevannes (1985:171-76) found further confirmation based on interviews with 24 men drawn from a larger, national random sample. Most of the men said that love was not the same as sex. This was vividly expressed in the language of two informants:

Dealing with a girl, you will see her tonight and have sex with her but don't like to say "This is my girl," or to tell your friends, "That girl is mine." . . . So, being in love and having sex — two different things.

and,

When you really have a woman, you can't see her and say you love her. You have to go into details, her ways, her ambition, and her past life. [If] you find she alright, you can deal with her, fall in love with her. That [is] different from when you see a girl and she look good. Me have plenty of them. Right now, me deh pon treatment for gonorrhoea—a girl give me gonorrhoea, and me give [to] two girl. Me wi' see them, and the same night me see them me have sex with them. But you see when daylight come, me wouldn't mind if dem no call to me.

Chevannes found that the concept of love as involving sex and other forms of reciprocity based on mutual attraction was not absent among the men. But, he also found that love was not a prerequisite to sexual intercourse.

Do Jamaican women share the same attitude toward love and sex?

Whitehead wrote that Jamaican females are more likely than men to be tricked into sexual intercourse by a verbal assurance of love. Whitehead also makes it clear that women may yield because men say they love them, not because they love the men. This difference between the sexes, however, should not be mistaken to mean that women link sex with love. Indeed, in a recent qualitative study with focus groups, Chambers and Chevannes (1991:20) were surprised to find "the extent to which money figures in sex" for women. The independence of sex from love is not gender-specific.

■ Sex Is Natural

Cohen (1952:108) observed that there is no anxiety surrounding coitus and that, during World War II, Jamaican farm workers could not "grasp or understand what they termed American preoccupation with sex." Clarke (1957) wrote that sexual activity is not only natural, but that it is unnatural not to have had a child, regardless of one's union status.

■ Sex Is Healthy—Too Much Sex Is Unhealthy

Jamaicans hold clear notions about how much sexual activity is appropriate. Repressing sexual urges causes headaches and mental stress. At the same time, too much sex can run down the structure and harm the body (Whitehead 1976). Beverages such as stouts and malts are drunk after intercourse to "put it back," to put back sexual potency (Brody 1981:59).

In a penetrating qualitative study based largely on observations and "conversational interviews" with 268 women, MacCormack and Draper

(1987:155) draw attention to a "gender asymmetry." For men, sexual intercourse is a good thing. For women, it is sexual intercourse linked to childbearing that is good. Noting that the concept of health also has sexual connotations, they write that, for men, sexual intercourse is thought to avoid blocking the natural vitality within. While the natural release of vitality is healthy, however, it also exposes men to risks. Men are weakened by the loss of semen. Women are more ambivalent. For them, sexual intercourse is good because it promotes regular menstruation, which is healthy and cleansing. But, "menstrual loss [also] puts women in a 'cold' and vulnerable situation."

THE MATING CYCLE

■ Socialization

Few studies have explicitly examined the dynamics of socialization in sexuality. Many, however, touch on sex-role socialization (Kerr 1951, Clarke 1957, Durant-Gonzalez 1976). These, although germane, do not adequately focus on knowledge about, attitudes toward, and initiation to sex. Nevertheless, there are several points of consensus.

First is the **unsystematic nature** of transmitting knowledge about sex. Jamaica has no puberty rituals. The only formally sanctioned, institutionalized mechanism for teaching about sex is what is broadly called "guidance counseling" in secondary schools. Parents rarely discuss sexuality with their children. It is not uncommon for girls to enter menarche confused and ignorant about what is happening (Brody 1981, Chambers and Chevannes 1991). As a result, both males and females derive their knowledge from sources ranging from the formal education system to peers, and including such private means as magazines and books, and not so private ones as the cinema.

Second is the dominant role of the **peer group**. This is particularly strong for males (Durant-Gonzalez 1976, Chevannes 1985) but also is important for females. Peers include friends, and sometimes siblings, with whom there is frequent socializing. Usually, the knowledge and attitudes transmitted derive from older members of a group. They act as bridges between the group as a whole and the distant, more knowledgeable world of young adults.

A third point revolves around the **gender differences** during socialization, which place the female adolescent at a severe disadvantage. Durant-Gonzalez (1976) findings, in an excellent anthropological study of a maroon community in St. Mary Parish, are applicable for other communities (Cohen 1953, Clarke 1957) and probably the nation.

Until age four there is no sex-role differentiation. After age four, parents make a conscious effort to teach girls "proper sex behavior and modesty." At puberty, the activities of girls are sharply curtailed. Boys are free to engage in nonpurposive activities outside the confines of the yard. Girls are severely restricted, watched, and controlled. Their extra-yard activities must be purposive: to fetch water, to buy groceries, to collect

letters from the post office, and so forth. Other authors (Clarke 1957, Brody 1981) highlight that sexual precocity in prepuberty males is treated with tolerance and even amusement.

Fourth, the **prevailing attitude** is that "sex is natural" (Kerr 1951, Cohen 1953, Clarke 1957, Phillips 1973, Chambers and Chevannes 1991). "Natural" is defined in two ways.

- There is nothing strange about the sex drive. While it may be controlled, it ought not to be repressed, on pain of ill health. The name for the sex drive is "nature."

- The other meaning refers to heterosexual intercourse. In a recent study of six focus groups comprising 40 carefully selected male and female participants, Chambers and Chevannes (1991) found that masturbation and homosexual relations and intercourse are considered to be "against nature." This view was strongest among males.

A fifth attitude, and one that is reinforced in practice by young adult males, is the **value of male sexual prowess** (Whitehead 1976, Chevannes 1985). This attribute is also valued by females who, understanding its place in the male ego, do not hesitate to use male sexual ineptitude or failure for ridicule. A woman's threat to fire a man for not being able to do "the work" represents a stinging humiliation.

Sixth, is the concept of **male dominance**. This is a logical outcome of the whole socialization process, beginning with sex role differentiation in childhood and continuing until adolescence. Church and Bible provide the ideological, and the family and community the practical, justification for female subordination to males. In his study of a national sample of 800 randomly selected men, Chevannes (1985) found that men reported a positive attitude about the idea of men undertaking domestic chores generally considered to be the responsibility of females, but had a negative record in practice. The overwhelming majority of respondents said they were heads of their families. It is interesting to note that, regardless of their own control and management of all aspects of domestic life, most women also defer headship to their male spouses (Powell 1986).

