Gangs in the Caribbean

Edited by

Randy Seepersad and Ann Marie Bissessar

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**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

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PREFACE

The proliferation of "gangs" and what is now referred to as "gang culture" is one of the most critical challenges facing governments throughout the world. In the United States of America for instance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has indicated that there are 33,000 violent street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs with about 1.4 million members criminally active in the United States today. In the case of Mexico, the number of criminal gangs has continued to proliferate as the trade in illegal drugs continues to grow. In the case of Jamaica, in 2011 the island nation of 2.7 million inhabitants saw 1,500 murders and 272 police killings, ranking it as one of the leading countries in murders per capita, along with South Africa and Colombia. In the first three months of 2008, there were over 300 homicides in Jamaica. Similarly, in the case of most of the islands in the Caribbean, the number of criminal gangs has continued to increase.

To researchers, the increase in the number of criminal gangs and in the intensity of criminal activity continues to stimulate a number of research questions. Anthropologists focus on the nature of the gang and gang culture. Political scientists focus their research on the public policies and the legislation that have been introduced to deal with this problem, while criminologists focus on the nature of gangs, their formation, and the age of groups, as well as the casual factors responsible for gang formation and continuance.

The papers assembled in this volume address some of the many issues and fears raised by the increase in criminal gangs in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Questions relating to the causal factors, the demographics of the gang, and the socio-economic environment, as well as social and psychological factors are examined. The papers were selected from among those presented at a conference held at the Department of Behavioural Sciences, the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies, in 2011. The special trajectory of this conference was its emphasis on Gangs, Violence and Governance.

The book is divided into two sections. Section one, which consists of chapters one through eight, aims to offer insight into the nature of gangs in the Caribbean. Very little published research exists on the topic, and indeed, the present book is the first on the topic. This section offers an in-depth examination of gangs in a number of Caribbean countries and contains studies which are based on quantitative data, as well as other studies

of a qualitative nature. Section two, which consists of chapters nine through eleven, is devoted to interventions and policy prescriptions.

Randy Seepersad in Chapter One sets the context for a study of gangs in the Caribbean by looking at comparative crime statistics from across the region. He suggests that while there are many perceptions about the crime situation in the Caribbean, an understanding of the relationship between gangs and crime cannot be gained in the absence of objective data on crime in the region. He notes that official statistics represent only one among other equally useful measures of crime and that victimization surveys and self-report studies represent other equally valid sources of information and indicate that official statistics underestimate the true extent of criminal offending.

Sheridon Hill's paper focuses on the factors that give rise to gang violence in the Caribbean. Using both quantitative and qualitative data, his paper reviews gang activities in the English-speaking CARICOM countries focusing on the countries of Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago. He offers a brief historical background of the factors that lead to gang violence, and assesses the impact of gangs on crime and murder rates. He then examines the responses of the ministries of national security and related law enforcement agencies to curb or minimize criminal gangs and their related activities. He concludes by offering recommendations.

Clifford Griffin's chapter argues that while the international literature on gangs provides useful insights, the nature and extent of crime and gang-related violence in the region can only be understood within the context of a more structural foundation which is relevant to the Caribbean region. This chapter describes, contextualizes, and summarizes the causes of crime and violence in the region; conceptualizes and contextualizes the gang phenomenon; and offers a structural model which argues that increasing crime and violence in the Caribbean is largely a function of organized gangs with deep, historical roots and with connections to the dominant political parties.

In Chapter Four, Janice Joseph looks specifically at the small nation of St Kitts and Nevis. The islands of St Kitts and Nevis are no more than 269 square miles in size with an estimated population of no more than 50,314 persons. Professor Joseph notes that while there are no empirical data to indicate what the socio-demographic characteristics of street gang members are in this country, there are two prominent gangs, the Blood and the Crips. She also notes that these islands have a high intensity of gang violence. Her chapter accordingly examines the phenomena of gangs and gang violence in St Kitts and Nevis and assesses the attempts by the gov-

ernment of these islands to combat gangs. She too offers recommendations at the conclusion of her chapter.

In Chapter Five, Ann Marie Bissessar addresses the issue of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago from another perspective. She argues that while a voluminous literature has been written on gangs and the predicators that give rise to gangs, in the case of a small, vulnerable society such as Trinidad and Tobago, the phenomenon of gangs emerged as a critical issue only after the introduction of structural adjustment measures imposed by the IMF and the World Bank on the country during the 1980s. Her paper contends that the primary predisposing factor that led to the proliferation of gangs was the downturn in the economy and the concomitant expansion of the drug trade.

Dylan Kerrigan and Nirmala Sookoo, in Chapter Six take an alternative perspective on the phenomenon of gangs in the Caribbean. According to the writers, instead of the practice of studying down, they borrow the anthropological idea of studying up. Their anthropological perspective on crime reflects historical contexts, class, and power differentials related to resource access and economic and political motives for defining criminality.

In Chapter Seven, Simon Alexis offers deep qualitative insight into the gang. Using an account of a mother he looks at one member of a gang. Using the mother's narrative he constructs in his paper a profile of a young man from a prestige school who turns to the gang. He notes that while this particular gang leader was loved by some he was hated by others. The author suggests that power, control and charity were associated with the leadership of this young man and argues that encounters with the law did not deter him from his pursuits. Inevitably, the young man "lived fast and died young".

Wendell Wallace in his chapter attempts an exploratory study on the association of females with gangs in Trinidad. He used primary and secondary data sources as he examined the roles and motivations of women in gangs in Trinidad as well as the possible changing paradigm of women who were affiliated with gangs and gangsters. His findings suggest that in the modern gang landscape in Trinidad, females are operating in quasi-gangs as well as engaging in illegal economic pursuits as partners, with or for their partners and sometimes for an entire gang. The changing role of female gang involvement, according to Wallace, appears to be influenced by females' increased involvement in crime and other illicit money-making activities.

Anthony Bryan in Chapter Nine argues that street gangs in the Northern Triangle (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador), such as the *Mara*

Salvatrucha and violent Mexican-based paramilitary groups like *Los Zetas,* have carved out geographic areas where national governments are essentially powerless to intervene. Transnational criminal organizations—many of which are Mexican and Colombian drug cartels—have the finances, organizational structures, geostrategic influence and illegally obtained firepower to potentially destabilize many Central American communities. Street gangs in the service of the transnational criminal organizations contribute to high levels of citizen insecurity and pose a threat to democratic governance by funding political parties, interfering with justice systems, and providing alternative governance within existing national territories. The evolution of Central American gangs, major differences in their *modus operandi*, their changing dynamics, and the responses of the individual governments trying to manage the security crisis posed by the gangs, is the subject of this chapter. The author tries to determine whether or not the experiences in the Northern Triangle are of relevance to the Caribbean.

Tarik Weekes in Chapter Ten examines how peacebuilding activities can be applied as a strategy to reduce gang violence in Jamaica. He argues that conflict resolution strategies must go beyond initial dialogue and mediation activities, and must make the transition to a conflict reduction path. The author argues that certain Jamaican communities have deep-seated conflict and that there must be an institutionalization of peacebuilding to effectively achieve a conflict reversal. In arguing for the use of a peacebuilding framework, the chapter examines group violence, peacebuilding characteristics and potentials, and the presence of defensive gangs and the conflict they present. The chapter concludes by asking for the scaling-up of some key resource areas to facilitate greater peacebuilding and a greater degree of policy coordination and partnership between state and non-state actors.

Kathy-Ann Felix-John and Dianne Williams in the concluding chapter suggest that mediation may well be the technique to resolve challenges with respect to gangs. They suggest that mediation is widely used in all sorts of disputes ranging from divorces and civil lawsuits to very complex public policy problems and international conflicts. They accordingly look at the issue of mediation and the advantages and disadvantages of employing this technique to reduce gang conflict and violence.

The various chapters of the present book bring together a range of expertise, and offer important insights into the nature of gangs in a number of Caribbean countries. The Caribbean is not a homogenous region, and likewise, the gang problem differs in each country. The present book draws upon what is known about gangs in the Caribbean, and offers a

number of recommendations for dealing with this issue. This issue has become a priority in recent times, and if not dealt with in a timely manner, may escalate to the point where public security agencies are unable to eliminate violent gangs from within the region. The policy recommendations offered call for a mix of preventative as well as suppressive strategies. Preventative strategies are required so that youths in the Caribbean feel that they have other alternatives open to them, and are not pulled by the lure of gangs. At the same time, the persistence of criminal gangs requires a range of approaches in addition to those which are preventative in nature. Research on gangs in the Caribbean is in its infancy. The present volume attempts to initiate the dialogue on this topic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SECTION ONE:

UNDERSTANDING GANGS AND VIOLENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN

CHAPTER ONE

CRIME IN THE CARIBBEAN

RANDY SEEPERSAD[1]

Abstract

Chapter one sets the context for a study of gangs in the Caribbean by looking at comparative crime statistics from across the region. While there are many perceptions about the crime situation in the Caribbean, an examination of the relationship between gangs and crime cannot be conducted in the absence of objective data on crime in the region. Caribbean crime data are notoriously difficult to gather. As such, the present chapter serves as a resource material for scholars of gangs as well as scholars who are interested in crime and violence. Data from 1990 to 2010 were examined, with a focus on murders, shootings, robbery, rape, burglary and house-breaking, and kidnapping. Official data are examined and are compared to victimization survey data which capture crimes not reported to the police.

Introduction

While there are many perceptions about the crime situation as well as the importance of gangs as a contributory factor to the level of crime in the Caribbean, the relationship between gangs and crime cannot be determined without objective data on crime in the region. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that official statistics represent only one among other equally useful measures of crime. Victimization surveys and self-report studies represent other equally valid sources of information, and typically indicate that official statistics underestimate the true extent of criminal offending. The present chapter benefits from the availability of both official crime statistics and victimization survey data. Official data were sourced from

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the various ministries of national security or their equivalents across the region, while victimization data derive from a United Nations Development Programme survey in which a standardized victimization survey was administered to 11,208 respondents in seven countries across the region. A secondary purpose for examining crime data is that the current volume aims to be a source of information on crime in the Caribbean. No previous publication has as complete and as extensive a range of crime data from the Caribbean region. The present chapter includes the raw data to facilitate the dissemination of this information. These data were gathered in March 2012, and represent the most up-to-date information available as of the time of publication of this book.

In examining crime statistics from different countries it must be borne in mind that many factors can impact on the available data. One of the most important is definition. Various countries may have different definitions for various crimes, or may even have different classifications (e.g. first degree murder vs. second degree murder). Another issue is the size and efficiency of the police service as well as the level of confidence in the police. These factors can affect the proportion of crimes which get into the official records. Cultural factors which may facilitate or hinder reporting are another such issue. Social stigma attached to some crimes such as rape and domestic violence may hinder reporting, thus depressing official statistics. Conversely, in cultures where such stigma may be minimal or absent there is a greater likelihood that people will report such activities. Data collection mechanisms and means of collating statistics from different geographical regions in a given country are other factors which may affect the accuracy of official crime statistics. Where there are variations in recording practices in different regions of a country, and where data are not computerized and must be tallied manually, there is the potential for human error in computing national statistics. While the above factors affect the comparability of crime statistics, many countries in the Caribbean, with the help of CARICOM and other regional bodies, have attempted to systematize their data collection procedures. These efforts have improved the accuracy and timeliness of available data, and help to facilitate comparability across the region.

