Changing Patrons, from Politician to Drug Don

Clientelism in Downtown Kingston, Jamaica

by
Amanda Sives

Clientelist relationships in the inner-city communities of downtown Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica, have seen a tendency toward a change in patrons from the politician to the drug don. This situation is interesting for several reasons. First, clientelism has served to divide the urban working class and led to partisan-political violence that has ensured the continuance of what Martz (1998: 317) has called a "bi-party hegemony," thus serving to perpetuate a capitalist society. Second, the intense divisions that have been fostered by the two political parties highlight the fact that clientelism can be more than a material relationship, contributing to the formation and maintenance of a political identity. Finally, as a former British colony, Jamaica has always been firmly embedded in and directed by global political and economic processes, and these relationships have had an impact on clientelism and on the tendency toward the change just described.

Clientelist political relationships are dependent not only on internal political, social, cultural, and economic developments but also on external factors. Having defined clientelism both as a political mechanism and in the Jamaican context, the article examines the linkages between clientelism, violence, and political identity. The first section discusses the economic context within which clientelism develops and the roles of the internal political economy, neoliberalism, and the state in clientelist distribution. The second part explores the specifics of the Jamaican case, highlighting the impact of clientelism on culture and power relationships in the marginalized

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communities of downtown Kingston and St. Andrew and the complex and blurred transition from political don to drug don.

CLIENTELISM: SOME DEFINITIONS

Definitions of clientelism and the debates surrounding it have developed from grounded research by anthropologists or political scientists. These studies have taken place in a wide variety of cultures with different historical experiences, at both macro and micro levels of society, and have employed different methodologies. This case-study approach adds a great deal of richness to the concept of clientelism, but it can also lead to some confusion about exactly what we mean by the term.

Flynn (1974: 134) provides a useful definition. He states that clientelism is a "more or less personalised relationship between actors or sets of actors, commanding unequal wealth, status or influence, based on conditional loyalties, and involving mutually beneficial transactions." This definition highlights four key points. First, the relationship is "more or less personal" and therefore relates to face-to-face dyadic arrangements as well as machine-based party politics. Second, the fundamental issue of unequal socioeconomic relations between patrons and clients is addressed. Third, the loyalties involved are seen to be conditional; the relationship is sustained as long as both partners fulfill their side of the agreement. Finally, the relationship is "mutually beneficial"; all parties are involved because at some level it is in their interest. It is also important to note that the transactions are not necessarily financially beneficial to the client.

In the Jamaican context, clientelism has been defined as a "mechanism by which to institutionalize a power structure that is distinguishable from class-based politics of liberal democracy in advanced capitalism" (Stone, 1980: 93). I want to suggest that this broader power structure is a hegemonic one and that, while distinguishable from class-based politics in advanced capitalism (as one would expect, given the very different conditions in the Jamaican economy and polity), clientelism operates as a form of class control. Clientelist political systems are often contrasted with class-based politics. Patron-client ties are vertical and based on individual and/or community advantage, and they promote competition on an intraclass basis and have short-term goals. Class ties, in contrast, are horizontal and based on a common position in the economic and political system, and they promote class solidarity and long-term political goals. It is clear, however, that clientelism is a "refined" form of class control (Flynn, 1974). It originates in the need of a patron (whether an individual or a party machine) to maintain his/her/its political, economic, or

social position. The aim of the patron is to minimize challenges either by other elites or by clients and to halt the development of horizontal alliances. In distributing resources and offering a sense of protection and belonging to the marginalized sectors, a clientelist-based politics can stymie the development of antihegemonic[1] challenges. It does this by creating dependence on the political system, which becomes a mechanism for marginalized people to meet their minimum material needs and provides a sense of belonging. Once competition and division are institutionalized (whether through political party, religious affiliation, or ethnic background), the possibility of class-based mobilization becomes remote.[2]

In Jamaica, clientelist political relations filtered through the two political parties, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP), have been a key element sustaining the hegemonic project. Gramsci, the main theorist of hegemony, recognized the role that economic corruption could play in the preservation of elite control. He stated, "Between consent and force stands corruption/fraud (which is characteristic of certain situations when it is hard to exercise the hegemonic function, and when the use of force is too risky)" (Gramsci, 1971: 80). In this article I pursue the argument that through the use of clientelist mechanisms the Jamaican elite class has constructed and maintained a form of hegemonic consensus. Several interesting facets of the development of clientelism in Jamaica have served to perpetuate this bi-party hegemony. First, as Gunes-Ayata (1994) has pointed out, clientelist relations can be based on more than the exchange of material resources. Second, clientelism in Jamaica has led to the development of political-partisan violence. These two features have strengthened the vertical ties between political elites and their supporters, weakened horizontal class linkages, and served to ensure that the development of a counterhegemonic project remains problematic.

Political parties have played the key role in mediating hegemony in the wider society and particularly in the downtown Kingston and St. Andrew communities. According to a Gramscian analysis, hegemony and counterhegemony in bourgeois society are mediated through the associations and organizations of civil society. It is here that the ideas sustaining the ruling elite are disseminated. In Jamaica, a contradiction was apparent between the strength of the colonial hegemony, mediated primarily through the church and the education system, and the weakness of an associational life in which a counterhegemony could be constructed. This weakness contributed to the capture of civil society by the political parties in the period immediately following 1944, particularly among the urban poor. In essence this meant that organizations of any major political relevance operated within the framework of either the PNP or the JLP (Gannon, 1976; Eaton, 1961; 1975). The colonial

experience controlled the development of internal political arrangements, embedding Jamaican development within the geopolitical and economic system.