But, as males sooner or later find out, their assertion of dominance takes place within the context of female assertiveness. The inability of males completely to subordinate females is cited as one reason for unstable unions early in life (Chevannes 1985, Dann 1987). Some sensitively written life stories by members of the Sistren Theatre Collective (Sistren 1986) chronicle the dramatic struggle waged by Jamaican women to assert and defend their independence. The first thing in life, one mother tells her daughter, is to have your own bed—"No man can run you off, but you can say to him, 'Come off a me bed!'" (Sistren 1986:46).

■ **First Sex**

Socialization into sexual intercourse begins early in reproductive life and sometimes before. For some males, first intercourse occurs as early as eight years old. The average age of first sex is between 14 and 15 years for boys and between 16 and 17 years for girls (Powell and Jackson

1987, Brody 1981, Chevannes 1985, MacFarlane and Warren 1989). Nearly six of every ten male adolescents in the Powell and Jackson probability sample survey had first sex before 14 years of age, and one of every seven before age 10. Slightly less than half of the females had first sex before 16 years, and less than one in 100 at or before 10. More than 80 percent of males had first sex by age 15, and females by age 17.

Partners during first sex tended to be older for girls and younger for boys (Powell and Jackson 1987). Sixty-three percent of the girls reported partners of between three and six years older. Fifty-seven percent of the boys reported partners their own age or younger. This finding contradicts earlier findings of older girls being responsible for the sexual initiation of younger boys (Brody 1981, Chevannes 1985). In neither case was the sample on which the findings were based randomly selected.

Chevannes (1985) reported that age of first sex seemed to have undergone intergenerational decline among males. From a random, national sample of males 18 years old and older, 26 males were selected for life-history interviews. First sex among those older than 30 averaged 15.9 years. For those 30 years old or younger, first sex occurred at age 13. It should be noted, however, that Powell and Jackson found no decline between age-cohorts 20 to 24 and 14 to 19, for both males and females, and MacFarlane and Warren (1989) found none for women between 1987 and 1989.

Powell and Jackson (1987) found that most first sex takes place in the home of the respondent or the partner; 87 percent among females and nearly 60 percent among males. Significantly, 64 percent of females had first sex in their partners' home, influenced, no doubt, by the greater age of the latter. What is striking about this overall disclosure is the change from bush (Cohen 1953) to house as the place where sexual initiation takes place. There being no evidence of greater license allowed by parents, we can assume that the greater access to the house has occurred because of changes in labor activity. In both town and country, parents work out more and therefore leave adolescents on their own.

Powell and Jackson indicated that 60 percent of females and 90 percent of males did not use contraceptives at first intercourse. Their reasons varied. The younger the adolescent, the greater the likelihood of nonuse attributed to lack of knowledge; the older the adolescent, the greater the likelihood of nonuse attributed to spontaneity. Thus, even with greater knowledge, between two and three of every ten adolescents experience first sex without contraception. Condoms are the contraceptive of choice in 80 percent of first sex encounters in which contraceptives are used. The authors found that sex education in school was associated with more females using contraception at first sex. No such relationship was found for males.

■ Adolescent Sexual Activity

For most adolescents, regular sexual activity begins sometime after puberty but before social maturity. It marks the start of the mating cycle. The role of the peer group is important. Male peers exert great pressure on young men to initiate relationships. Reasons for beginning sexual activity include fear of being branded homosexual (Chevannes 1985),

fear of ridicule because of "oil cakeup," (unreleased sex-drive) (Chambers and Chevannes 1991), and the belief that sex is natural. Peers are a source of pressure not merely to become sexually active. Peers sometimes also share in the actual experience, in what is commonly known among boys as "battery," in which a group of boys take turns at coitus with a single female (Chambers and Chevannes 1991).

Powell and Jackson measured the frequency of sexual intercourse among young adults, persons aged 14 to 24. Forty-eight percent of both males and females reported having had sexual intercourse during the month before the survey, averaging 4.8 times for females and 4.5 for males. Unfortunately, these data were not disaggregated by age. But, if one assumes that regular sexual activity follows soon after first sex, then MacFarlane and Warren's report that 53 percent of females aged 15 to 19 years had had sexual intercourse may be taken to imply that most adolescent females are sexually active before they reach age 20.

During adolescence, stable mating relationships, or unions, are formed for the first time. Early unions are characteristic of the mating pattern in the Caribbean. At least one survey indicates there are more early first unions being established now than in the past. The proportion of females living in a union before reaching age 15 has risen across generations, from 10 percent among those aged 45 to 49, to 13.5 percent among those in their late 20s, to 19 percent among those in their late teens (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1. Percent distribution of women aged 15 to 49 by age at first union and current age

Age	Age at First Union			
	Never in Union	<15	15 to 17	18 to 29
15 to 19	60.3	19.1	17.8	1.6
20 to 24	18.1	21.0	39.0	13.5
25 to 29	7.8	15.7	39.5	16.2
30 to 34	4.6	13.5	38.8	19.6
35 to 39	3.4	12.9	36.0	18.6
40 to 44	0.9	11.2	35.9	18.3
45 to 49	1.9	10.4	31.7	20.2

Data chronicling types of unions are available from sources that rely on censuses (Roberts 1955, 1979; Lightbourne and Singh 1982; Boland 1983; Harewood 1984), and sources that rely on national random sampling (Powell and Jackson 1987; MacFarlane and Warren 1989). All of the authors concur that the predominant type of union among adolescents and young adults is visiting, which constitutes nonresidential union.

In addition, Powell and Jackson's (1987:25) study of 4,235 young adults introduces the concepts of boyfriend and girlfriend. They write that "among the young adults, there appears to be less distinction between a boy/girl friend and visiting partner than among the older generation."

Although they offer no substantiating evidence, the authors' distinction is nonetheless quite useful because they show that such relationships may not yet have developed into sexual relations.