Murder

Murder statistics represent one of the most reliable indicators of violent crime in any country. It is typically the case that murder statistics have a higher degree of accuracy than statistics for any other type of crime. This is the case since murder is typically considered to be the most serious

crime, and it is a crime which is very unlikely to go unreported. While it is the case that murders can be incorrectly classified, this misclassification occurs in only a very small proportion of all murders. Murder statistics are presented in table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Statistics for murder in Caribbean countries

	Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica	Barbados	Grenada	St. Lucia	St. Vincent & Grenadines	St. Kitts & Nevis	The Bahamas	Dominica	Belize	Guyana	Antigua & Barbuda
2000	120	887	20	15	20	20	6	74	2	47	74	4
2001	151	1139	25	6	33	12	6	43	1	64	79	7
2002	171	1045	25	14	33	20	5	52	10	87	142	9
2003	229	975	33	8	28	11	10	50	8	67	206	6
2004	261	1471	22	6	36	21	11	44	8	79	131	7
2005	386	1674	29	11	37	24	8	52	8	81	142	6
2006	371	1340	35	11	39	13	17	61	5	92	163	14
2007	391	1583	25	11	27	36	16	78	7	97	115	19
2008	547	1618	23	16	36	27	23	73	7	103	158	14
2009	506	1682	19	7	37	20	27	86	13	97	117	16
2010	473	1428	31	10	44	25	20	94	11	132	139	7
Average	328	1349	26	10	34	21	14	64	7	86	133	10
Average increase	35.3	54.1	1.1	-0.5	2.4	0.5	1.4	2	0.9	8.5	6.5	0.3
Average rate	26.0	51.7	9.7	10.1	21.5	19.1	29.2	21.2	10.4	35.8	17.8	12.9
Rate increase	2.8	2.1	0.4	-0.5	1.5	0.5	3.0	0.7	1.3	3.5	0.9	0.4

The data in table 1-1 indicate that, for the period 2000-2010, Jamaica had the highest average annual number of murders (1349) followed by Trinidad and Tobago (328), Guyana (133), Belize (86) and the Bahamas (64). It is not necessarily the case, however, that the risk of becoming a victim of murder is higher in countries with the highest number of murders. An examination of murder rates allows for the comparison of risk

since this takes into account the size of a country's population and is an expression of the risk of victimization.[2]

Figure 1-1 indicates that where murder rates were concerned, the countries of the Caribbean could be divided into four groups. The murder rate for Jamaica (an annual average of 51.7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants) far exceeded those of any other Caribbean country, and placed Jamaica in a group by itself. Belize, St. Kitts/Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago placed in group two with murder rates which ranged between 26 and 35.8 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. Group three comprised St. Lucia, the Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Guyana. For the time period under consideration, the murder rate of countries in group three was approximately 20 per 100,000 inhabitants. The countries with the lowest murder rates in the Caribbean were Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and Barbados.
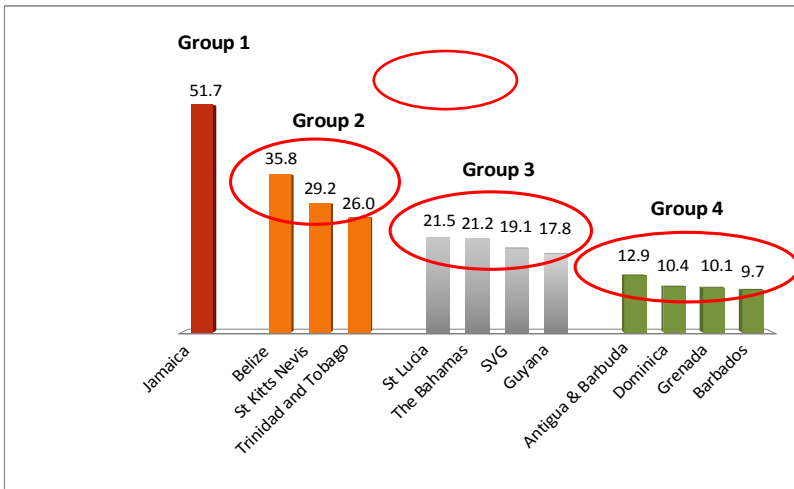
Fig. 1-1 Average murder rates (2000-2010)

The majority of countries in table 1-1 exhibited an increasing number of murders. For the majority of countries, however, this increase was rela-

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[2] All rates are calculated using the following official population statistics: Census year 2000 (Bahamas 303611, Barbados 268792, Belize 240204, Dominica 69625, Jamaica 2607632, St Kitts/Nevis 46325, Trinidad/Tobago 1262366); Census year 2001 (Antigua/Barbuda 76886, Grenada 103137, St Lucia 156734, St Vincent/Grenadines 109022); Census year 2002 (Guyana 751223).

tively small. For Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, the Bahamas, Dominica, and Antigua and Barbuda, the increase ranged between 0.3 and 2.4 murders per year, with an average increase across the countries of 1.2 murders per year. In the case of Grenada, there was a small decline in the number of murders over time. The countries with the greatest increases were Jamaica (in which there was an average annual increase of 54 murders), Trinidad and Tobago (35), Belize (8.5) and Guyana (6.5). Table 1-1 also indicates the average change in the murder rates across Caribbean countries. For the period under consideration, the countries with the most rapid increases in murder rates were Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica (see figure 1-2). Countries with negligible increases in murder rates were Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Bahamas, Dominica, Guyana, and Antigua and Barbuda. These data indicate that the number of murders as well as the risk of victimization was increasing at a rapid rate in Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, while in the case of St. Kitts and Nevis, although the absolute increase in the number of murders from year to year was small, the risk of victimization was increasing at a rapid rate.
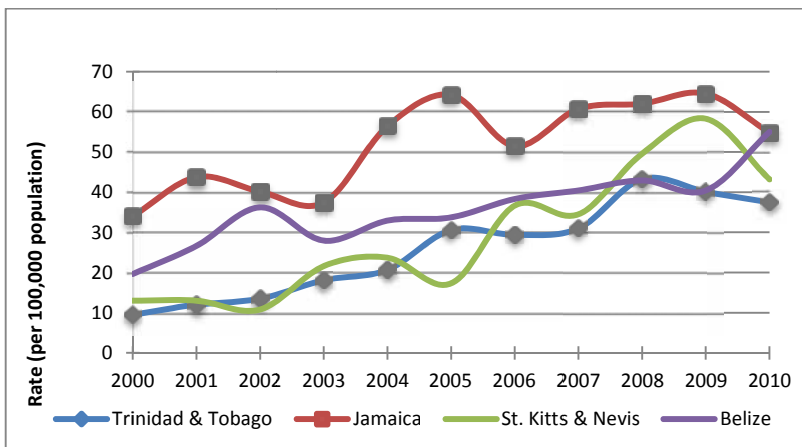
Fig. 1-2 Murder rates for countries with the most rapid increases over time

Overall, when all countries were weighted equally, there was an increase in murder rates across the region (see figure 1-3). In 2000, the average murder rate for the region stood at 14.3 per 100,000 inhabitants. This increased to 28.1 per 100,000 in 2010, an increase of 196 per cent. For the

entire period under consideration, the average murder rate for the Caribbean was 22 murders per 100,000 inhabitants, and the rate increased by an average of 1.4 murders per 100,000 inhabitants per year.
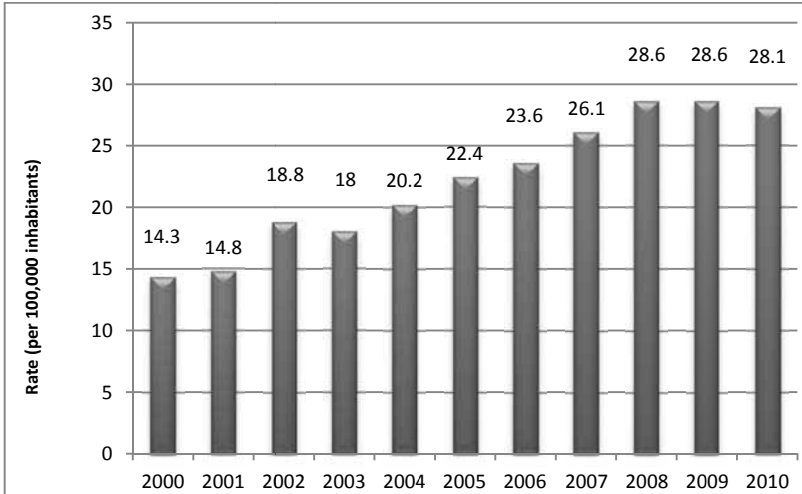
Fig. 1-3 Average murder rates for the Caribbean (2000-2010)

Shootings

Shooting statistics for the period 2000-2010 appear in table 1-2. The two countries with the highest quantum of murders, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, also had the highest average number of shootings. For the period under consideration, Trinidad and Tobago had an average of 653 shootings per year, while Jamaica had an average of 1,401. Other countries with comparably high average annual numbers of shootings included Barbados (105) and the Bahamas (86). The most rapid increases in shootings for the period under consideration occurred in Jamaica (an average annual increase of 48.5 shootings) and Trinidad and Tobago (23.6), with a notable increase also occurring in the Bahamas (11.5). While Barbados had a high average annual number of shootings, the incidence of shootings in Barbados was declining by an average of 7.8 per year.