The role of political parties and their relationship to civil society are ambiguous in Gramsci's work. Are they part of civil society or part of the state apparatus? This ambiguity reflects the fact that circumstances in particular countries are crucial to the development of hegemony, political parties, and civil society. The key question in analyzing a particular situation is whether the representatives of civil society develop their position vis-à-vis the state in order to represent and articulate the interests of civil society or try to capture and control civil society in order to enhance their position, in the process maintaining the status quo (Pearce, 1996). Gramsci recognized that political parties can play an important role in building a counterhegemonic movement, particularly in the "elaboration and diffusions of conceptions of the world" (1971: 335). However, they can also be part of the construction and maintenance of hegemony. If political parties capture the spaces in which a counterhegemony could be constructed, they can be crucial in controlling the questions and limiting the challenges that arise within the society. If political parties can contain the protests and dissatisfactions within their own party boundaries, then the political system remains secure and the status quo unchallenged. Hegemony in Jamaica has therefore been refracted through the PNP and the JLP. The ability to contain radicalism either by absorbing it, repressing it, or ensuring that it never surfaces has been one of the key strengths of the Jamaican elite. The political parties have played the crucial role in ensuring that this occurs, and clientelism has been a key element in this strategy.

CLIENTELISM, POLITICAL IDENTITY, AND VIOLENCE

Clientelist relations are often seen to be motivated purely by the need to accumulate economic resources.[3] The patron, who has access to either private or public wealth, distributes it to favored clients who, in return, offer loyalty or some other nonmaterial benefit. These arrangements are usually economic and, as Kaufman (1974: 285) states, remain private and particularistic, "anchored only loosely in public law and community norms." However, relationships can also become more intense. Gunes-Ayata (1994), for example, argues that clientelist relations are associated with economic and political modernization and the consequent need to re-create political identities and relationships. Premodern ties, which depended on community loyalties and shared values, were disrupted with the onset of market economics and the

development of individualist politics. In search of economic security, people left their villages for the towns and cities. When the economy failed to meet the needs of these uprooted people and traditional mechanisms of community and belonging became redundant, anxiety and a sense of alienation developed. As a result, the democratization process and in particular the political party were able to re-create a sense of belonging (1994: 21–22):

> In this process, the political parties serve two functions. They become the means through which bargaining over resource allocation can occur, according to both clientelist intercessions and universalistic principles. Moreover they serve as a basis for the formation of a new kind of identity, a sense of belonging to an imagined community, and a potential means of access to power centres. Thus clientelism and party politics may be instrumental in defining boundaries of membership, which in turn define the boundaries of exclusion in an economy of scarcity. How realistic these exclusionary mechanisms are, how much a client benefits from such relationships, or what the tangible outcomes for the client are do not necessarily matter.

The key point is that the political party provides a sense of community in which other identities such as class, ethnicity, and religion have not developed or, alternatively, have been thwarted. The existence of a political dimension to the relationship explains why, although economic marginality remains at its core, many clients do not receive tangible economic rewards. Often the "most important factor in the recurrence of clientelism is the generation of expectation and hope, the individual's feeling of being protected, of being able to depend on some 'patron,' be it an individual or an organization" (Gunes-Ayata, 1994: 22). In many ways, political inclusion through clientelist ties can alleviate some of the negative consequences of economic and social exclusion by providing a sense of belonging, identity, and hope. This can be a crucial support for elite hegemony.

While the breakdown of internal political clientelism is closely linked to economic considerations (including the supply of external financing), issues of political identity and belonging also have an impact. The nature of the impact depends on the way in which clientelism declines. There are two contradictory developments that can help explain its demise. First, it can occur when the amount of resources available in the society either expands and/or becomes more accessible. This is the preferable of the two options, as it allows a more equal distribution of economic resources throughout the society. Second, it can occur when the amount of resources available for the state to distribute declines, with the result that the state can in fact no longer "fund" clientelism. In either case, however, clientelism does not immediately decline; loyalty and political identity have been built up over generations, as have

patterns of political participation and expectation. As Johnson (1977: 208) noted in the case of Beirut: "A change in the economic structure might eventually lead to the dying out of clientelism in Lebanon. However, it will not be an easy death, because politicians have built machines that not only exploit individualism, but also encourage pessimism." Changes in clientelist relations, even when they have not been material in nature, strike at the security that the patron has provided. However, the patron has been a figure of authority who can be relied upon in times of trouble. Where bureaucratic officials and authority figures were dismissive, the patron was the contact with the structures of power and appeared to operate for the loyal group. The inability to provide a secure foundation in an insecure context undermines loyalty, thereby creating the potential for a questioning of hegemony and the possibility of the development of a counterhegemonic project. However, as will be seen in the case of Jamaica, clientelism has fostered a sense of disempowerment and dependency over a long period of time: relationships are slow to fracture.

CLIENTELISM AND VIOLENCE

There are conflicting views over the extent to which clientelism results in violence. In some earlier anthropological studies, patron-client relations were viewed as a strategy for the preservation of order and harmony; the paternalistic and benevolent nature of the relationship was stressed. Pitt-Rivers defines the relationship in a small Spanish village as one of "lop-sided friendship" (1969: 140). In a later study, this view was seriously revised, with clientelism being recognized as a "divide and rule" strategy (Flynn, 1974). There remains little doubt that clientelism minimizes the potential for antihegemonic violence as it mediates economic disparities within the society while ensuring that a more radical redistribution of income is avoided. Rouquié (1978: 33 [emphasis added]) states, "As a mechanism of control, patronage and clientele relationships ensure *a certain social peace*. The *partial satisfaction of immediate individual needs* serves as a safety valve in situations where the distribution of income is profoundly unbalanced."