Notwithstanding these data, a great deal of sexual activity among adolescents takes place outside unions and could be described as casual (Cohen 1953, Clarke 1957, M. G. Smith 1966, Roberts and Sinclair 1978). These authors use "casual" to describe sexual relationships that are devoid of emotional and social commitment. The relationships described by the second of the informants presented above, from which he both contracted and transmitted gonorrhoea, were casual. No proper study has been made of casual relations. According to data presented by Powell and Jackson (1987:43), however, 329 (23 percent) of the females and 743 (38 percent) of the males who were sexually active during the previous month either had no steady partner or had a boyfriend or girlfriend with whom they did not have a sexual relationship.

More men than women have casual relationships, according to Powell and Jackson. In contrast, adolescent females were twice as likely as males to have had coitus with a boyfriend or steady partner, the reason being the same as that suggested for partners of first intercourse—the greater maturity of the female. A report from the Women's Centre (1989), which operates a rehabilitation program for adolescent mothers, showed that 52 percent of the baby-fathers were 19 to 24 years old.

Educational level appears to be the one important factor that delays the start of regular sex among female adolescents. The lower the level of education, the higher is the proportion of women in unions (MacFarlane and Warren 1989). It is unknown whether this factor also holds true for males.

■ Pregnancy

Adolescent risk of pregnancy is high due to their high rate of sexual activity. Significant public attention has been focused on the problem of teenage pregnancy, which has been described as a new phenomenon arising from increased sexual promiscuity.

During the first half of the 1960s, the fertility rate increased most for 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 year olds (Lightbourne and Singh 1982). When examined over a longer time, however, the increase in adolescent fertility rate over the past 30 years does not appear to be as great as public concern would suggest. Between 1960 and 1970, the adolescent fertility rate rose, as did the rate for all age groups under 30 (Sinclair 1974). For those two decades the highest rate was in the 20 to 24 age cohort, followed by the 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 age groups (Sinclair 1974). Age-specific fertility rates (*Figure 2*) have declined for all groups. Total fertility moved from 4.5 in 1975 to 3.5 in 1983 and 2.9 in 1989. During the 1980s, the 30 to 34 age group experienced a more rapid rate of decline than the 15 to 19 age group.

Figure 2. Age-specific fertility rate by age cohorts and total fertility rate

Age Cohort/Year	Age-specific Fertility Rates		
	1,975	1,983	1,989
15 to 19	137	122	100
20 to 24	234	190	161
25 to 29	207	150	130
30 to 34	155	110	93
35 to 39	101	73	59
40 to 44	54	40	31
45 to 49	9	8	5
Total Fertility Rate	4.5	3.5	2.9

Public concern has also been expressed about the causes of teenage pregnancy. Little is known about the problem, however, partly because it has not been precisely defined. If, as most authorities have established, early sexual activity and childbearing are normative, then the issue that ought to concern policy-makers is identifying those factors that would encourage adolescents to postpone childbearing.

High on the list of such factors would be using contraception. Contraceptive activity among adolescents has moved from low in the early 1970s, when most first pregnancies occurred within a year from first intercourse and adolescent attitudes toward contraceptives were negative (Powell 1978), to high in the late 1980s. Powell and Jackson (1987) estimated that 70 percent of all males and females used contraceptives in the 1980s. Despite this positive picture, 96 percent of the adolescent pregnancies among graduates of the Women's Centre were accidental (Women's Centre 1989).

A second factor could be lack of knowledge about the human body and contraception. Lack of knowledge was cited by Jagdeo (1984) as responsible for adolescent pregnancies in several eastern Caribbean countries, but it is not known if this factor is significant in Jamaica. What is known is that accurate knowledge of the human anatomy was lacking among a sample of 268 ante-natal clinic patients. This lack of knowledge prevented them from using the coil (IUD) and the condom. Respondents said these could become lost in the body. They said that injected contraceptives, by suppressing menstruation, could block the tubes and decrease fertility, and that the pill might cause a build-up that might require a good laxative to wash out the system (MacCormack 1985). Folk beliefs such as these have become a target of at least one successful peer counseling program of the Ministry of Youth, in which human anatomy is a favorite topic (Chevannes 1988).

The role of education as a factor in contraception was examined by Justus et al. (c. 1979) and Whittaker (1980). Justus concluded that "educational opportunity and achievement will be negatively correlated

with fertility" (c. 1979:12). In addition, they found that the drop-out rate due to pregnancy was twice as high in new secondary as in the high schools. Although both types of institutions are theoretically equal, the quality of education has been higher at the high schools. High schools therefore attract the more intelligent students. Whittaker also reported an inverse relation between the level of education attained and fertility. These findings lead one to believe that preoccupation with, and pursuit of, a career are important factors that influence adolescents to avoid or postpone pregnancy.

An interesting hypothesis, that unsatisfactory parent-daughter interaction contributes toward teenage pregnancy, was tested and confirmed by Rawlins (1984) in a sample of secondary educational level girls and teenage mothers at Kingston's largest maternity hospital. Her study supported Brody's discovery (1981), from a sample of women, that a happy childhood and receiving information about sex from mothers were correlated. Chambers and Chevannes (1991) found that working class women are conscious of deficiencies in their adolescent relations with their mothers, at least as far as concerns their preparation for menstruation, sex, pregnancy, and other aspects of sexuality.

Pregnancy, when it does occur among teenagers, is at first negatively perceived by parents, especially the mother. Her reaction "falls into four almost ritualized stages" (Clarke 1957:99). During the first stage, mother's disapproval is expressed strongly, sometimes violently. The second stage is the departure of the girl to seek refuge with kinsfolk. The third is her reintegration into the home, following the intercession of kinsfolk and friends. The fourth is the birth of the child and the assumption of the girl's mother of full control over the baby. These stages apply only to the first pregnancy. With subsequent pregnancies, the adolescent is considered a woman and as such is responsible for her children. In many, if not most cases, even after she leaves to live with her baby-father or husband, her first child remains in its grandparents home, calls the grandmother "mama" and calls her mother by her own name.

Thus, adolescent pregnancy in Jamaica parallels a *rite de passage*, that confers the status of adult (Durant-Gonzalez 1976), although full privileges and responsibilities come gradually and later. Durant-Gonzalez reinforces the observation made by earlier research, such as Kerr (1951), that early pregnancy is influenced by pressure to prove one's fertility. She offers a structural explanation for this behavior. "Women in Jamaica have limited access to nonmaternal role opportunities, and the high status and value placed on the maternal role is partly an adjustment to the weak social position of women within the society" (Durant-Gonzalez 1976:185).