Table 1-2: Statistics for shootings in Caribbean countries

	Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica	Barbados[a]	St. Lucia	St. Vincent & Grenadines	St. Kitts & Nevis	The Bahamas	Dominica	Guyana	Antigua and Barbuda
2000	387	1012	156	33	30	14	38	2	15	-
2001	499	1183	135	33	14	3	64	0	28	-
2002	655	1270	142	57	43	4	55	2	33	11
2003	784	1145	97	98	25	6	72	1	20	9
2004	643	1675	96	108	22	18	72	2	28	15
2005	795	1646	84	73	25	11	55	7	28	10
2006	657	1341	118	48	30	7	84	2	24	13
2007	680	1448	63	37	31	12	131	7	28	35
2008	771	1528	100	27	27	39	120	6	15	33
2009	689	1667	86	41	27	36	97	10	8	11
2010	623	1497	78	48	42	33	153	-	-	22
Average	**653**	**1401**	**105**	**55**	**29**	**17**	**86**	**4**	**23**	**18**
Average increase	**23.6**	**48.5**	**-7.8**	**1.5**	**1.2**	**1.9**	**11.5**	**1**	**-0.8**	**1.4**
Average rate	**51.7**	**53.7**	**39.1**	**35.0**	**26.3**	**35.9**	**28.2**	**5.6**	**3.0**	**23.0**
Rate increase	**1.9**	**1.9**	**-2.9**	**1.0**	**1.1**	**4.1**	**3.8**	**0.9**	**-0.8**	**2.2**

a Referred to as 'firearms crimes'

Average rates of shootings for Caribbean countries appear in figure 1-4. The countries with the highest average rates of shootings for the period 2000 to 2010 were Jamaica, with an average annual rate of 53.7 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants, and Trinidad and Tobago with an average annual rate of 51.7. Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, the Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Antigua placed in group two in figure 1-4, and had average annual rates which ranged from 23.0 to 39.1 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants. The countries with the lowest rates of shootings in the Caribbean for the period under consideration were Dominica and Guyana.
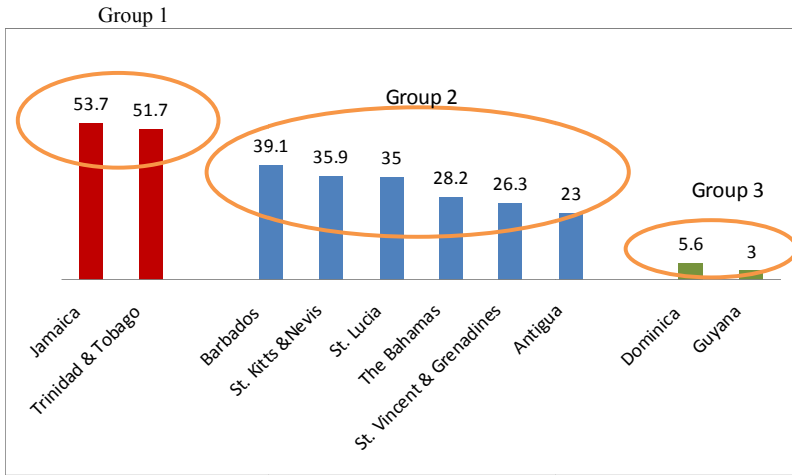
Fig. 1-4 Average shooting rates (2000-2010)
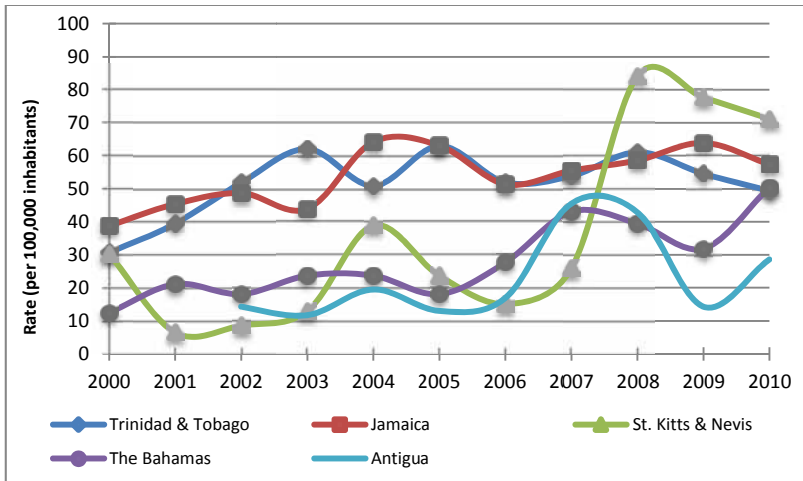
Fig. 1-5 Shooting rates for the countries with the most rapid increases

For the period 2000 to 2010, the countries with the most rapid increases in rates of shootings were St. Kitts and Nevis (with an average annual increase of 4.1 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants), the Bahamas (3.8), Antigua and Barbuda (2.2), Trinidad and Tobago (1.9) and Jamaica (1.9).

Rates of shootings for these countries for the period 2000 to 2010 appear in figure 1-5. All countries concerned exhibited a fluctuating but increasing incidence of shootings. In the case of St. Kitts and Nevis, the most pronounced increase occurred between 2006 and 2008 when the rate rose from 15.1 to 84.2 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants.

Accessibility to firearms in the Caribbean at present has led to a situation where a substantial proportion of murders are being committed with the use of firearms. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, for the period 2004 to 2010, a total of 2,935 murders were committed. Of these, 2,043 or 69.6% were committed with a firearm (see table 1-3). Prior to 2000, firearms were used in less than one third of all murders in Trinidad and Tobago, whereas after 2000, firearm usage in homicides increased to the point where firearms represented by far the predominant weapon of choice. In the case of Jamaica, for the period 2004 to 2010, a total of 10,796 murders were committed, of which 8,269 or 76.6% were committed with a firearm.

Table 1-3: Murder involving firearms: Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Jamaica	Total no. of murders	1471	1674	1340	1583	1618	1682	1428
	No. committed with firearms	1111	1278	1008	1249	1253	1290	1080
	Percentage	75.5	76.3	75.2	78.9	77.4	76.7	75.6
Trinidad and Tobago	Total no. of murders	261	386	371	391	547	506	473
	No. committed with firearms	180	272	269	303	432	232	355
	Percentage	69.0	70.5	72.5	77.5	79.0	45.8	75.1

The average rate of shootings across the Caribbean increased over the period 2000 to 2010 by an annual average of 2 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants (see figure 1-6). For the entire period under consideration, the average rate of shootings for Caribbean countries was 31 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants. For the period under consideration, the rate of shootings reached its highest point in 2010; this figure was 44.4 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants.
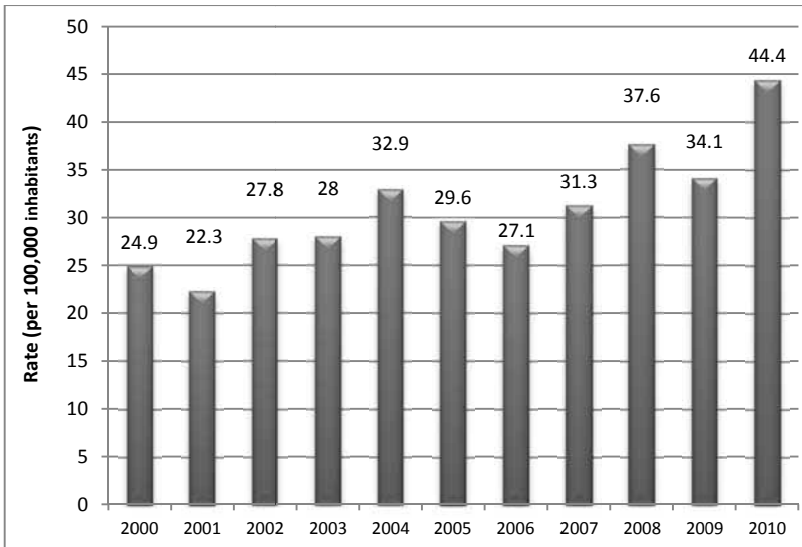
Fig. 1-6 Average shooting rates for the Caribbean (2000-2010)

Robbery

Table 1-4 shows the number of robberies in Caribbean countries for the period 2000-2010. By far, the countries with the highest annual average number of robberies were Trinidad and Tobago (an average of 4,832 robberies per year), Jamaica (2,239) and Guyana (1,939). These were followed by Belize (an average of 529), St. Lucia (388), Barbados (368), the Bahamas (235), and Antigua and Barbuda (108). Each of the other countries listed in table 1-4 had on average fewer than one hundred robberies per year. It is noteworthy and troubling that, in addition to having the highest number of robberies, the rates of increase in robberies for Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana were far higher than those for the other countries examined. In Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2000 to 2010, the number of robberies increased by an average of 98 per year, while in Jamaica the number of robberies increased by 52 per year, and in Guyana there was an increase of 96 robberies per year. While there were increases in the number of robberies for the other countries listed in table 1-4, these increases were negligible compared to the increases in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana.

Table 1-4: Robbery statistics for Caribbean countries

	T&T	Ja	Bar	Gre	Luc	SVG	SKN	Bah	Dom	Bel	Guy	Ant
2000	4094	2331	428	50	290	81	69	219	57	574	1715	58
2001	4269	2109	312	31	299	101	43	206	104	546	1832	40
2002	4675	2021	350	85	352	74	63	207	103	571	2440	61
2003	4590	1710	316	44	324	63	54	258	73	441	1596	93
2004	3885	2103	289	38	385	62	52	199	80	442	1669	78
2005	4883	2210	330	45	419	73	90	198	104	653	1982	73
2006	5633	2009	367	50	375	79	75	188	76	526	2060	148
2007	4965	1601	392	60	380	56	119	194	71	514	1685	198
2008	5043	2660	394	43	490	47	102	262	71	-	1833	153
2009	6040	3021	383	43	601	68	108	316	79	545	2582	164
2010	5075	2850	487	71	348	117	84	336	67	477	-	120
Average	**4832**	**2239**	**368**	**51**	**388**	**75**	**78**	**235**	**80**	**529**	**1939**	**108**
Avg. increase	**98**	**52**	**6**	**2**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**12**	**1**	**-11**	**96**	**6**
Avg. rate	**383**	**86**	**137**	**49**	**247**	**68**	**169**	**77**	**116**	**220**	**258**	**140**
Rate increase	**7.8**	**2.0**	**2.2**	**2.1**	**3.7**	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.9**	**1.4**	**-4**	**12.9**	**8.1**

KEY: Ant-Antigua; Guy-Guyana; Bel-Belize; Dom-Dominica; Bah-Bahamas; SKN-St Kitts/Nevis; SVG-St Vincent & Grenadines; Luc-St Lucia; Gre-Grenada; Bar-Barbados; JA-Jamaica; T&T-Trinidad and Tobago