The key phrases here are "certain social peace" and "partial satisfaction of immediate individual needs." The political system remains inherently unstable because violence can easily be one of the outcomes. Politics becomes a zero-sum game in a context in which losing means the surrender of a job, house, and/or contract. One of the main features of clientelist violence is the way in which it can be managed and controlled by elite actors. Unlike violence that threatens the political system, this violence does not challenge the

system in which the actors operate. If competition for resources develops into violence, the division between individuals and communities is bolstered and in turn reinforces political identities and belonging within specific individual/organization orbits. The whole issue of material benefits may become less relevant as violence continues and becomes inextricably linked to the political culture and the process of political identity formation. In this context, the likelihood of the forging of cross-party alliances that could confront the status quo becomes increasingly remote. Thus elite hegemonic discourses remain largely unchallenged.

ECONOMIC LINKAGES AND CLIENTELIST POLITICS

Clientelist politics tend to develop when there is a small elite group with access to material resources and a large group in need of material relief. The mediation of these income inequalities is the internal dynamic of clientelist practices. However, clientelism also develops between international and national partners, here usually driven by the need of national governments for external financial resources. This has been particularly pertinent for former colonial economies like Jamaica, where creating a robust economy has been one of the major challenges of the postindependence era. Former colonial economies began the process of "independent" economic development at a distinct disadvantage. As Chandra (1980: 437) states, "the colonial state follows, in the long-run, anti-industrialisation and anti-development policies. And it does so precisely because it is guided by the 'national situation' not of the colony but of the metropolis." Thus while political liberation has been won or granted, major inequalities in global economic power relations have continued to hinder the development of the newly independent nations. The majority of the former colonies have remained to a great extent dependent on external agencies/nations for investment, credit, and assistance with industrialization and development policies and obliged to follow Western development models. This continued reliance on external resources necessarily restricts the political directions and options open to the national government. As Grant-Wisdom (1997: 193) has commented, "the effective power that sovereignty bestows is largely dependent on the economic power and resources that a given state can command." When a national government is constrained in economic policy orientation by international states or lending agencies, its sovereignty is called into question.

Reliance on external financial resources has been the reality for many former colonies since political independence, when the paramount need became ensuring "stability" for foreign investors. Although the Western model of

development pursued did not address social inequalities, it was clear that any radical social and/or political idea would have threatened this stability. Deviations from the capitalist path were costly for independent states, many of which were reliant on external financing for their economic development. However, while the Jamaican economy has, like the majority of the former colonies, historically been embedded in the global economic system, the process of globalization in the 1980s and 1990s has tightened the linkages. Recent neoliberal strategies, with their focus on a reduction in state expenditure and a reliance on the market as the engine of economic growth, have significantly impacted the role of the national government in directing economic policy. This has necessarily affected internal political arrangements, and this has had a negative impact on political stability in Jamaica.

Clientelist strategies are therefore not only a feature of the internal political landscape but also important in directing the relationships between developed and less developed states. The nature and importance of the power relations between client and patron at this international level should not be viewed as a rigid set of arrangements. The bargaining power of the less developed state may fluctuate depending on the geopolitical context. During periods when the hegemony of the patron is challenged in the international arena, a friendly ally (client) can be of crucial importance. Conversely, when hegemony is secure, there is less need for the patron to sustain a clientelist relationship with other states. The extent to which it is operational is dependent on a range of factors: this is pertinent in both internal and external political contexts.

CLIENTELISM AND VIOLENCE: FORMING POLITICAL IDENTITIES

Jamaicans gained universal suffrage in 1944, and during that first election there were incidents of partisan-political violence. These incidents were class-based in that the manual workers were linked to the JLP and the skilled workers with the PNP. The violence was not widespread, tending to be concentrated in Kingston and St. Andrew, and would appear to have been initiated by the JLP in an attempt to control the streets and ensure that the PNP could not hold its political meetings. The PNP, in response to this violence, organized its supporters to defend its meetings. At this early moment in the history of the two political parties, violence was used to secure votes predominantly in the urban areas, albeit on a limited scale.

While the material forms of clientelism did not appear to have an impact on partisan-political violence until the early 1960s, there had been allegations

of politicians' using state resources to secure votes during the 1955 and 1959 election campaigns. Despite the fact that material benefits were not evident during this early period, these initial incidents of violence were a manifestation of clientelist politics. The violence was connected with the need to develop a political identity: affiliation with the political party gave newly enfranchised Jamaicans a sense of belonging in the wider polity. This was particularly important given that the majority had previously been excluded from formal political participation. Following Gunes-Ayata, these relationships can be viewed as clientelist. The party (and at this stage the party leader) gave people a sense of belonging (crucial given the colonial history of racism and exclusion), and in return the supporter voted for the party and made an effort to protect it.