A final point considers the partners, or baby-fathers, of adolescent mothers. As Clarke (1957) noted, relationships with them might take several directions. If the father is a boy of about the same age and is assumed to be without material substance, that will be the end of the affair. If the father is older and someone of substance, he will be pressured to assume financial obligations toward the pregnancy, birth, and rearing of the child. If they are the result of casual affairs, such pregnancies do not result in any attempt to establish a union. If the affair was more than casual, visiting rights may be obtained and a nonresidential

union established—if the mother's parents approve. If they do not approve, they may send the girl away to break off the relationship.

That was the situation in the 1950s. The Women's Centre's most recent experience is that half of the baby-fathers are young adults aged 19 to 24, and a third are 14 to 18. Three-quarters of them accepted paternity, and seven of ten offered material and emotional support. Most were in fact boyfriends.

The Women's Centre report, of course, cannot, and does not claim to, represent the entire country. But it allows a glimpse into a hazy, still unresearched area, where childhood experimentation stops and the mating pattern takes over. That many children are the products of early mating experimentation merits recognition as a special category, as Roberts and Sinclair (1978:60) contend, and makes it a prime target for future research.

■ Visiting Unions

It is unclear who first used the term "visiting" to define the type of mating arrangement anthropologists such as M. G. Smith (1962) and R. T. Smith (1970) called "extra-residential," or which others, such as Roberts (1955, 1957), had to use in their work with the censuses. The use of "visiting" in the 1970 census, however, gave it a legitimacy that has since been universally approved.

It has become customary to regard visiting unions as the formal beginning of the mating cycle. Whereas premarital sexual relations are established in secret (Cohen 1953), visiting relations are, as M. G. Smith noted, carried on in public. They give the male exclusive sexual rights, "a sine qua non of determinate paternity" (M. G. Smith 1962:251). Public recognition implies social sanction. Yet, like common law, but unlike legal marriage, a visiting union may be dissolved at will. This is the source of its apparent instability.

How unstable is a visiting union? Using data from the World Fertility Survey (WFS) carried out in Jamaica in 1974–75, Harewood (1984) calculated the average number of partners for women in visiting unions. The average was 2.4, which is to say that the average woman would have had two or three partners by the time she changed her union type.

Harewood's findings vary from those of Blake (1961). In Blake's sample, most never-married women had three or more unions. Blake found that 23 percent of the males had between 7 and 15 unions and 35 percent more than 15. Her conclusions, however, were based on a sample that was not randomly selected from the general population and was quite small—93 females and 53 males. Further, because the distinction made between sexual relations and a union was not clear, it is not inconceivable that many respondents could have reported their sexual relationships, most of which could be casual.

Although it does not provide clear evidence of union stability, it is instructive to note that in one nationally conducted random sample survey of men, aged 18 years and older, nearly 40 percent had relations with only one baby-mother and 30 percent had relations with no baby-mothers (Chevannes 1985). Using a clinic-based sample similar to that

of Blake, Brody (1981) found that half the mothers were still living with the fathers of their first children at the time of his interview. And, more than half the men in Brody's sample were in a common law or legal marriage to the mother of their second and subsequent children. He concluded that the pattern of impregnation by the men represented a movement toward conjugal stability. Dann (1987) draws similar conclusions for Barbados. Thus, current data do not support Smith's earlier position that extra-residential mating was a male means of avoiding responsibility (R. T. Smith 1963:36).

Figure 3 gives the incidence of visiting unions that was calculated by Roberts and Sinclair for the census years 1960 and 1970, using the union status of females between 15 and 44.

Figure 3. Frequency (percent) of visiting unions by age cohort, 1960 and 1970

Age Group	1960	1970
15 to 19	89.2	86.8
20 to 24	52.5	54.8
25 to 29	29.9	30.2
30 to 34	21.2	19.7
35 to 39	17.7	14.9
40 to 44	16.1	13.3

The data show that eight or nine of every ten females aged 15 to 19 years who are in a union are in a visiting union. This proportion drops sharply during the next ten years. Five or six of ten are in visiting unions to age 24, and three or four maintain visiting unions to age 29. By age 30, 30 percent of the women in unions are in visiting relationships. Harewood (1984), working with WFS data collected a few years after the 1970 census, on which Roberts' figures were based, presented similar findings. Only one-third of the women who originally entered a visiting relationship had by age 29 remained in that union type, most having shifted to common-law marriage.

When is the transition to other mating forms made? It should be mentioned that one anthropologist has challenged the general consensus of a sequential mating pattern. Rubenstein (1977) charges that it is methodologically wrong to use synchronic data to infer diachronic patterns. But, not only can he not explain the high synchronic rate of visiting unions in lower age groups, he is least convincing when he suggests "that early marriage is the norm in other lower class Afro-Caribbean rural communities as well" (Rubenstein 1977:209).

Until the 1950s, when the category "single" covered both the truly single and those in visiting unions, Roberts (1955) put the average age of marriage by single persons at 29.8 years for men and 26.1 years for women. He calculated that the average 55-year-old man would have lived 15 years as single and nearly 25 as married (legal and/or common law). He calculated that women 15 to 45 years old, would have been single 14.5 years and married 15.5 years.

Although once blamed for Jamaica's population explosion, visiting unions are now recognized as the least fertile of all three union types (Roberts 1957 and 1975, Cumper 1966, Roberts and Sinclair 1978, Harewood 1984, Charbit 1984). The reason, it is assumed, is because visiting unions have the lowest level of coitus. Roberts and Sinclair (1978:69-70) proved this assumption correct, despite small aggregates. For persons younger than 25, the monthly average frequency of intercourse was 6.71 for visiting unions, compared to 7.04 for common law, and 12.44 for legally married wives.

Lightbourne (1970 and 1984) and Lightbourne and Singh (1984) do not dispute this characteristic of visiting unions for earlier periods. But they did argue that the rise of contraceptive technology has reduced the advantage of visiting unions. During the ten years before 1975, the difference of numbers between visiting and marital unions declined in the 20 to 24 age group, had disappeared in the 25 to 29 age group, and had reversed in 30 to 44 age group. Moreover, Lightbourne (1984:121) argues that there is proof that entry into new partnerships increases slightly with age.