While the number of robberies as well as the annual increase in rob-
beries in the majority of countries was small, this must be considered in
the context of the size of the populations of these countries. A small num-
ber of robberies in a small population can still create conditions where the
risk of robbery victimization is high. The average rates per 100,000 inhab-
itants at which people fall victim to robbery are shown in figure 1-7. While
the risk of robbery victimization was highest in Trinidad and Tobago (383
per 100,000 inhabitants per annum on average), the risk of victimization in
several countries was higher than in Jamaica, despite the comparatively
higher number of robberies in the latter country. Countries with robbery
rates which exceeded that of Jamaica include Guyana, St. Lucia, Belize,
St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Dominica. An
examination of the average robbery rates in the Caribbean indicated that
the various countries could be placed into four groups (see figure 1-7).
Group one comprised Trinidad and Tobago with the highest robbery rate.
Group two contained Guyana, St. Lucia and Belize, each with average
annual robbery rates which exceeded two hundred. St. Kitts and Nevis,
Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and Dominica placed in group three, and
had rates which exceeded one hundred. The countries with the lowest av-
erage robbery rates in the Caribbean were Jamaica, the Bahamas, St. Vin-
cent and the Grenadines, and Grenada.
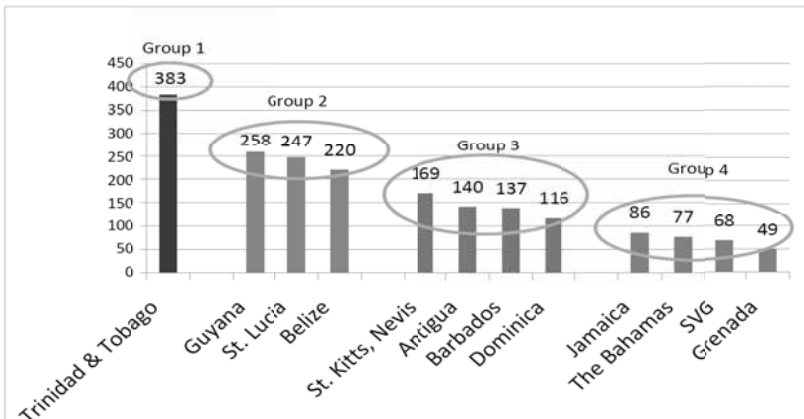
Fig. 1-7 Average robbery rates (2000-2010)

The countries with the highest average annual increases in robbery
rates were Guyana (an average increase of 12.9 robberies per 100,000 in-
habitants per year), Antigua (8.1), Trinidad and Tobago (7.8), the Baha-

mas (3.9) and St. Lucia (3.7). The robbery rates for these countries for the period 2000 to 2010 appear in figure 1-8.
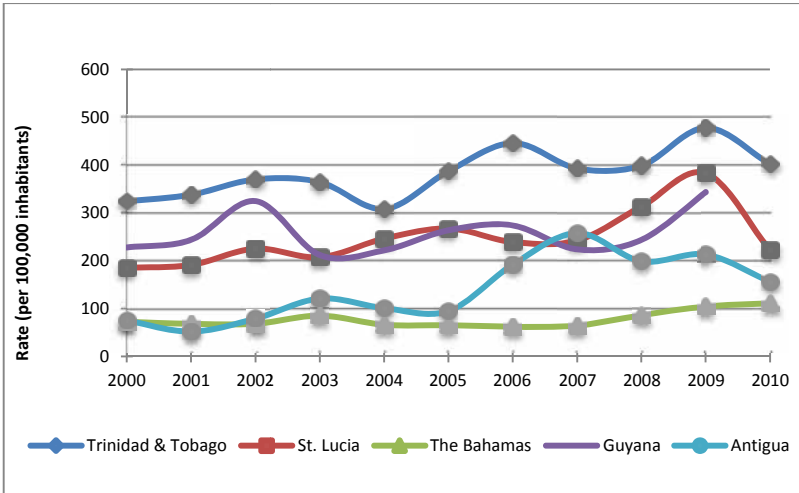
Fig. 1-8 Robbery rates for the countries with the most rapid increases

Rape

Table 1-5 shows the number of rapes in Caribbean countries for the period 2000 to 2010. The highest average number of rapes occurred in Jamaica (an annual average of 806 rapes), Trinidad and Tobago (279), the Bahamas (117) and Guyana (114). The other countries in table 1-5 had an average of fewer than one hundred rapes occurring annually.

While many Caribbean countries recorded comparatively small annual numbers of rapes when population size was taken into account, the risk of rape victimization was comparably high in many of the countries. The countries with the highest rates were St. Vincent and the Grenadines (48.7 rapes per annum per 100,000 inhabitants), the Bahamas (38.7), St. Lucia (32.4), and Jamaica (30.9). These were followed by Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Dominica, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago, all of which had rates which exceeded 20 rapes per annum per 100,000 inhabitants. The only countries with rates lower than these were Belize and Guyana.

Table 1-5: Statistics for rape in Caribbean countries

	T&T	Ja	Bar	Gre	Luc	SVG	SKN	Bah	Dom	Bel	Guy	Ant
2000	261	870	68	21	40	49	14	101	24	78	117	-
2001	274	912	71	21	35	51	17	111	20	56	117	-
2002	302	875	95	29	37	43	12	150	23	54	137	13
2003	317	931	79	32	48	60	6	114	14	50	122	15
2004	305	860	84	19	52	66	9	89	23	33	154	16
2005	334	746	77	23	49	87	11	82	22	47	169	22
2006	259	707	75	22	65	50	10	72	9	44	124	17
2007	317	712	72	30	69	60	7	134	17	38	82	30
2008	236	851	62	31	45	36	13	118	18	38	58	46
2009	247	702	68	57	53	54	14	126	25	30	62	32
2010	215	704	63	32	66	28	14	205	19	21	-	8
Average	**279**	**806**	**74**	**29**	**51**	**53**	**12**	**117**	**19**	**46**	**114**	**22**
Avg. increase	**-4.6**	**-16.6**	**-0.5**	**1.1**	**2.6**	**-2.1**	**0**	**10.4**	**-0.5**	**-5.7**	**-6.1**	**-0.6**
Avg. rate	**22.1**	**30.9**	**27.5**	**27.9**	**32.4**	**48.7**	**24.9**	**38.7**	**27.9**	**19.3**	**15.2**	**28.8**
Rate increase	**-0.4**	**-0.6**	**-0.2**	**1.1**	**1.7**	**-1.9**	**0.0**	**3.4**	**-0.7**	**-2.4**	**-0.9**	**-0.9**

KEY: Ant-Antigua; Guy-Guyana; Bel-Belize; Dom-Dominica; Bah-Bahamas; SKN-St Kitts/Nevis; SVG-St Vincent & Grenadines; Luc-St Lucia; Gre-Grenada; Bar-Barbados; JA-Jamaica; T&T-Trinidad and Tobago

Figure 1-9 offers a graphic representation of rape rates, where countries were classified into three groups. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Bahamas were in group one with the highest rates, while Belize and Guyana were in group three, with the lowest rates. All the other countries were in group two. While rape rates were high in many countries, the incidence of rape was declining in the majority of Caribbean countries. The only countries with increases in their rape rates were the Bahamas (an average annual increase of 3.4 rapes per 100,000 inhabitants), St. Lucia (1.7) and Grenada (1.1).
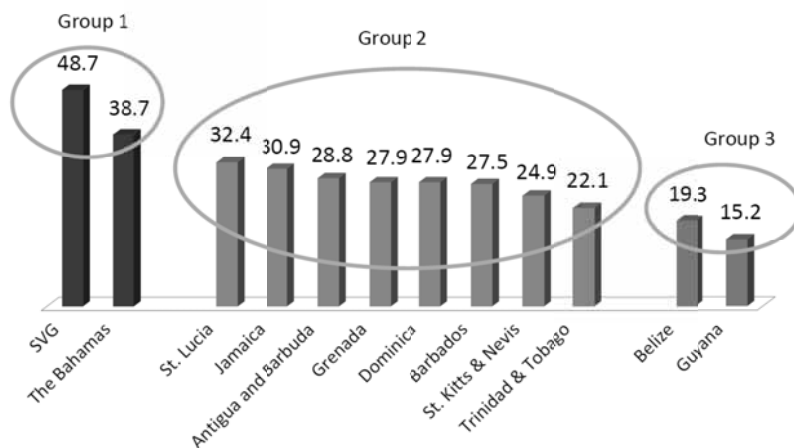
Fig. 1-9 Average rape rates (2000-2010)

Burglary and Housebreaking Offences

Burglary and housebreaking offences for the period 2000 to 2010 appear in table 1-6. In the case of Barbados, the statistics given included residential burglary, commercial burglary, and other burglary, while for Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, data are for housebreaking offences. In the case of Guyana, the data given are for burglary, housebreaking and larceny.

A number of countries stand out as locations with comparatively large numbers of burglaries and housebreakings; these include Trinidad and Tobago, which has an annual average of 5,085 burglaries, the Bahamas (2,477), Guyana (2,305), Jamaica (2,203), Antigua and Barbuda (2,197), and Barbados (2,077). The annual average number of burglaries for the

other countries in table 1-6 does not exceed two thousand, with the number in Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis not exceeding one thousand per annum.

Table 1-6: Statistics for burglaries/housebreakings in Caribbean countries

	T&T	Ja	Bar	Gre	Luc	SVG	SKN	Bah	Dom	Bel	Guy	Ant
2000	5623	2426	2861	1098	2072	1759	941	2434	1297	1852	3083	2145
2001	5016	2184	2574	583	2211	2172	733	1803	1286	1942	2518	2178
2002	4930	1769	2693	1069	2030	1691	896	2137	1551	1986	2589	2194
2003	4863	1401	1949	849	1887	1501	695	2581	1175	1713	2590	1880
2004	5214	2044	1883	861	1875	1563	585	2019	1012	1660	2588	2701
2005	4548	1653	1833	990	2049	1492	719	2255	1002	1758	2279	2784
2006	4973	1297	1846	1012	2102	1301	758	2628	1106	1514	1959	2607
2007	1958	1493	1594	879	1621	1144	735	2534	1004	1256	1813	2725
2008	4855	2449	1889	1008	2224	1107	761	2726	1019	-	1826	1873
2009	5744	3786	1808	1158	2124	1527	692	2668	1015	1286	1800	1635
2010	5207	3734	1919	1125	1680	1724	786	3133	935	1018	-	1445
Average	**5085**	**2203**	**2077**	**967**	**1989**	**1544**	**755**	**2447**	**1127**	**1599**	**2305**	**2197**
Avg. increase	**-42**	**131**	**-94**	**3**	**-39**	**-4**	**-16**	**70**	**-36**	**-108**	**-143**	**-70**
Avg. rate	**403**	**84**	**773**	**937**	**1269**	**1416**	**1629**	**806**	**1619**	**665**	**307**	**2858**
Rate increase	**-3**	**5**	**-35**	**3**	**-25**	**-3**	**-33**	**23**	**-52**	**-45**	**-19**	**-91**

KEY: Ant-Antigua; Guy-Guyana; Bel-Belize; Dom-Dominica; Bah-Bahamas; SKN-St Kitts/Nevis; SVG-St Vincent & Grenadines; Luc-St Lucia; Gre-Grenada; Bar-Barbados; JA-Jamaica; T&T-Trinidad and Tobago