The use of the term "political party" during this early stage of political development is in fact rather misleading. While the two political parties existed and the PNP was far more structured and organized than the JLP, it was the political leaders, Alexander Bustamante (JLP) and Norman Manley (PNP), who commanded loyalty. Bustamante, in particular, had gained huge popularity as a result of his interventions following the 1938 uprisings (Eaton, 1975). Imprisoned for his leadership of the workers in Kingston, he had become famous throughout the island as the "people's champion." The PNP, emerging as it had from the middle class, was developed along the lines of a formal political party with party branches and a structure (Munroe, 1977). This strategy was later adapted as the PNP concentrated on competing with the personality politics of Bustamante. Populist politics became a feature of Jamaican political culture and was linked to the development of clientelism. The distribution of material benefits was seen not as a corrupt use of state resources but as a legitimate reward for loyalty. Political parties were seen as extended families ruled by charismatic leaders who would assist their political supporters in times of need. In this way, those who were marginalized and socially excluded were politically included as part of a political family presided over by the party leader and supported by the skewed distribution of resources earned through acts and expressions of party loyalty.[4]

These collective clientelist relationships had their most obvious starting point with the construction of the Tivoli Gardens housing complex in West Kingston, the key point being that the housing units were allocated to JLP supporters. Initially planned by the PNP, construction was continued by the JLP government in 1962 (Grey, 1991). Tivoli Gardens was built in the most deprived area of Kingston, Back O'Wall, where cardboard and zinc dwellings covered the land and people eked out a living mainly in the informal economy. These shantytowns were the first stopping-off point for rural migrants seeking a better living in the capital city. The rural-to-urban drift

was a result of economic policies that focused on industrialization as the path to economic development. A low-wage economy, industrial peace, and incentives for foreign investors—what became known the "Puerto Rican" model—were seen as the key to economic success. While the model led to high rates of economic growth, income inequality continued to increase. The economic policies pursued did not benefit the majority of the population but rather were designed to ensure a stable climate for foreign investors, highlighting the limits of "independence."

Resentment and antagonism were strong between the new residents of the area and PNP supporters who had seen their homes destroyed, were not allocated housing, and were denied employment on the construction site. Violence between opposing party supporters occurred during the construction and later in the election campaign of 1966–1967 and differed from previous partisan-political violence (Lacey, 1977; Wilson, 1980). Gangs, guns, and bombs were in widespread use, and politicians as well as rival political supporters were targeted until, finally, a state of emergency was declared in the area. In building Tivoli Gardens the JLP had created a base of support in West Kingston, establishing a group of hard-core supporters who were ready to fight to defend their political enclave and ensure, through the use of collective clientelism, that West Kingston would remain a safe seat for the JLP. When the PNP government was elected in 1972 it responded to these developments by building another housing estate, Concrete Jungle, which was allocated to its own supporters. Two stronghold political communities in which space was politicized, political difference not tolerated, and violence between rival political gangs common now confronted each other in downtown Kingston and St. Andrew. This development of collective clientelist mechanisms in a socially excluded and economically marginalized population created opportunities to cement political loyalties and affiliations, thereby blocking the development of a counterhegemonic alternative.

THE MANLEY GOVERNMENTS (1972–1980)

To argue that there was no antihegemonic protest in Jamaican society or that the political parties had completely colonized the space for resistance would be to present an inaccurate and simplified picture of social and political relations. As Connell (1977: 206–207) has stated: "Hegemonic situations range from a strongly established pattern of direct controls with only marginal dissidence, through situations where a working class has formed as an economic and social category but its mobilisation is being aborted to situations where mobilisation has occurred though only within decided limits."

Resistance to the capitalist project and the liberal state were both overt as in the Coral Gardens Uprising, the Henry Rebellion, and the Rodney Riots and less directly challenging to state power (see Campbell, 1985; Grey, 1991; Lacey, 1977). The religious movements of the rural areas and urban inner-city communities, such as Rastafarianism, pocomania, and obeah, highlighted the persistence of different worldviews (Chevannes, 1998). Rastafarianism was and is the least marginalized of these movements and has succeeded in creating spaces for resistance, but the extent to which the intention of the religious and cultural movement was to build a counterhegemonic project is questionable. In the late 1960s, social protest was connected with issues—particularly race and class inequalities—first articulated by the Rastafarian movement and later developed by Walter Rodney and the Abeng movement. However, in 1972 many of the Rastafarian symbols were appropriated by Michael Manley during his election campaign. Using the language of Rasta, wielding the rod of correction (a gift from Haile Selassie), and using reggae for his campaign songs, Manley incorporated much of the radicalism and antihegemony of Rasta and associated groups within the framework of the PNP.

The governments of Michael Manley heralded a new development in Jamaican politics. The experience of 1970s Jamaica can also not be divorced from the international context, and perhaps more than any other period this decade in Jamaican politics highlights the extent to which national governments are constrained by their embeddedness within the global economy. Self-reliance, increased trade with nonaligned countries, and community development were the key planks of the PNP platform. Manley attempted to pursue a "third path" in economic and political development, a difficult path in the context of the cold war and in relation to the geographic position of Jamaica, located so close to the United States and Cuba. As has been the case for Caribbean and Latin American countries in general, dependence on the United States has been a key feature of economic development (Petras and Morley, 1990). There are several examples of countries in the region that have attempted to follow alternative, non-Western political and economic paths only to be destabilized. The Jamaican experience of what came to be (vaguely) defined as "democratic socialism" followed closely on the heels of the U.S.-aided destabilization of the Chilean Marxist president Salvador Allende and his replacement with General Augusto Pinochet. Clearly during this period any signs of alternative development paths, whether social democratic in origin or more radical, would be greeted with skepticism and alarm in U.S. circles. This was particularly the case given the rise of the Non-Aligned Movement (of which Manley became a vociferous and active member) during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the challenges arising from the

Group of 77 for a New International Economic Order (Sauvant and Hasenpflug, 1977). For the United States, the escalating conflict in Vietnam and the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) challenges of the mid-1970s combined to call into question the role of Western hegemony. The rise of Michael Manley at this moment in the cold war, combined with the seemingly weakened position of the United States in the global economic order, posed challenges that could not be ignored.