A woman's likelihood of wanting another birth has little effect on her likelihood of using contraception for stopping reasons, but is associated with substantially lower likelihood of using contraception to postpone the next birth and involves a considerable likelihood of being pregnant.

He acknowledges, however, that the effect is marginal. It thus remains to be seen whether the changes that the author claims in the relative standing of the fertility of visiting unions are confirmed with a degree of authority equal to that which has established visiting unions as the least fertile. Even if such changes were substantiated, it is the fertility differential that would be affected, not the frequency of coitus. That would remain lowest of all.

It would be futile to deny that social and economic changes could have an impact on the mating pattern. There is evidence that visiting unions are inversely associated with the level of education attained (Boland 1983, Harewood 1984). The lower the level of education, the higher the frequency of visiting unions as the initial type. But, Roberts and Sinclair (1978) observe that common law unions have the lowest level of educational attainment, a trend that was established as far back as the 1943 census. Data from MacFarlane and Warren (1989) support this latter contention: secondary school graduates have the highest proportion of visiting unions.

Visiting unions have several disadvantages for women, one being the ability of the male to deny paternity or to escape its obligations. This, no doubt, was at the root of R. T. Smith's (1963) charge of avoidance of responsibility. Roberts and Sinclair (1978) argue, however, that visiting unions also have advantages, including independence and freedom from male dominance.

Most studies of visiting unions focus on women. Roberts and Sinclair, however, found that male visiting partners maintained considerable contact with their spouses. They spend an average of three hours a day together and discussed a variety of domestic issues. The men spend

approximately four hours each week with their children. M. G. Smith drew attention to the function served by the public nature of visiting unions, namely the male's right to the sexual exclusiveness of the female. But, while females are limited to one male partner, males have no such limit. Chevannes (1985) found that men younger than 25 had the most multiple partnerships, were least likely to await their partners' sexual availability and were most prone to fulfill sexual needs outside the relationship.

In summary, visiting unions mark the formal start of the mating process, although there is evidence to warrant giving this place to casual mating. But, to borrow from Rubin (1978), visiting unions are neither as promiscuous as moralists say, nor as unstable as structuralists say, nor as responsible for high fertility rates as family planners say.

■ Common-Law Marriage

The next stage in mating begins when a man and woman take up common residence. Common-law unions retain the voluntary and informal character of visiting unions, but assume the form of legal marriage by their co-residential nature. Recently, common-law unions have won some legal recognition. For example, the surviving spouse of a such a union may make claims to the estate of her partner, provided the union lasted no less than three years.

Notwithstanding this change, common-law marriage has the lowest status of all unions when measured against socioeconomic indicators (Roberts and Sinclair 1978). For this reason, it is the predominant type of union among the poor peasantry (Clarke 1957, Cumper 1958, M. G. Smith 1962). Legal marriage is an ideal that most common-law partners strive for. In this respect, common-law unions are also transitional.

More than one-third of common-law unions are among women aged 25 to 29 (Roberts and Sinclair 1978). The average age of transition to marriage is 34 years for females and 42 for males (Roberts 1955).

In more recent years, common-law unions have replaced marriage as the most fertile (Sinclair 1974; Boland 1983; Harewood 1984).

Little is known about sexual relations at this stage of the mating cycle. Assuming that male outside relationships are a function of economic status, and recalling the tendency for more multiple relationships among the young, one could hypothesize that sexual relations in common-law unions are more confined to the spouses than in marriage or visiting. This represents an area for further research.

■ Legal Marriage

Marriage represents the culmination of the mating cycle which began with visiting unions. Marriage usually begins and continues from the middle of the reproductive cycle—a little later for males, a little earlier for females. Marriage has legal character. It bestows certain rights and exacts certain obligations from the contracting parties.

From a social point of view, marriage confers higher social standing than other types of unions. This is a constant throughout the literature. Documentation shows that it is not just the act of marrying that confers status. The conditions attending marriage, most notably economic advancement of the male, also give status. This condition explains the relative lateness of marriage that has been observed by all scholars and the elaborate wedding expenses that often are incurred.

Male dominance in marriage is also important. The husband-father, as described by Clarke (1957), is the undisputed authority in the household. In the sexual division of labor, husbands provide the economic requirements of the family; wives assume responsibility for routine, domestic work. Perhaps for this reason married men participate less in domestic work than do men in other types of unions (Chevannes 1985). Contraceptive use among married men is lower than among men in other types of union. Until the introduction of contraceptives, marital unions were responsible for higher rates of fertility than common law or visiting unions.

■ Multiple Relationships

No worthwhile discussion of the mating cycle could be considered complete without discussing multiple partnerships—mating relationships with one or more persons other than one's current partner. Multiple partnership includes sexual relationships that are marked by some form or level of commitment and excludes those without any. Multiple partnership is what Jamaicans commonly call "outside woman" or "outside man." Of these, the "outside man" is rarely discussed because it is not sanctioned.

Casual sexual relationships are excluded from the definition. Casual relations may be of two sorts—"one-night stands," or a series of "one-night stands" with the same partner. This last-mentioned may or may not develop into a relationship with commitment. Prostitution is considered separately from casual sex because of their different legal statuses and economic and social dimensions. This section focuses on the outside woman and the outside man.

The Africans who peopled the Americas came from societies that sanctioned polygamy. In Jamaica, it was customary for those slaves vested with some authority, such as drivers, headmen, and artisans, to retain several wives (Patterson 1967). The great Maroon leader, Kojo Accompong, on a visit to Black River in January 1751, 12 years after the peace treaty with the British, included in his entourage "many of his wives" (Hall 1989:17).

The Europeans who settled Jamaica came from societies that sanctioned only monogamy. But, to the shock of visitors and observers during slavery, they also practiced a sort of polygamy. With the force of legal sanction they married their own, but retained with the force of moral sanction concubines from among the African and mixed races. The modern middle and upper class pattern of monogamy combined with more or less open concubinage, and the various forms of mating among the lower class were, Henriques (1953) believed, continuations of these

“promiscuous” practices under slavery. The designation promiscuous, however, is questionable. The middle- and upper-class practices were unsanctioned polygamy rather than promiscuity. An example of genuine promiscuity may be found in the Thistlewood Diary (Hall 1989:302):

. . . in 1784 he had taken Phibbah 33 times, and Bess 14, and there had been 21 other occasions with 11 others of whom all but one belonging to Mr. Wilson were his own.