Almost invariably, the number of burglaries and housebreakings was declining across the Caribbean, with the greatest declines occurring in Guyana (an average annual decrease of 143), Belize (108), Barbados (94) and Antigua and Barbuda (70). These decreases may have been the result of better guardianship, which might include a range of security devices as well as personnel. Such decreases could also signal the possibility that burglars were becoming more violent and resorting to robbery as a means of property acquisition. The Bahamas and Jamaica were the only countries with notable increases in the number of burglaries and housebreakings. In the case of the Bahamas, there was an annual increase of 70 burglaries and housebreakings, and in the case of Jamaica there was an annual increase of 131 such offences. These increases translated into increases in the average annual rate of burglaries in each country. For the Bahamas, the burglary and housebreaking rate increased by an average of 23 such offences per 100,000 inhabitants per annum for the period under consideration, while for Jamaica, the corresponding increase was 5 burglaries and housebreakings per 100,000 inhabitants per annum.
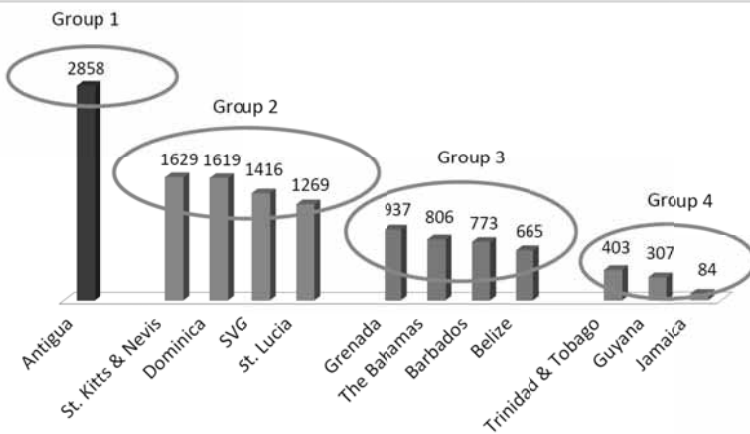
Fig. 1-10 Average burglary/breaking rates (2000-2010)

The average burglary rate of a number of countries was in excess of one thousand burglaries per one hundred thousand inhabitants, with that of Antigua and Barbuda almost approaching three thousand (see figure 1-10). The burglary rates for St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia were 1629, 1619, 1416, and 1269 burglaries per 100,000 inhabitants respectively. The average annual burglary rate for

Antigua and Barbuda was 2,858 burglaries per 100,000 inhabitants. Figure 1-10 indicates that Caribbean countries could be classified into four groups where burglaries and housebreakings were concerned. Antigua, with the highest rate in the Caribbean was the only country in group one. Group two contains those countries which had rates which ranged between one and two thousand burglaries per 100,000 inhabitants per annum, while group three contains countries in which the rate was greater than 500 per 100,000, but did not exceed 1,000 per 100,000 inhabitants. The final group contains Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Jamaica; all the countries in this group had rates of less than 500 burglaries and housebreakings per 100,000 inhabitants per annum, with Jamaica having the lowest rate of all countries considered.

Kidnappings

Data on the number of kidnappings in the Caribbean appear in table 1-7. For the period under consideration, Trinidad and Tobago had an average of 185 kidnappings per year. This represented by far the largest number of kidnappings in any Caribbean country. Data for Trinidad and Tobago include data on kidnappings for ransom and kidnappings for other purposes. Data for the period 2000-2010 indicate that kidnapping for ransom accounted for 11.8% of all kidnappings in Trinidad and Tobago.

Other countries with notable numbers of kidnappings were Jamaica (with an average of 35 kidnappings per year), Barbados (18), and Guyana (12). In all other countries for which data were available, the average number of kidnappings was less than ten per year. While many of the countries in table 1-7 experienced increases in the number of kidnappings over the period indicated, these increases were, for the most part, very small. Kidnapping rates were highest in Trinidad and Tobago (an average of 14.7 kidnappings per 100,000 inhabitants), Barbados (6.6) and Dominica (4.6).

Table 1-7: Statistics for kidnappings in Caribbean countries

	Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica	Barbados	St. Lucia	St. Vincent Grenadines	St. Kitts & Nevis	Dominica	Guyana	Antigua
2000	156	37	19	0	0	0	0	4	3
2001	135	26	23	0	0	0	1	15	1
2002	235	33	20	0	6	0	2	14	0
2003	235	23	24	0	10	2	2	3	0
2004	177	38	12	0	3	5	4	9	2
2005	280	31	23	5	2	1	3	18	2
2006	214	38	14	11	3	1	5	27	2
2007	178	38	17	10	8	0	4	8	1
2008	155	47	12	13	2	1	5	5	1
2009	155	-	18	14	1	2	6	18	1
2010	119	-	12	7	2	3	3	-	1
Average	**185**	**35**	**18**	**5**	**3**	**1**	**3**	**12**	**1.3**
Avg. increase	**-3.7**	**1.3**	**-0.7**	**0.7**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0.3**	**1.6**	**-0.2**
Avg. rate	**14.7**	**1.3**	**6.6**	**3.5**	**3.1**	**2.9**	**4.6**	**1.6**	**1.7**
Rate increase	**-0.3**	**0.1**	**-0.7**	**0.7**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0.3**	**0.1**	**-0.2**

Thus far, this chapter has examined official crime data. Official data represent crimes which are known to the police. A large proportion of crimes, however, go unreported. Alternative data sources are required to determine the proportion of crimes which are unreported. Victimization surveys, as well as self-report data on criminal offending represent two methodologies which are capable of collecting crime data beyond those which appear in official crime statistics. Victimization surveys have the advantage that they are not strongly influenced by the tendency of re-spondents to portray themselves in a socially desirable way. Self-report studies, in contrast, depend on respondents to truthfully supply data which indicate the extent to which they have committed illegal acts. While re-spondents may be willing to disclose incidents in which they were victims of crime, it is less likely that people will disclose illegal behaviour, espe-cially so within the context of an interview, where the information is es-sentially being given to a stranger and holds the possibility of self-incrimination. While isolated victimization surveys have been conducted in various Caribbean countries, the only survey which utilized a standard-ized instrument across a range of countries was that conducted by the United Nations Development Programme in 2010. This survey collected data from over eleven thousand adults in seven Caribbean countries, and

respondents were sampled in a manner which represented the key demographic characteristics of the adult population in each country. In comparing such victimization data to official crime data it should be noted that such data are not immune to problems. Social factors, for example, may affect the willingness to report various types of victimization. Domestic violence and rape are examples of crimes which may be underreported, even in victimization surveys. Differential understandings of the definition of various crimes may also affect the data which are collected. In the case of the United Nations Development Programme data, however, interviewers were knowledgeable about definitional issues and were able to clarify those issues for respondents.

    Table 1-8 gives the percentages of people who were victims of crime in the last year (2009) and within the last ten years (2000-2010) in the seven countries surveyed by the United Nations Development Programme. In assessing victimization, eighteen different crimes were specified; these were: attempted murder, assault with a weapon, robbery at gunpoint, robbery with other types of weapons, sexual assault and/or rape, extortion/protection, domestic violence involving a partner, family violence, house break-ins in the day, house break-ins at night, motor vehicle theft, theft from a motor vehicle, kidnapping (for ransom), abduction, financial crimes/scams, praedial larceny, a threat to one's life by someone with a weapon and a threat to one's life by someone without a weapon. Crimes within the last year comprised acts of victimization committed in 2009. The countries with the highest past year levels of victimization were Antigua and Barbuda (10.6% of the sample), St. Lucia (10.5%) and Barbados (10.4%). Countries with somewhat lower rates of past year victimization included Trinidad and Tobago (9.4%), Suriname (9.3%), and Guyana (8.3%). The country with the lowest recorded rate of victimization was Jamaica (5.2%). Where crime victimization within the last ten years was concerned, in all countries except Jamaica, over 20% of respondents reported such victimization. The highest rate occurred in Barbados (26.6% of the sample), followed by Suriname (24.1%), St. Lucia (22.9%), Trinidad and Tobago (22.6%), Antigua and Barbuda (22.4%), and Guyana (20.1%). Jamaica had the lowest rate of self-reported criminal victimization within the last ten years (17.4%).

Table 1-8: People victimized within the last year and the last ten years

	Victimization (percentage)		Sample Size
	Past year	**Last 10 years**	
Antigua & Barbuda	10.6	22.4	1512
St. Lucia	10.5	22.9	1514
Barbados	10.4	26.6	1506
Trinidad & Tobago	9.4	22.6	1595
Suriname	9.3	24.1	1512
Guyana	8.3	20.1	1569
Jamaica	5.2	17.4	2000

Tables 1-9 and 1-10 give statistics of victims of specified crimes within the last ten years, and within the last year respectively. When victimization within the last ten years was considered, the country with the largest proportion of persons who reported that they were victims of attempted murder were Antigua and Barbuda (1.4%), Barbados (1.3%), St. Lucia (1.2%) and Jamaica (1%). Where assault with a weapon was concerned, the countries with the highest rates were St. Lucia (4.5%), Barbados (3.7%) and Antigua and Barbuda (3%). Robbery with the use of a firearm was highest in Trinidad and Tobago (5.6%) and Guyana (3.7%). Robbery with other weapons was highest in Trinidad and Tobago (3.8%), Suriname (2.9%), Antigua and Barbuda and St. Lucia (both 2.8%). Self-reported rape victimization was highest in Antigua and Barbuda (2.2%) and Barbados (1.1%). Victimization rates for other crimes are shown in table 1-9.

Table 1-9: Percentages of persons self-reporting victimization within the past ten years

	Antigua & Barbuda	Barbados	St. Lucia	Guyana	Trinidad & Tobago	Suriname	Jamaica
Attempted murder	1.4	1.3	1.2	.9	.8	.9	1.0
Assault with weapon	3.0	3.7	4.5	1.7	2.3	1.3	2.5
Robbery at gunpoint	2.8	1.8	1.3	3.7	5.6	1.7	2.7
Robbery other weapons	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.4	3.8	2.9	2.5
Rape	2.2	1.1	.9	.8	.4	.7	.7
Extortion	.5	.1	.1	.4	.3	.3	.4
Domestic violence	1.7	2.9	1.5	1.8	.9	1.7	1.1
Burglary / Break-in	10.1	9.0	11.6	5.5	5.4	15.5	3.6
Motor vehicle theft	1.0	.5	1.2	.3	1.1	2.5	.5
Kidnapping /Abduction	.2	0	0	0	.2	.1	0
Sample size	**1512**	**1506**	**1514**	**1569**	**1595**	**1512**	**2000**

Where victimization within the last year was concerned, the highest rates for attempted murder were recorded in Antigua and Barbuda and St. Lucia (both 0.5%) and Barbados (0.4%). The highest rates of assault with a weapon were recorded in St. Lucia (2%), Barbados (1.9%), and Antigua and Barbuda (1.6%). Within the last year, the highest rates of robbery at gunpoint were recorded in Antigua and Barbuda (1.3%) and Trinidad and Tobago (1%). The highest rates of robbery with other weapons were recorded in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana (both 1.1%) and Suriname (0.7%). The highest rates of rape were recorded in Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados (both 0.7%) and Suriname (0.5%). Past year victimization rates for other crimes are shown in table 1-10.