Destabilization strategies tend to be covert. In the Jamaican case they were alleged to come from two directions: political and economic. CIA involvement was alleged, and immediately prior to the 1976 Jamaican election, in which Manley was reelected, the former CIA operative Philip Agee named the agents working in the U.S. Embassy. The United States and the local opposition forces denied that there were CIA agents undermining the PNP government, but given the role of the United States in the region it would have been unusual if CIA agents had not been involved. The JLP, particularly in its self-proclaimed role as the protector of democracy, argued that the PNP was intent on imposing a communist solution on the island along the lines of the "Cuban model." They pointed to the close relationship between Manley and Castro, the trading links developed between the two countries, the arrival of Cuban doctors and engineers on the island (spies), and the training of young unemployed youth in brigade programs in Cuba (a cover for military training).

Introducing this ideological element to Jamaican party politics heightened conflicts in the society that were then exacerbated by economic collapse. However, as Lewin (1981–1982: 52) has argued, "To the outside world, and to most of the Jamaican intelligentsia (maybe even to himself), Manley may have appeared to be mounting a serious challenge to the status quo, but really he was not." Clearly, at some level, he was articulating a different socioeconomic agenda. In calling for greater self-reliance and community empowerment and greater cooperation with the countries of the South, Manley was seeking new trading and economic directions. But at no time did he call for the state to expropriate private property, and indeed he expressed a desire to work with local capitalists to develop the economy. Part of the problem, then, was in the articulation of the message. Manley was a charismatic populist leader who could inspire the population, but his (at times "threatening") rhetoric was easily turned against him, as was his rather vague ideological message. Given U.S. perceptions of a "domino effect" in the region and the desire of the JLP to regain power, the rhetoric was a key part of the constructions of ideological political identities that were hitched onto the political party identities of the formative period—JLP versus PNP became Capitalist versus Socialist.

The second method of destabilization—the withdrawal of economic support—highlights the narrow limits within which independent national governments can operate. While economic sanctions were never explicitly or directly imposed, they had an important negative impact on the economic situation (Payne, 1994: 52-53). This was compounded by capital flight (legal and illegal) organized by multinational companies and local Jamaican businessmen (Kaufman, 1985: 90). The lack of investment—indeed, the active divestment strategies—of local and international capitalists highlighted the restrictions within which the Jamaican government operated. Economic collapse and high levels of violence facilitated Manley's electoral defeat in 1980.

And what of clientelism during this period of self-reliance and community empowerment? There is little to suggest that patronage politics did not continue along its usual pathways. In 1972 it was clear that the PNP government rewarded its own supporters, arguing that for the previous ten years JLP supporters had received the material benefits that come when one's party controls the resources of the state. The expansion of state expenditure with, for example, the introduction of an employment program (known as the "crash program") increased the opportunities for the transfer and distribution of benefits. The creation of Concrete Jungle and the allocation of housing to PNP supporters along with the attempted removal of residents from the nearby Rema housing estate (many of whom were JLP supporters) all pointed to the continuation of clientelist politics. Loyal supporters would have expected nothing less. The construction of blocks of hard-core political supporters created semimilitarized bases in the inner city that, as the violence escalated, became important for strategic purposes.

The election year of 1980 registered the highest murder rate in the island's history. It is estimated that between 800 and 1,000 people were murdered, the majority in the name of politics. Whole communities were "cleansed" of supporters of the rival party, creating homogenized political areas now known as "garrisons" (Figueroa, 1994). High-powered weapons, bombings, military-style offensives, terrorist tactics, and arson were rife in the Kingston and St. Andrew area. Eyre has estimated that 21,372 people were deprived of housing in a 2-kilometer area of Kingston during this period (1984: 32). Was this violence linked to clientelism? The answer is yes, indirectly. The development of clientelist politics in Jamaica became inextricably linked with the construction of political party identities and partisan-political violence. The violence, which escalated out of political control in 1980, was linked to the political identities created in the earlier period. The reasons it dramatically increased were connected to the ideological divisions constructed by the two political parties in the context of cold-war politics. The threat that Manley

posed to the power relations in Jamaican society was, in reality, not significant, but it was perceptions that came to dominate action. What occurred was an exaggeration of that challenge not only by Manley himself but particularly by the JLP, which cynically manipulated many of the PNP's rhetorical statements as well as its close links with the Marxist-Leninist Workers' Party of Jamaica (WPJ) in order to highlight the "threat" that Manley posed to the prevailing political order.[4]

Political allegiances were not suddenly created in the 1970s but had always existed, and in certain periods they had led to violence. The increasing violence that affected whole communities of men, women, and children reinforced the community-party relationship and deepened the divisions, leaving a legacy of mistrust that remains difficult to break down. It may seem a contradiction to claim that, in the midst of all the violence and instability that characterized the 1980 election, the political class was secure. However, what occurred on the streets of Kingston and, indeed, in many other parts of the country *did not radically challenge* the liberal democratic state or the capitalist economy. Instead, it was the perception that it would, combined with high levels of violence and economic collapse, that had an impact on the political, social, and economic fabric of the society. In fact, clientelism and the formation of party identities have ensured that counterhegemonic projects have failed to take root and therefore challenges to elite hegemony have not arisen. In 1980 the violence did not lead to a civil war precisely because there was no ideological alternative that could mobilize the population and no one willing to lead it. Participants in the partisan-political violence were not fighting for a "new vision" but defending their communities and protecting their party identity.