Although not married, Thistlewood was evidently in love with Phibbah, toward whom he showed some commitment, but who he could not under the conditions of slavery marry, even as the mother of his only child. His sexual promiscuity for 1784, a year of “declining sexual activity,” as Hall observes, involved at least 11 women.

McKenzie and McKenzie (1971) observed that African traditions probably influenced the evolution of the mating pattern in Jamaica and the Caribbean, but the nature of this influence is unknown. The outside woman remains a deeply entrenched, but still unresearched, tradition in Jamaica. How extensive is this relationship? Popular stereotyping would have it as a universal, but research conducted in the 1980s shows that only half of men 18 and older practiced it (Chevannes 1985). This distribution was evenly spread across town and country, varied inversely with age, was highest among men in visiting unions (70 percent) and lowest (30 percent) among married men. This finding is at variance with Brody (1981), a majority of whose sample of men had outside women. Brody’s sample was neither national nor random.

Save for Henriques (1953) no systematic study has been done of concubinage among the middle class. Yet, not only does it exist, it also is the subject of popular comment.

Little more is known about this age-old institution. Is it constant across class lines? What are the factors of selection? Why have as many partaken as have not? What is the profile of the outside woman? How often is she visited? What are the subterfuges used to prevent wives from knowing? For those who know, what are the dynamics of the relations between the two women? Is the outside woman sufficiently constant to consider her part of the family structure? Only further research can answer these and other questions.

Even less is known about multiple relationships among Jamaican women. Yet, Chambers and Chevannes (1991) found evidence that women too engage in multiple relationships. That the term “jacket” is so commonplace, although it does not appear in Cassidy (1961), suggests a widely practiced phenomenon. Only women can “give a jacket”—attribute false paternity. There is no discussion of multiple partnership among women, save for Patterson’s (1967:163) brief mention of “quasi-polyandry” among slave women. The extent of current practice is not likely to be as great as among men. But, to argue on a purely mathematical level, it is difficult to see how, with a demographic distribution nearing 1:1 between the sexes, half of the eligible males could monopolize twice their number of women, unless some of the women also shared more than one man.

■ Casual Sex

Casual sex also needs researching. Although it is the earliest part of the mating cycle, it also continues throughout the mating cycle, notwithstanding evidence that it is more common among younger than among older men (Chambers and Chevannes 1991). The concept "giving someone a burn" runs through all age groups in the mating cycle.

PROSTITUTION

Ross-Frankson (1987) conducted the only known systematic sociological study of prostitution in Jamaica. Twenty prostitutes, aged 16 to 43 years, provided data for the report. The author identified five categories of prostitutes:

- The **street prostitute**, who is usually working class and has a low level of education
- The **casual**, who may come from any class, but who prostitutes only when her economic situation dictates
- The **new breed**, who is a low-paid professional who plies the hotels and places of entertainment
- The **hospitality prostitutes**, who are middle class and operate through a network to service wealthy and official visitors
- The **kept**, who are middle-class women who provide sexual services for a wealthy man in exchange for economic security.

Except for the last category, prostitution runs across all social classes. As Ross-Frankson noted, kept women do not consider themselves prostitutes, nor do the men who keep them (Chambers and Chevannes 1991). Popular culture regards such women as basically clever, and their men as basically foolish. The men are called "boops," a less than flattering term.

Ross-Frankson's study only scratches the surface of a living phenomenon. She describes the variety of acts prostitutes are sometimes called upon to allow or to perform. She also notes that, as soon as they achieve their target, some of the street women return home for as long as the money satisfies their needs and those of their families. Among street prostitutes, contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD) is feared with the greatest shame.

A more recent health survey of 113 prostitutes conducted by the Ministry of Health (1990) contains valuable information on their social characteristics and sexual practices. Ranging in age from 16 to 42, with the median being 29, 50 percent of these women had a "special man." The report does not indicate whether this is the same as a spouse. Younger prostitutes were more educated; had fewer children (one or none, compared to more than two among the older group); were recent starters; had no regulars; plied the bars rather than the streets; and wanted to stop soon for other employment. The older prostitutes were

more established, plied the streets, and wanted help to stay healthy. Condom use among all prostitutes is high. Nearly 70 percent use condoms during vaginal sex. And, condom use is increasing because of AIDS.

Male prostitution exists but has not been studied. It appears to be concentrated in the tourist capitals of the country. Most, although not all, male prostitutes who serve tourist zones sport dreadlocks. They are called "rent-a-dreads." Little is also known about the use of boys, or sodomy, except that it exists. Social attitudes toward prostitutes vary according to sex. Men in the Chambers and Chevannes focus group study (1991) were hostile toward the "rent-a-dreads" but sympathetic toward the female street prostitutes. Women were not as sympathetic toward female prostitutes.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Relatively little is known about homosexuality in Jamaica. One reason for the dearth of scientific knowledge is hostility toward homosexuality and discrimination against homosexuals. In the Chambers and Chevannes study, "homosexual" is reserved by the participants for males. Female homosexuals are known as lesbians. Men who were interviewed said they did not wish to associate with [male] homosexuals. They also said that homosexuals are the products of socialization or social deviance, rather than of genetic predisposition, hence their attitude that they should be beaten or killed.

Cohen (1952) was first to mention homosexuality in the literature. He wrote about women, who, unable to wait any longer for the attention of men, turned to other women for sexual satisfaction. His conclusion is dubious, however. Cohen cites no ethnographic evidence in support, and no other anthropologist has ever mentioned it.

Whitehead (1976) studied bisexuality in "Haversham" and gained access to a network of homosexuals in Kingston. He reported that bisexual informants said that "homosexuality should be a pleasurable diversion and not a major life style pattern" (1976:124). Bisexuals disapproved of male behavior that simulated females.

Murphy et al. (1988) conducted a health study of 125 homosexual and bisexual men in Kingston. They found that 30 percent of these men had sexual relations with male visitors to Jamaica and 27 percent with men while visiting abroad; 90 percent had 36 or fewer sexual partners annually, with approximately four homosexual acts per month. Only nine percent reported having sex with a male prostitute. The authors did not collect data on the social class of the subjects, but assumed from the information on travel abroad that the study included more affluent persons than in the general population.