Table 1-10: Percentages of persons self-reporting victimization within the past year

	Antigua & Barbuda	Barbados	St. Lucia	Guyana	Trinidad & Tobago	Suriname	Jamaica
Attempted murder	.5	.4	.5	.3	.3	.3	.2
Assault with a weapon	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.1	.4	.8
Robbery at gunpoint	1.3	.4	.5	.5	1.0	.1	.4
Robbery other weapons	.5	.5	.5	1.1	1.1	.7	.5
Rape	.7	.7	.3	.4	.4	.5	.3
Extortion	.1	0	.1	.1	.2	0	0
Domestic violence	1.1	1.0	.9	.5	.6	.6	.5
Burglary / Break-in	4.3	2.3	4.4	2.4	2.8	6.4	1.5
Motor vehicle theft	.4	.2	.6	.3	.3	.7	.2
Kidnapping /Abduction	.2	.2	0	0	.1	0	0
Sample size	**1512**	**1506**	**1514**	**1569**	**1595**	**1512**	**2000**

Victimization survey data can be used to compute crime rates and allow for a comparison with official crime rates. It must, however, be noted that comparisons can only be made where similar crimes exist in the victimization as well as in official data. With the present data, victimization rates for 2009 can be compared to official crime rates for 2009 or even to official average crime rates for a specified period of time (see table 1-11). Victimization rates computed using reports of victimization incidents within the last ten years cannot be used for comparison purposes since they represent the cumulative number of incidents of victimization within the specified time period, as opposed to the average number of incidents within the time period.

Table 1-11 compares official crime rates to rates computed based on victimization data for six of the seven countries for which data were collected by the United Nations Development Programme.[3] The final column in this table gives the ratio of the victimization rate to the official crime rate, both using 2009 data. With the exception of the comparison of murder and attempted murder, this ratio offers an estimate of the extent to which official crime data underestimated the actual rate of criminal offending.

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[3] Suriname is excluded since official crime data are not available for the majority of crimes, and as such, comparisons cannot be made.

Table 1-11: Comparison of official crime rates and self-reported victimization rates

		Official rates		Victimization rates	Ratio[a]
		2009	2000-2010	2009	
T&T	Murder/Attempted murder	40.1	26	251	6.3
	Robbery	478	383	2069	4.3
	Rape/Sexual assault	60	55	439	7.3
	Burglary/Breaking	455	403	2821	6.2
Jamaica	Murder/Attempted murder	64.5	51.7	150	2.3
	Robbery	116	86	850	7.3
	Rape/Sexual assault	49	48	300	6.1
	Burglary/Breaking	145	84	1450	10.0
Barbados	Murder/Attempted murder	7.1	9.7	398	56.1
	Robbery	142	137	863	6.1
	Rape/Sexual assault	65	70	664	10.2
	Burglary/Breaking	673	773	2258	3.4
St. Lucia	Murder/Attempted murder	23.6	21.5	462	19.6
	Robbery	383	247	991	2.6
	Rape/Sexual assault	73	75	330	4.5
	Burglary/Breaking	1355	1269	4425	3.3
Guyana	Murder/Attempted murder	15.6	17.8	319	20.4
	Robbery	344	258	1657	4.8
	Rape/Sexual assault	27	41	382	14.1
	Burglary/Breaking	240	307	2422	10.1
Antigua	Murder/Attempted murder	21.0	12.9	463	22.0
	Robbery	213	140	1720	8.1
	Rape/Sexual assault	107	73	662	6.2
	Burglary/Breaking	2127	2858	4302	2.0

Note: All rates are per 100,000 inhabitants. For murder/attempted murder, the official rates represent murder rates, while the victimization rates represent attempted murder. Victimization rates for robbery are computed using robbery at gunpoint and robbery with other weapons.
[a] This ratio reflects the victimization rate : official crime rate for 2009.

Where murder is concerned, it is typically the case that official statistics offer an accurate representation of the incidence of murder. Victimization rates based on attempted murder allow the reader to gain an under-

standing of the extent to which the number of murders could have been higher. Assuming representativeness of the samples drawn by the United Nations Development Programme, extrapolation of the rates, based on population size, allows for a computation of the number of persons who potentially could have been murdered. Using Trinidad and Tobago as an example, 251 persons per 100,000 persons indicated that they were the victims of attempted murder. With a population of approximately 1.3 million, this implies that in 2009, a total of 3,263 persons were the victims of attempted murder. While this may be plausible in the context of the number of robberies and other violent crimes which occurred in 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago, it must be cautioned that it is possible for people to take any threat on their life as an attempt at murder. This implies that while some people may have indicated that they were victims of attempted murder, their lives may in fact have not been in danger to the extent that murder could have occurred. This indicates that the above extrapolation may overestimate the number of people who could potentially have been murdered in Trinidad and Tobago. The ratio of attempted murder to actual murder was particularly high in Barbados (a ratio of 56:1), Antigua (22:1), Guyana (20:1) and St. Lucia (20:1). This ratio was lowest in Jamaica (2.3:1).

Robbery rates computed from the victimization data were calculated based on responses to questions which asked about robbery with a firearm and robbery with other types of weapons. The combination of both measures yielded a construct comparable to the definition of robbery across the range of countries in table 1-11. Comparisons of victimization to official data indicate that the actual rate of robberies was 8.1 times higher than that indicated by official statistics in Antigua. In Barbados, the actual rate of robbery was 6.1 times higher, while in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago the actual rates were 4.8 and 4.3 times higher respectively. In the case of St. Lucia, the actual rate of robbery was comparatively closer to the official rate, compared to the other countries considered. The ratio of the robbery rate based on victimization data compared to official crime data for St. Lucia was 2.6:1.

The comparisons based on rape and sexual assault must be considered with caution since various countries include different acts in their definition of sexual offences. Victimization data from the United Nations Development Programme were based on rape and sexual assault, while official data were available for rape alone (see table 1-5), and for rape as well as other sexual offences. Sexual assault may include many acts apart from rape. As such, rape *and* sexual assault is a broader construct than rape alone, and it is to be expected that victimization rates based on rape and

sexual assault will yield higher estimates than official crime data based on rape alone. It is therefore more appropriate to compare the available victimization data (i.e. rape and sexual assault) to official crime data based on rape and other sexual offences. While data on sexual offences apart from rape are not supplied in this chapter, such data are available, and have been utilized in making the comparisons in table 1-11. Comparisons are therefore made between rape and sexual assault (victimization survey data) and rape and other sexual offences (official crime data). The range of other sexual offences for each country is indicated below so that the reader is aware of the comparisons being made.

For Trinidad and Tobago, according to the United Nations Development Programme data, the rate of victimization of rape and other types of sexual assaults was 439 per 100,000 inhabitants. Where all sexual offences were concerned, the rate in Trinidad and Tobago for 2009 was 60 per 100,000 inhabitants. The ratio of the victimization rate to the official rate of all sexual offences in Trinidad and Tobago was 7.3:1. To the extent that there is equivalence between rape and sexual offences, and all sexual offences, this implies that the rate of sexual offences in Trinidad and Tobago was approximately seven times higher than that indicated by official data. Data for rape and carnal abuse were available for Jamaica. The official rate for rape and carnal abuse in Jamaica in 2009 was 49 offences per 100,000 inhabitants while the rate of self-reported victimization of rape and sexual assault was 300 per 100,000 inhabitants. The victimization rate for rape and other sexual offences was six times higher than the rate of rape and carnal abuse in Jamaica. In Barbados, data were available for rape, assault with intent to rape, sex with a minor, indecent assault, serious indecency and other sexual crimes. When all of these categories were combined, the sexual offences rate, based on official data for 2009, was 65 offences per 100,000 inhabitants. Victimization data indicated that the rate of rape and other sexual offences was 664 per 100,000 inhabitants. This indicates that the actual rate of sexual offences in Barbados wais ten times higher than that indicated by official crime data. For St. Lucia, victimization data indicated that the rate of sexual offences was 4.5 times higher than that indicated by official data. Data for rape and carnal abuse were available for St. Lucia, and when both crimes were considered, the official rate of such offences for 2009 was 73 per 100,000 inhabitants. Victimization survey data indicated that the rate of rape and sexual assault in St. Lucia was 330 offences per 100,000 inhabitants. Data on a range of sexual offences were available for Guyana. These included rape, attempted rape, carnal knowledge of a girl between twelve and thirteen years old, indecent assault, buggery, incest, attempted incest, gross indecency, and bigamy.

These data indicated that the official rate of sexual offences in Guyana for 2009 was 27 offences per 100,000 inhabitants. A comparison with victimization survey data in table 1-11 indicates that the rate of sexual offences was approximately 14 times higher than the official rate of such offences. Official data for rape and indecent assault were available for Antigua and Barbuda. These data indicated that the rate of rape and indecent assault in 2009 was 107 offences per 100,000 inhabitants. Victimization survey data indicated that the actual rate of rape and sexual assault was 662 per 100,000 inhabitants, or six times higher than that indicated by official data.

Self-reported rates of burglary and housebreakings were closest to the official rates in Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, and Barbados. In contrast, official data underestimated the extent of burglary and housebreakings to a greater extent in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana (see table 1-11). In Trinidad and Tobago, victimization survey data indicated that the rate of burglaries and housebreakings was 2,821 offences per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to an official rate of 455 per 100,000 in 2009. Victimization data indicated that the actual rate of burglaries and housebreakings was 6.2 times higher than that indicated by official crime data. In Jamaica and in Guyana, the rate for victimization data was ten times higher than the rate indicated by official crime data. In Jamaica, victimization data indicated that there were 1,450 burglaries and housebreakings per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to an official rate of 145 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2009. In Guyana, victimization data indicated that the actual rate of such crimes was 2,422 offences per 100,000 inhabitants, while 2009 official crime data indicated a rate of 240 burglaries and housebreakings per 100,000 inhabitants. In Barbados, the official rate of burglary and housebreakings (673 offences per 100,000 inhabitants) was 3.4 times lower than that indicated by victimization survey data (2,258 offences per 100,000 inhabitants), while in Antigua and Barbuda, the official rate (2,127 offences per 100,000 inhabitants) was half that of the rate indicated by victimization survey data (4,302 offences per 100,000 inhabitants).

The comparison of official crime data with victimization survey data for comparable crimes provides a way to determine the extent to which official data underestimate the true extent of criminal offending. When the six countries in table 1-11 were examined for those crimes which were directly comparable (i.e. robbery, rape and sexual assault and burglary), the countries with the largest disparities between official and victimization survey rates were Guyana, followed by Jamaica and Barbados.[4] The coun-

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[4] Estimated by computing the mean of the ratios of victimization survey rates to official crime rates for the three crimes being considered.

try with the lowest disparities was St. Lucia. Low disparities between victimization data and official crime data may indicate that the populations of such countries are more willing to report crimes, but could also be a reflection of the effectiveness of the police service, at least as it applies to detecting crimes. That said, it must be acknowledged that table 1-11 makes comparisons between only three crimes which are directly comparable, and other crimes not considered may have ratios which differ markedly from the ratios for these crimes. The accuracy and generalizability of the ratios in table 1-11 also depend on the accuracy and representativeness of the victimization survey data which were used, as well as the typicality of official crime data for 2009. It will be recalled that ratios were calculated by comparing victimization survey data (which were gathered in 2009) to official crime rates for 2009. To the extent that official crime data for 2009 were anomalous or atypical of normal crime trends, such comparisons may yield misleading estimates of the extent to which official data underestimated the true extent of criminal offending. In this respect, table 1-11 offers average official crime rates for the period 2000 to 2010, though ratios are not computed using these rates.