CLIENTELISM, POLITICAL CULTURE, AND DRUGS IN THE 1980s AND 1990s

While the 1980 election results were accepted by both parties and the violence declined after they were announced, it was clear that politicians had recognized that at certain moments during the campaign they had "lost control" over party activists. The violence had become "unmanageable" as each political community had mustered its resources and fought battles that took on their own momentum, above and beyond the orders and demands of certain political elites. The post-1980 period also saw the decline in state resources, the rise of alternative sources of income, mainly in the form of drug money, and the partial replacement of the politician as the patron. I use the word "partial" because the opening up of these communities had led to a

variety of options for the residents. To characterize all of the residents of the inner city as dependent on politicians, drug dons, or other "big men" is to stigmatize working people trying in difficult circumstances to provide a secure environment for themselves and their families.

Direct experience of partisan-political violence in the 1970s had been a good training ground for many gunmen. Weapons were available (many of them handed out by politicians) and on-the-job training accessible, making it very difficult for residents of the besieged communities to go to work or school. When the 1980 election was over, the guns were not recovered. Many gunmen, seeking alternative forms of income, turned to crime, and the most lucrative option was the drug trade.

Jamaica had supplied U.S. markets with marijuana long before the partisan-political violence began to have an impact on the society (Campbell, 1985). However, at the end of the 1970s cocaine was coming into Kingston, and gangs politically active in Kingston communities were becoming increasingly involved in selling the drug in the United States and acting as trafficking agents (Gunst, 1995). After 1980, many of the Jamaican gunmen obtained visas and migrated to the United States, where gangs were already established. This had several implications for partisan-political violence and a patron-client-based political relationship. First, alternative sources of income and security were available through involvement in drug trafficking and dealing. Second, this money was regularly available and was "big money." As one member of a political community explained to me, "The drugs take over from the politician because politician would come to you and give you a piece of bushing to bush out here every holiday especially near to Christmas . . . but the drugs man give you everyday to sell and you can make money every day" (interview, July 1995). Third, there was the opportunity to go abroad, as many of the gang leaders maintained connections with their home communities. Fourth, this alternative lifestyle was becoming an option at a time when state resources were contracting as a result of the structural adjustment policies implemented first by the PNP and later by the JLP.

The economic context within which the transition from political elites to drug dons occurred is crucial to an understanding of the shift that has taken place in the 1980s and 1990s. The main economic change during this period has been the implementation of neoliberal structural adjustment and stabilization policies. These policies have undoubtedly affected the ability of the Jamaican state to achieve multiclass alliances and a hegemonic consensus through the distribution of material resources. As Grant-Wisdom (1997: 199) describes the neoliberal philosophy,

> Competing on the world market through export is the name of the game. In addition, the government must endeavour to attract foreign investment by liberalising the foreign exchange system and by promoting the private sector and market efficiency. This has required the state to virtually dismantle itself, privatize, deregulate the economy, and rationalize its budget and cut subsidies.

In practice, Grant-Wisdom argues, this has meant that "national resources and development are diverted from domestic needs to export markets, as the free market economy is considered to be the only acceptable model of development." It is here, in the diversion of resources from the domestic arena, that patron-client politics has been most affected: the harsh reality is that the resources available for distribution have declined. As a former prominent JLP politician said, "in relative terms the economy is no longer able to allow for this large-scale dispensation of scarce resources" (interview, June 22, 1995).

While Manley had signed agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the late 1970s, the conditions attached to the loan were strict compared with those of the agreement that Edward Seaga, leader of the JLP government, signed upon his election in 1980. With the backing of the U.S. government and an IMF agreement, money flowed into Jamaica. Seaga firmly put Jamaica back in its place as a strong U.S. ally in the Caribbean region (in contrast, relations with Cuba were broken in October 1981). Seaga's and Manley's experience with the United States highlighted the importance of patron-client relations at the international level. As Edie notes: "As a dependent client of international capitalist agencies and the US government, Seaga pursued the policies that were recommended by his patrons in exchange for their critical capital transfers" (1991: 141). Manley, in contrast, had "offended" Jamaica's traditional patrons and consequently had his "material benefits" withdrawn.

As I have argued, structural adjustment and stabilization policies aimed to reduce the role of the state to ensure that markets were "unfettered." The provision of social support is one of the key areas in which state expenditure has been "trimmed." According to Boyd (1988: 110) social expenditure declined by 44 percent between the budgets of 1981 and 1985. This was realized in cuts in public-sector employment and reduction in education spending and social provision (Jamaica had the largest reduction in education spending in the region [Stone, 1989: 86]). Edie (1991: 123) argues that this reduction in public spending had no effect on the resources available to sustain a clientelist politics: "Market-oriented policies required not only a new ideological orientation in the government, but a political strategy for handling the transition

and the capacity to dismantle the clientelist political coalitions that characterized the party system. The latter has not occurred." She convincingly shows that resources were shifted from the center to the members of Parliament, favoring "a resurgence of clientelism as the MP's new role demanded that he strengthen his position among his constituents" (1991: 132–133). Thus, even though the amount of state resources had declined in relative terms, their concentration in the hands of MPs allowed clientelist relations to be maintained.