A 1991 qualitative study of the Ministry of Health (Royes and Weller 1991), in view of fears that social intolerance of homosexuality could block access to this group in the fight against the spread of HIV infection, studied condom use and attitudes, self-risk assessment, willingness

to be involved in peer counseling for AIDS prevention, the extent of bisexual activity, and several other sensitive issues.

ANAL INTERCOURSE

Men in the Chambers and Chevannes (1991) study attribute the practice of anal intercourse, which they consider as revolting as male homosexuality, to the spread of blue movies in Jamaica. In reality, the practice seems quite old. Goldberg and Sutherland (1963) conducted interviews among 273 male gonorrhea patients in Kingston. They reported that more than one-third (34.3 percent) admitted to having had anal intercourse one or more times. "Approximately 20 percent of the males stated that they did this at the request of the female, suggesting that the anal area is an erotic zone in some females (1963:236)." This accords with the admission of one group of women in the Chambers and Chevannes report that some of them had tried anal intercourse. Others said they knew women who loved it. Goldberg and Sutherland (1963:237) concluded, "Obviously, this type of sexual activity is much more frequent than commonly acknowledged."

SAFER SEX

■ Condoms

Because this review was prompted by concern about the spread of STDs, and not with fertility, this section focuses only on contraceptives as a prophylactic against diseases. The condom is one of the two most widely known contraceptives in Jamaica, the other being the pill. Men have slightly greater unprompted knowledge about the condom than the pill (Chevannes 1985; Powell and Jackson 1987). Young women revealed much greater unprompted knowledge (as many as 27 percentage points) about the pill than the condom. Almost all women had prompted knowledge about condoms (MacFarlane and Warren (1989). But, only 85 percent of men had knowledge when prompted (Chevannes 1985). There was greater lack of knowledge in rural areas.

Known as "french letter" or "boots," more and more Jamaican men are using condoms. In 1985, Chevannes identified only 11 percent of men as current, versus ever, users. This percentage grew to 37 percent by 1988 and 42 percent by 1990 (Smith and Stover 1990). In 1989, MacFarlane and Warren found that only seven percent of people used condoms. The wide discrepancy, however, may reflect that in the other studies the respondents were male. The 1989 study was of females. Increased awareness about AIDS may be responsible for increasing condom use.

In a more limited study of 100 men 20 to 50 years old who were recruited from a general health clinic, Weller et al. (1990) reported that 50 percent always used condoms in casual heterosexual sexual intercourse.

Forty-five percent always used condoms during the first heterosexual encounter. This compares with Chevannes (1985) who found that 61 percent of those who had outside relationships used condoms. Smith and Stover (1990) reported that 82 percent used condoms.

The finding that only 5 percent of the men used condoms with their regular female partners led Weller et al. to conclude that overall condom use was low. Chevannes (1985) found that men rely on their female partners to provide contraceptives. This finding explained why condom use was lowest among married men, but highest among those in visiting relationships. On the basis of evidence that many women do engage in multiple and casual relationships (Chambers and Chevannes 1991), a large proportion of the 100 men were assumed to be at risk of contracting STDs.

Weller and his colleagues report some interesting reasons for ceasing to use condoms. The search for pleasure and desire to have children ranked highest, 26 percent and 25 percent, respectively, followed by noncasual sex (18 percent). Whitehead (1976) also linked nonuse to the blocking of sexual pleasure. Smith and Stover (1990:37) linked nonuse to the "fear of introducing the condom into a primary relationship." At the same time, respondents in the Chevannes study said they were willing to use condoms if their partner could not use another contraceptive.

■ Masturbation

The small body of literature on adolescent sexuality has not mentioned masturbation. Cohen (1952) said masturbation was unknown in the Rocky Road community. Although masturbation is known today by several vernacular terms, it is, reportedly, uncommon. Chambers and Chevannes (1991) found that males considered masturbation an unnatural way to express the sexual urge and would never admit to practicing it. It is called "backing your fist." Females in the study did not exhibit the same revulsion toward masturbation and were not afraid to say they had practiced it.

THE CULTURE OF SEX

This section reviews several recent studies in the hope of further situating sexual behavior in Jamaica within its cultural context. Because culture encompasses values and beliefs as well as practices, the overlap with socialization should become obvious.

■ Religion and Sex

This paper does not attempt to explore all aspects of religion and sex. One source, however, provides an interesting perspective. In a study of a widely played numbers game called "drop pan," in which each number is assigned several meanings, Chevannes (1989) suggested a symbolic association between sexuality and religion. Although religion and sex

interface across a broad frontier, one particularly interesting link is that preaching is an essentially male sexual activity, and church attendance and worship is a female sexual activity. This might account for the preponderance of male preachers to essentially female congregations. It may also be responsible for the frequent charges and rumors of sexual relations between preacher and members. Religious teaching and activity offers ample scope for increasing understanding of sexuality in Jamaica.

■ Male Irresponsibility

In a perceptive study, Alexander (1973) characterizes male irresponsibility as a replication of the Anansi prototype. Anansi, the spider, is a folk hero who triumphs over the powerful by his guile and wit. He appears, and is loved, as "a charming, genial, popular and irresponsible man" (Alexander 1973:233). Anansi's geniality makes his irresponsibility tolerable.

Here, Alexander is addressing the sexual division of labor, but his characterization offers one possibility for understanding why the sexual exploits of men are viewed as clever, especially if they manage to pass the "jacket" to someone else, why children can be proud of irresponsible fathers if they are popular in the community (Alexander 1973:247), and why "Charlie Mattress" could become a legend for having fathered some 60 children.

■ Slackness

Anderson and Langley (1989) analyzed 200 songs in response to the public debate about lyrics from popular music that are thought to be degrading to women and morally degenerate. They found the dominant images of women in song to be housewoman, superficial, persons whose goal in life is to attract men, sex objects, dependents, and evil and defective.

Carolyn Cooper (1990) sees the popularity of the bawdy lyrics and associated "indecent" dance movements, together known as "slackness," as a rejection by down-town working class of up-town middle class morality as hypocritical. That women are the main supporters of lyrics and movements thought to be degrading to womanhood, she explains as expressions of sexual liberation. She notes that men are not condemned for the same types of expression.

Cooper points out that sexual mores are changing (Chambers and Chevannes 1991) and should be studied carefully. Such a study could be defined by, but not limited to, the present sociocultural ferment. For example, DJ music has strongly condemned cunnilingus and fellatio, known by a variety of names such as "bow," "bow cat," or "eat under the table." These songs draw attention to the strength of disapproval of these activities that exists among the people. In this situation, music might be thought of a weather vane of public opinion.

■ "Hunting" Sex

For both men and women, the quest for sex is expressed in hunting imagery, and the act in food imagery. Thus, men pursue women (Chambers and Chevannes 1991), while women catch or trap men. Powell and Jackson (1987) analyzed male and female perceptions of how to get the opposite into a sexual relationship. Thirty-six percent of the women and 58 percent of the men said that males rely on money and coaxing. Forty-two percent of the men and 39 percent of the women said that women rely on flirting, sexy clothes, and seduction. In addition, 18 percent of the men said women rely on good looks.

Coaxing is evidently of less importance than men think. Chevannes (1985) found that men placed a great store on their ability to "lyrics" their way into bed. But, in the Powell and Jackson survey, only 13 percent of women credited coaxing as important. Thirty-two percent of men said it was important. Six of 22 popular terms for the vulva and three terms for labia were references to foods (Chambers and Chevannes 1991). In contrast, 10 of 18 popular terms for the penis were references to weapons.

CONCLUSIONS

Mating among Jamaicans, and other Afro-Caribbean peoples, follows an established pattern. Consensus among scholars has done little to change stereotypes about male irresponsibility, although it has helped to make the legal concept of illegitimacy redundant, notwithstanding the attempt by Goode (1961) to link it to anomie. That this and other changes in the law have come about, such as the right of a common-law spouse to the property of an intestate partner, provided their union lasted three years, speak to popular perception that this is "how Jamaicans do it." These situations have become a recognized part of cultural practice.

Scholars, however, have been cautious in validating this assumption, for two reasons. Until now, research has been limited to the level of social structure and so can only explain social structural phenomena. These studies include not only those such as Clarke (1957) but also those that refer to the influence of slavery on present-day sexual relations. Rodman's attempt to apply the "culture of poverty" theory (Rodman 1971) also is related to these studies.

A second reason is within the mating system itself, which assigns different levels of status to different forms of mating or different moments of the cycle. So, what is cultural about that if, by their own actions, people say the pattern or cycle is a function of social roles? This is precisely where more interpretative research is needed, if, as Roberts and Sinclair (1978) contend, the changing social order has left the mating pattern intact. If culture "consists of socially established structures of meaning" (Geertz 1973:12), anthropologists could make a significant contribution toward understanding sexuality by adopting the suggestion made by Mintz and Price (1976:5) in their criticism of Herskovits and the West African cultural connection. They wrote that

anthropologists should focus “more on values, and less on sociocultural forms, and even by attempting to identify unconscious, ‘grammatical’ principles, which may underlie and shape behavioral response.”

To advance our understanding of mating and sexual behavior in Jamaica and therefore strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention activities requires analyzing the meaning of sex to Jamaicans and the values that underlie or overlie sexual activities. Three lines of pursuit might be attempted to help develop this understanding.

- Study the folklore of sex,³ following the work of MacCormack and Draper (1987). Such studies would comprise all of the popular beliefs about sex, sexuality, and gender relations.
- Study the work of Jamaican dramatists. Their work could provide a rich mine for contextual analysis, from the point of view both of literary criticism and presentation. Sex is a dominant theme in most plays, current and past, of which there are quite a few. Popular music is another potentially rich source for study, as Anderson and Langley (1989) and Cooper (1990) showed.
- A study of motivation also would promise insight into conscious and unconscious sexual behavior. For example, in relaxed moments, it is common to see Jamaican men clutching their genitalia, or moving a hand in its direction. Why?

Two aspects of mating are in urgent need of research, casual sex and multiple partnerships. Roberts and Sinclair (1978) saw casual sex as a subcategory of visiting relations. This was understandable in terms of the beginning of the mating cycle. Casual sex, however, also is an activity that may and does occur throughout life. It may be that casual sex occurs more frequently among younger than older people, and among men than women, but we do not know for sure.

Multiple sexual partnership differs from casual sex by the psychological factor of commitment. Generally speaking, sexual relations are more predictable in multiple partnerships. Considering the long-standing stereotype that Jamaican men are polygynous, the only explanation of why so little research has been done is that although males are thought to have multiple partners, females have been the only subject of research.

We not only do not know that only men engage in multiple relations, we also do not know much about such engagement. How much a part of the mating cycle are multiple relations? Where do they fall in the family structure? How and why are multiple partnerships formed? What is the outside union like? How does it compare to the inside? How does the one affect the other? What is the average life span of outside partnerships? What happens to each partner when they break up? How do men conceal multiple partnerships? How do women? These are only a few of the questions one could ask. What is necessary is thorough ethnographic, descriptive research.

There also are several areas of Jamaican sexuality in which noticeable changes are occurring and that need research. Foremost among these is homosexuality, which is believed to have increased during the past 15 years. Whether this is true or not, attitudes toward homosexuality are changing, at least among the middle classes, at which level male homo-

³I am grateful to Herman McKenzie for this term.

sexuals can function openly. From observation, working class hostility to homosexuality remains high.

Heterosexual practices are also changing and should be studied. Cohen (1953) observed that the coital position was dorsoventral, although he alone has made this observation. Today the missionary position seems to be preferred, but one cannot be too sure. With the spread of video technology and exposure to the influence of blue movies, many Jamaicans are experimenting more. Values and practices are changing.

These and other research initiatives would help to better understand sexual behavior in a society which has as part of its history the destruction, among the Africans who peopled it, of the form of social organization designed by every known society and culture for reproducing the species, namely the family. And, insofar as Jamaica is part of the wider West Indian, or Caribbean, or Afro-Caribbean cultural zone, developing such culture-specific understanding could also have wider relevance. The primary focus should seek to understand patterns of behavior and what they mean to the people.

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