While I am in broad agreement with Edie, it is difficult to argue that the *same* levels of clientelism could be maintained. This is significant given the declining employment in the public sector—according to Stone (1989: 92) government-sector jobs were reduced by over 30 percent between 1980 and 1987—and the increased poverty and social deprivation brought about by declining social provision. Figures provided by Lundy (1999: 23), for example, highlight that in June 1991 feeding a family of five required three times the minimum wage. Where possible, benefits were allocated in an attempt to bind political supporters to the party. Payne (1994: 113) has shown that a year *before* the 1988 budget "the government had significantly increased public expenditure, especially on road-building, a classic form of political patronage." There is little doubt, then, that clientelist politics continued to be a feature of political relationships in the 1980s and 1990s despite the structural adjustment policies. However, the amount of resources available to be distributed had declined and the money immediately available from an alternative source—namely, the drug trade—had increased.

At the political level, declining resources affected the strong partisan identities and relationships that had developed around clientelist politics. The relationship between politicians and supporters is not, however, purely economic, and this explains why relations have fractured rather than broken down completely. The partial replacement of state resources with drug and crime proceeds has had repercussions on political relationships within besieged communities. First, the gunmen operating in the communities are not fighting for political control: gang disputes, protection of drug turf, and revenge killings account for a larger proportion of the violence than political rivalries. This undermines the politician as "protector" of the community and "broker of the peace." It also shifts the balance of power in the community to the gangs and the gang leaders as opposed to the political representative. For example, in September 1994, Edward Seaga, MP for West Kingston, handed over a list of 13 names to the police force. The names were those of men who, he claimed, had been terrorizing communities in his constituency. He stated in the press that he had repeatedly asked these individuals to stop their violence but they had refused to listen to him and he therefore had little choice but to bring the police into the area to arrest them. Interestingly, this

highlighted the changing position of the MP. In the past Seaga had been able to broker peace—to "control" the men who had been involved in violence and maintain his own authority over the area. The freedom that the 13 men had attained arose, it would appear, from their involvement in crime and drugs: they were no longer dependent on the political representative.

The second major impact of declining state resources and the increasing role of the drug trade has been the "opening up" of civil and political space in the besieged communities. Whereas the political party was previously the main channel through which needs were articulated and resolved, there are now other, nonpartisan actors attempting to provide alternative life choices to the residents of many inner-city communities. Education programs, inner-city training programs, conflict prevention courses, and contacts between residents from different political communities are, in some cases, helping to break down the perceptions that people have formed about each other over the generations. This has been (and is) a difficult process, and because the areas are volatile, relations between communities tend to fluctuate. However, there are development projects that are trying to forge relationships across traditional political boundaries.

Third, discourses in the wider society since 1980 have been more critical of politicians and the political system. Demands for constitutional reform, the creation of a third political party (the National Democratic Movement), discussions of the high levels of violence in society, and economic chaos have all contributed to a recognition of the need to reform the political system. However, this process remains a slow one in the politicized communities of the inner city. The legacy of paternalist politics has been one of dependency, and it has left people disempowered. As a community development worker explained, dependency is "the concept of following the leader. It has been encouraged, and you go to a meeting in [community A] and [community B] and there is always an expectation of what you are going to do for them not what are we going to do for ourselves and how you can help us achieve that. That has been encouraged I think either deliberately or otherwise by the politician" (interview, August 1995). Politicians do not encourage "independent," that is, nonpartisan initiatives. As one politician stated during a discussion of a nonpolitical initiative that was taking place in his "stronghold": "I want my man to be in charge regardless what the program is. They want their man who is apolitical. I want my man to be in charge" (interview, June 1996).

In the absence of the resources, civic education, and training to build community networks, power is represented by violence and money, hence the position of the community don. These men (and they are always men) tend to be linked to politics or drugs or both. They command "respect" in the area. Regardless of how they are viewed outside the community, they are protected

inside. A good example of this is Delroy "Uzi" Edwards, a former political gunman turned drug dealer in the United States who was found guilty there on 42 charges including 6 murders. According to members of his JLP community in Kingston, Delroy was "a good man. He look after his people. He was a leader when he was here, and when he went foreign, he don't forget us. He sent back food and clothes for the kids and when he came back, he always handed out money and treats" (Silverman, 1994: 42).

The legitimacy of the political system has been undermined by the inability of the state to cushion the vulnerable, maintain economic stability, and provide an adequate system of law and order. Clientelist politics attempted to mask the inequalities in power and income relationships in the society through the distribution of material benefits. Declining state resources have led to the partial replacement of the politician by the drug don, who can provide not only material resources and an opportunity to travel but also protection. As one resident stated, the gang members are the ones that "hang out, and they know what gives and they know what is what. It's as if they are the ones that people of a particular community look for from time to time. They are really the ones that go through nights without sleep, looking out for the enemy" (interview, August 1995). It is access to resources and willingness to use them within the community that give men power and respect and thus allow them to maintain their positions as dons. During the 1960s and 1970s, politics provided the resources for community dons to maintain their control of an area. The flow of hard drugs through the Caribbean during the 1980s and 1990s, combined with a tightening of state resources, has provided another, more lucrative avenue for income generation.

It is evident that the increase in drug trafficking coincided with the implementation of structural adjustment policies. These policies have had an important impact on the most vulnerable in the society (Grant-Wisdom, 1997; Lundy, 1999). The inability of the state to protect the marginalized, particularly in the urban areas, has led to a questioning of the political system and a reliance on other "authority" figures for resources and protection. However, while community dons play a protective role, they are unable to stem the increasing violence of urban community life. This violence is devastating, and prospects for building a "peace constituency" remain dim while political divisions between communities remain and members of the community rely on the perpetrators of violence to provide the resources and protection that the state is no longer able to supply.

This is not to ignore the fact that politics still has a role to play in the political communities. As I have argued, there is still some pork left in the barrel, and political loyalties, while weakening, are still evident. When election time comes around, the political communities, many of which experience internal

gang fighting during the nonelection period, come together to fight their traditional political rivals. Symbols of party loyalty—orange for the PNP and green for the JLP—signify potential friends and enemies. Spaces become politicized, and boundaries, symbolic and real, are reinstated. In these communities there is no democratic choice; for the majority of people the idea of voting for the "other" is not an option.

There is little doubt that the introduction of structural adjustment policies by the Seaga, Manley, and P. J. Patterson governments led to a decline in the resources available for clientelist politics. This is not to say that clientelist politics has ended but rather that it has continued in a limited way, having been superseded by income from drugs. The gunmen who fought political battles in the 1970s and early 1980s found other, more lucrative opportunities in the late 1980s and 1990s. However, the distinction between the drug don and the political don is not necessarily a clear one. Many of those who later became involved in the drug trade (for example, Jim Brown of the Shower Posse) were initially political dons. Regarding the political elites' involvement in the drug trade, there are many rumors but little hard evidence. Given the obvious previous political connections between politicians and community dons, it is difficult not to surmise a continuing relationship. The boundaries are blurred, and whether a gang leader is a political don or a drug don may well depend on timing. When elections draw near, communities tend to withdraw into their political identities, and it may well be that the political don reemerges from his drug don identity to ensure political loyalty.

CONCLUSION

Clientelism develops in contexts of inequality. These relationships exist at individual, state, and international levels. Internal political relationships in Jamaica have been maintained through the distribution of material resources and the provision of a sense of political identity and belonging for the economically and socially marginalized citizens of downtown Kingston. The decline of resources and the rolling back of the state in the 1980s and 1990s necessarily altered the ability of the state to provide security for the vulnerable. While this has been a positive development in certain respects—leading to an opening up of the two-party hegemony and a questioning of power relations—it has occurred in the midst of increasing violence and drug trafficking.

Drug resources and criminal activity have moved into the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the state. Loyalties fluctuate in the midst of increasing economic hardship and violence. The arrest of the community don "Zeeks"

in September 1998 is a good illustration of this development. Following his arrest, there were three days of protests on the streets of downtown Kingston; businesses closed and gun battles raged between the gangs and the police. A prominent member of the governing PNP told the media: "It is a fact that the withdrawal of the state from certain programmes has posed problems in terms of interventions in providing cushions for the more vulnerable" (*Daily Gleaner*, September 29, 1998). Political stability in Jamaica has been predicated on the ability of the state to provide resources to the most vulnerable, and as it is no longer able to undertake this material distribution the consensus is breaking down.

This breakdown of a consensus reliant in many ways on corruption and the fostering of dependency has had some positive short-term impacts, particularly in terms of an opening up of the political system. Clientelist politics tied communities into the political system through material and identity-based relationships. Class division was institutionalized, contributing to the formation and maintenance of hegemony and ensuring that party identity overrode class identity. The breakdown of this party identity led to electoral reform, increasing demands for constitutional change, and the creation of nonpartisan civil groups. However, it also led to a decline in participation, a withdrawal from the formal mechanisms of politics (witnessed in the rise of civil protests), and a sense of disillusionment with "politricks." A class identity has not emerged, partly because of the legacy of division that still exists, particularly around elections, but also because the high levels of violence militate against political organization.

The experience of Jamaica under independence highlights the continued "dependency" of the independent nation-state in the global economic system. Structural disjunctures in the Jamaican economy, vulnerability to external economic shocks, and an inability to compete with more established economies have combined to ensure that internal economic and political directions are constrained by geopolitical considerations. Jamaica is a client of the international economic system, and this relationship has been reinforced in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of increasing debt and an increased reliance on external financial assistance. The perverse outcome is that the demands of neoliberal proponents to "free up" the market have directly altered the nature of political participation. While Jamaican democratic processes have been problematic, particularly in terms of violence and division, a consensus did once exist. This is being eroded by the fact that the state can no longer provide security for its citizens, particularly the urban, marginalized population. How drugs will affect the political system in the longer term

remains to be seen. Precedents such as the Colombian one do not bode well for economic, political, and social stability.

NOTES

1. I use the term "antihegemonic" to refer to protest or dissent that is not organized, as opposed to "counterhegemonic," which is based on a specific, goal-oriented political strategy.

2. Flynn (1974: 149) makes the important point that too often anthropologists and political scientists argue that clientelism makes a "spontaneous appearance" and ignore the possibility that it can be a "deliberate organisation and maintenance from above for political purposes."

3. Clientelist relations also exist between states. Edie (1991) has shown this convincingly in the case of Jamaica.

4. The Workers' Party in Jamaica played an important role in Jamaican society during the 1970s. While it worked with the grassroots community, the majority of its members were intellectuals. It gained two seats in the local government elections of 1982, but its impact was limited. The collapse of the former Soviet Union, which coincided with the recognition that the political strategy followed was not the most appropriate for Jamaican conditions, led to a split in the party. In the context of two-party politics, it had little chance of success, especially with the odds stacked against radical developments in the U.S. backyard and the stranglehold of the two political parties in Jamaica (see Munroe, 1990).

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