Conclusion

With very few exceptions, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago had the highest quantum of crimes committed in the Caribbean region. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, data for the period 1990 to 2010 indicated that there were long-term increases in all major crimes except burglary, and in the case of sexual offences and kidnappings, there were noted decreases in these crimes after 2005 to 2006. The increases noted in Trinidad and Tobago were more pronounced within the last ten years. A much larger proportion of crimes occurred in Trinidad than in Tobago. For the period 2001 to 2010, 2% of murders, 2.7% of woundings and shootings, 4.4% of sexual offences, 3.2% of kidnappings, 2.2% of robberies, 7% of narcotic offences, and 8.4% of burglaries occurred in Tobago. Tobago accounts for approximately 4.3% of the population of Trinidad and Tobago.[5]

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[5] Central Statistical Office (2000) National Census Report 2000, Trinidad and Tobago

Table 1-12: Percentage distribution of violent crimes according to police division in Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2001 to 2010

Police Division	Murder	Woundings/ shootings	Sexual offences[a]	Kidnapping[b]	Robbery	Narcotic offences	Burglary
Port of Spain	26.2	24.8	8.2	10.6	18.5	12.5	14.0
Northern	20.0	17.4	18.4	23.7	24.5	22.3	18.7
North Eastern	14.0	11.6	9.0	7.9	9.3	7.4	8.7
Western	13.0	11.0	7.3	10.0	8.8	6.9	9.9
Central	8.2	11.1	13.4	11.9	12.9	9.6	11.3
Southern	7.8	11.2	15.4	18.7	15.7	14.2	15.4
Eastern	4.5	5.0	13.7	5.0	3.6	12.1	5.9
South Western	4.3	5.2	10.2	9.0	4.5	8.0	7.7
Tobago	2.0	2.7	4.4	3.2	2.2	7.0	8.4
Total N	**3486**	**6796**	**7056**	**1883**	**49058**	**5304**	**50308**

[a] This includes rape as well as other sexual offences
[b] This includes kidnapping for ransom and kidnapping for other purposes

The spatial distribution of crime in Trinidad and Tobago exhibited considerable stability over time, with some areas accounting for a consistently disproportionate number of crimes each year. Of the nine police divisions in Trinidad and Tobago, the most crime prone where murder was concerned was the Port of Spain division, which accounted for 26.2% of all murders for the period 2001 to 2010 (see table 1-12). This was followed by the Northern Division (20%), and the North Eastern Division (14%). These three divisions were also responsible for the highest proportion of woundings and shootings in Trinidad and Tobago. Within each police division there are a number of police stations, each responsible for a police station district. The spatial stability in the distribution of crimes at the divisional level was mirrored by similar spatial stability at the police station district level. For example, when the locations of all murders for the period January 01, 2009 to October 31, 2011 were examined, it was observed that 243 out of a total of 1,281 murders (18.9%) took place in the Besson Street Police Station district (which is within the Port of Spain division), while the Police Station district with the second highest number of murders was Arima (Northern Division). Arima accounted for 99 murders or 7.7% of the national total for this period. Similarly, data on woundings and shoot-

ings for the period January 01, 2009 to September 30, 2011 indicated that, of the 1,815 such crimes which occurred, 381 or 21% occurred in the Besson Street Police Station district (Port of Spain Division), while 106 or 5.8% occurred in the Morvant Police Station district (North Eastern Division) and 105 or 5.8% occurred in the West End Police Station district (Western Division). Table 1-12 shows the spatial distribution of serious crimes according to police division for the period 2001 to 2010.

Until recently, crime policy in Trinidad and Tobago focused exclusively on reactive measures which relied solely on an overburdened criminal justice system. Popular sentiments about what worked drove crime policy. This, unfortunately, resulted in a situation where the manipulation of the severity of punishment, including the acceptance of the death penalty for capital offences, was accepted as the solution to the crime problem. Crime data for the last twenty years indicate that this approach has not been successful. Preventative approaches in dealing with the crime situation are gradually gaining acceptance, though Trinidad and Tobago is a long way from fully utilizing such approaches. The Citizen Security Programme is an example of a preventative initiative of the Ministry of National Security. This programme targets high crime communities and has three primary objectives which include community action, assistance to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and institutional strengthening of the Ministry of National Security. This programme aims to strengthen the linkages between the Police Service and communities, and aims to build social solidarity and informal systems of social control with the objectives of achieving a reduction in the perceived levels of insecurity, a reduction in the levels of victimization, and an improvement in attitudes and behaviours towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Initial evaluation has indicated that the objectives of the Citizen Security Programme are being realized.[6] This evaluation has found that there was an increase in community building activities in all Citizen Security Programme communities, as well as a 30% reduction in the crimes of murder, wounding and shooting, and sexual offences, compared to a national reduction of 6.5% for the period 2008 to 2010. In Trinidad and Tobago there is the need for an empirically driven approach to crime prevention. Such an approach should examine risk and protective factors at varying levels of analysis, including the individual, family, school, community, and nation, and should utilize primary as well as secondary prevention strategies (Brantingham and Faust 1976).

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[6] Citizen Security Programme Terms of Reference for expansion (LO 1965/OC-TT)

Crime data for Jamaica indicate that there was a continuous increase in murders, shootings, and rape and carnal abuse from 1970 to 2010 (see figure 1-11). For this period, the number of murders increased by an average of 39 per year, while the number of shootings increased by 31 per year, and the number of incidents of rape and carnal abuse increased by 20 per year.
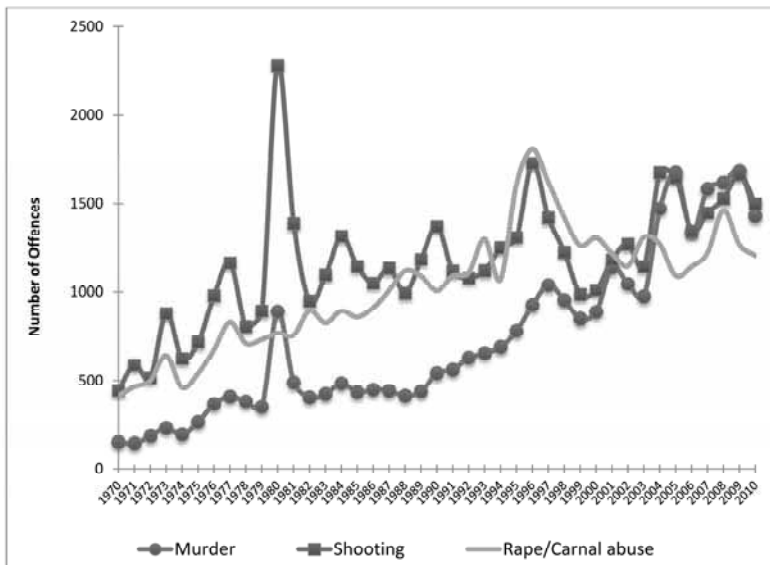

Fig. 1-11 Murder, shooting, and rape/carnal abuse in Jamaica (1970-2010)

Where robberies were concerned, there was a steady increase from 1970 to 1994, and thereafter a consistent decrease until 2003, with a reversal after this point (see figure 1-12). For the period 1970 to 1994, the number of robberies increased by an average of 134 per year, while for the period 1995 to 2003 the number of robberies decreased by an average of 417 per year. From 2004 to 2010, the number of robberies increased by an average of 163 robberies per year. Burglaries and housebreakings increased steadily from 1970 to 1978 then stabilized until 1986, at which point there was a steady decline until 2006. From 2006 to 2010 there was an increase in the number of burglaries and housebreakings. Larceny exhibited a very gradual increase from 1970 to 1987, and thereafter began to decline until 2007. Available data indicate a small increase in the number of larcenies after 2007.
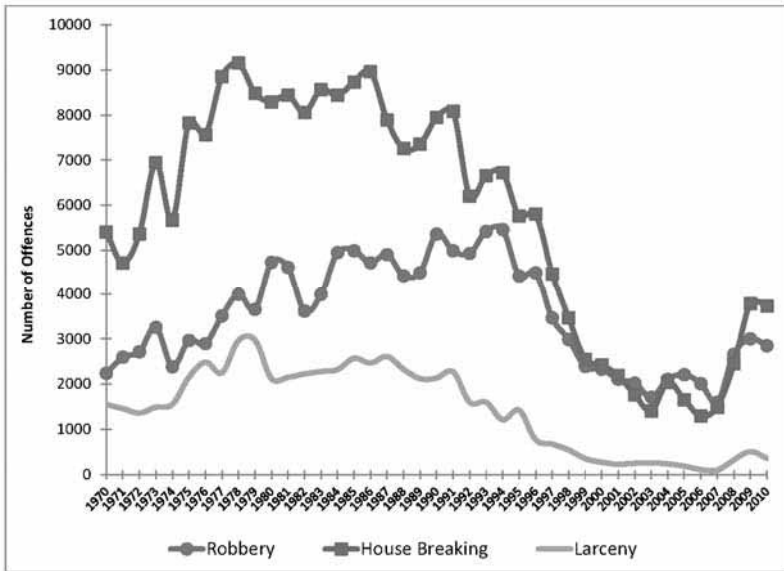
Fig. 1-12 Robberies, housebreakings and larceny: Jamaica 1970-2010

Crime in Jamaica has been linked to a number of factors including political processes, illegal drugs, access to firearms, corruption and economic factors. The emergence of political tribalism and the resulting garrisonization of sections of communities in support of partisan politics is one factor which has served to legitimize the use of violence in Jamaica. While the establishment of such communities was initially encouraged to manipulate the political process, garrison communities have evolved and have moved beyond the control of the political parties which initially were in control of such communities. Economic factors have also played a role in the crime situation of Jamaica. The collapse of the economy during the 1970s, structural adjustment of the 1980s, further collapse of the financial sector of the 1990s, and the world economic crisis that commenced in late 2007 have impacted negatively on Jamaica (Handa and King 1997). Increasing poverty and inequality have added to the frustrations of Jamaican society and have translated into acts of violence and aggression.

While Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have the highest quantum of crimes in the Caribbean, at times, the risk of victimization in other nations is comparable to or exceeds the risk in these countries. The murder rates of Belize and St. Kitts and Nevis, for example, are higher than in Trinidad and Tobago. Where murder is concerned, however, Jamaica ranks the

highest in the Caribbean with an average murder rate of 51.7 per 100,000 inhabitants per annum for the period 2000 to 2010. The average murder rate for the Caribbean as a whole has increased over time and in 2010 stood at 28.1 per 100,000 inhabitants. Murder is closely linked to shootings in many countries. The countries with the highest average shooting rates for the last ten years are Jamaica (53.7 shootings per 100,000 population per annum) and Trinidad and Tobago (51.7). Other countries with notable average annual shooting rates include Barbados (39.1), St. Kitts and Nevis (35.9) and St. Lucia (35). The average shooting rate for the Caribbean as a whole in 2010 stood at 44.4 shootings per 100,000 inhabitants. Trinidad and Tobago has the highest robbery rate in the Caribbean (an average annual rate of 383 robberies per 100,000 inhabitants for the period 2000 to 2010). Other countries with comparable robbery rates include Guyana (258), St. Lucia (247) and Belize (220). Countries with the highest rates of rape are St. Vincent and the Grenadines (48.7 rapes per 100,000 inhabitants per annum for the period 2000 to 2010), the Bahamas (38.7), St. Lucia (32.4) and Jamaica (30.9). Countries with the highest rates of burglaries/breakings are Antigua (an average annual rate of 2,858 burglaries/breakings per 100,000 population for the period 2000 to 2010), St. Kitts and Nevis (1,629), Dominica (1,619), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1,416) and St. Lucia (1,269). Kidnapping rates are highest in Trinidad and Tobago (an average of 14.7 kidnappings per 100,000 inhabitants per annum for the period 2000 to 2010) and Barbados (6.6). Self-report victimization data from the United Nations Development Programme indicate that the actual rates of criminal victimization are higher than that indicated by official crime statistics. A comparison of data for 2009 indicate that the actual rate of robbery could be as much as eight times higher than indicated by official data in Antigua and Barbuda, and as much as six times higher in Barbados. The actual rate of rape and sexual assault could be as much as fourteen times higher than that indicated by official crime data in Guyana, and as much as ten times higher in Barbados. The actual rate of burglaries and breakings in Jamaica and Guyana may be as much as ten times higher than that indicated by official crime data.

The current chapter presented official data on a range of criminal offences for Caribbean countries for the period 2000 to 2010. Such data establishes the context for a discussion of gangs in the Caribbean. Such a discussion should be data driven as opposed to being based on speculation and intuition. A secondary purpose of the present chapter is that it provides a readily accessible source of crime data. Caribbean crime data are notoriously difficult to source, and the present chapter should be of benefit to criminology students and practitioners from across the region.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE RISE OF GANG VIOLENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN

SHERIDON HILL[1]

"Today, several of our CARICOM territories are experiencing substantial increases in their homicide. Analysis shows that much of the homicide problem can be attributed to youth violence, gangs and gang crime." (Williams 2009)

"Gangs have been identified by officials nationwide and are universally accredited with disrupting life in the areas where they gather causing problems for their communities and for themselves. Nevertheless there is no simple solution to gang problems. Considerable variations exist in gang membership, organization involvement in crime and the social context in which they thrive." (Conly 1993)

Abstract

Over the decade 2000-2009, murder rates significantly increased in the English-speaking Caribbean with many countries establishing new records. Among these countries Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago had the highest murder rates with a parallel increase in gang violence as the most significant factor in the murder rates (except Belize). Police forces lack the capacity to respond to the new phenomenon and there is very little research on the subject in the Caribbean. Apart from recent studies in Trinidad and Tobago, most of the literature on the subject is anecdotal and there is no cross jurisdictional analysis of the problem

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across the Caribbean. Using quantitative and qualitative data, this paper reviews gang activity in the English-speaking CARICOM countries focusing on the four countries with the highest murder rates giving a brief historical background of the phenomenon, the impact of gang violence on crime and murder rates and the responses of the ministries of national security and related law enforcement agencies in these countries to eradicate this growing phenomenon. The paper also offers recommendations based on the findings of the study.

Introduction

During the period 2000-2009, crime and violence increased in the Caribbean resulting in the region being viewed as the most violent and crime prone region in the world (UNODC/WB 2007). A later study found that the Caribbean had the fourth highest murder rate in the world behind the African, Central and South American regions and had a growing gang violence problem (UNODC 2011). A number of studies have concurred that gang violence has severely affected many CARICOM countries. The UNODC/WB (2007) for example report that "youth violence is a high-priority high-visibility concern across the Caribbean" (p. 51) while UNODC (2011) indicates that "Caribbean countries are also affected by violent crime driven by organized drug trafficking which partially overlaps with the illicit activities of gangs" (p. 53). Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis have passed anti-gang legislation with harsh penalties due to growing concerns over the gang violence problem, while Jamaica has proposed similar legislation-others may soon follow. In August 2011, the government of Trinidad and Tobago declared a state of emergency largely because of gang-related problems because, as one magazine reported, "it was too costly for the government to ignore" (*Economist* 2011, 32). The government of St. Kitts and Nevis has resisted calls for similar action solely because of gang violence.[2] The prime ministers of Trinidad and Tobago and Belize held discussions and met with gang members in pursuit of an end to the violence (Cayetano 2011; Townsend 2009) while similar talks between government officials and gang members were successful in Grenada.[3] Regardless, gang violence represents a clear and present danger in the Caribbean.

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[2] See "Official warns against calls for St. Kitts state of emergency declaration" available at http://www.caribjournal.com/2011/09/13/officials-warn-against-calls-for-st-kitts-state-of-emergency/.
[3] Memorandum from Royal Grenada Police Force.

Despite recent initiatives by states, law enforcement officials and the various multilateral institutions such as the Organization of American States (OAS), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), street gang activity has shown an upward spiral in the countries with the highest murder rates. National police forces lack the specialized training and capacity required to respond to this new phenomenon. In this context, research on gangs in the Caribbean represents a critical factor in the struggle against gang violence. Apart from recent groundbreaking work in Trinidad and Tobago, there is a huge gap in the research on gangs in the Caribbean. While two cross-jurisdictional analyses were conducted on the US and Trinidad and Tobago (Katz and Fox 2010; Katz, Maguire and Choate 2011), there is no known similar analysis of Caribbean countries. This paper, therefore, is the first attempt to view the phenomenon across the Caribbean with an emphasis on the four countries with the highest murder rates and accompanying severe gang violence problems. In light of the growth of gang violence in the Caribbean, its impact on crime, the challenge it poses to stakeholders and their various responses and limited knowledge of the subject, this paper focuses on three issues:

1) The rising murder rate;[4]
2) The growing gang violence problem; and
3) Lack of credible statistics and research to properly diagnose the problem.

This paper highlights the increasing number of murders and a parallel growth of gang violence in the Caribbean during the period 2000-2009 using murder statistics and definitions of "gang" and "gang-related murder" from the Statistics Department of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), the Belize Police Department (BPD), the Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force (RSKNPF) and recent anti-gang laws in Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis, as a case study. These four countries are the focus of this paper because they have experienced the highest murder rates per 100,000 inhabitants between 2000 and 2009 and are most severely affected by gang violence. This paper also reviews the various responses by the states and the police in the four countries as well as the regional (OAS) and sub-regional (CARICOM) initiatives in response to gang violence in the Caribbean.

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[4] The author refers to murder instead of homicide as murder is a crime and one category of homicide whilst the latter is a broad term including various categories including lawful and unlawful acts. For an excellent discussion of homicide see "Homicide" http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/homicide.

The Caribbean is defined as the fifteen full member states of the Caribbean Community.[5] However, Haiti and Montserrat are not examined due to unavailability of credible data. The primary unit of analysis is the murder rates because of the lack of credible data on other gang-related criminal activity in the Caribbean (Katz and Webb 2006; Maxson and Klein 1990). Indeed, murder is one of the most reported crimes, the definition is consistent among the CARICOM countries, and the murder rates of the region are the subject of much review. This paper analyzes the definitions of "gangs" and "gang-related murder" and juxtaposes them to determine the possible impact of the varying degrees of flexibility of the definitions on the murder trends. Initiatives of the various police forces, governments and international organizations are analyzed against the background of information from previous research to determine the relative success of these initiatives and the possible solutions for moving forward in dealing with gang violence in the Caribbean.

Data Collection and Methods

Data for this study were collected between August 2008 and March 2012 through various methods. The data collected can be placed in three categories: 1) murder statistics, 2) definitions of gangs and gang-related murders and 3) responses to the emerging phenomenon. Murder statistics were provided by the Royal Antigua and Barbuda Police Force, Royal Barbados Police Force, Royal Bahamas Police Force, Belize Police Department, Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force, Royal Grenada Police Force, Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of Guyana, Statistics Department of the Jamaican Constabulary Force, Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force, Royal St. Lucia Police Force, Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, Ministry of Justice and Police of Suriname, and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

The definitions of gangs and gang-related murder were obtained from the Belize Police Department (BPD),[6] Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force, and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service through formal written requests, and communication through consultants and state officials in the ministries of national security in Belize, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis. This paper reviews the definitions of gang and gang-related activity in the Anti-Gang Act 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago and the Gang (Prevention and Prohibi-

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[5] See CARICOM website homepage www.caricom.org.
[6] No definition of gang was obtained from the Belize Police Department.

tion) Act 2011 of St. Christopher and Nevis. The responses to gang violence in the Caribbean were obtained through many sources. The author conducted interviews with members of the Gang Unit within the Kingfish Branch of the Jamaican Constabulary Force, members of the intelligence unit of the Royal Barbados Police Force, members of the Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force and senior officials of the Ministry of National Security Immigration and Labour in St. Kitts and Nevis, Commissioner John Broughton of the Royal St. Lucia Police Force, and members of the Community Action Policing Section (CAPS), formerly the National Crime Commission (NCC), in St. Lucia, and the members of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police. Official information was provided by the office of the Commissioner of Police of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the Royal Grenada Police Force through memoranda, telephone calls and interviews. The author also interviewed officials of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and obtained statements from the delegates of the governments of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago at special CSH meetings held at OAS Headquarters in Washington D.C. on January 17, 2008 and March 2, 2010.

This paper begins by reviewing the murder statistics in the thirteen Caribbean countries to determine the countries with the highest murder rates and the dominant murder classification. Next, the paper analyzes the various definitions of gangs and gang-related murders and the impact of gang violence on the murder and crime statistics in the countries with the highest rates of murders and gang violence. This is followed by a review of the various responses to gang violence by the national (government and police forces) regional (OAS) sub-regional (CARICOM) and international (United Nations) institutions and an analysis of the research findings in these four countries. The paper concludes with brief findings and suggestions for the way forward.

Rising Numbers of Murders

During the period 2000-2009, there was a significant increase in murders in the Caribbean. Data from each nation revealed a number of interesting points. First, the average murder rate of these thirteen countries increased from 14.84 to 24.96 per 100,000 persons (figure 2-1).
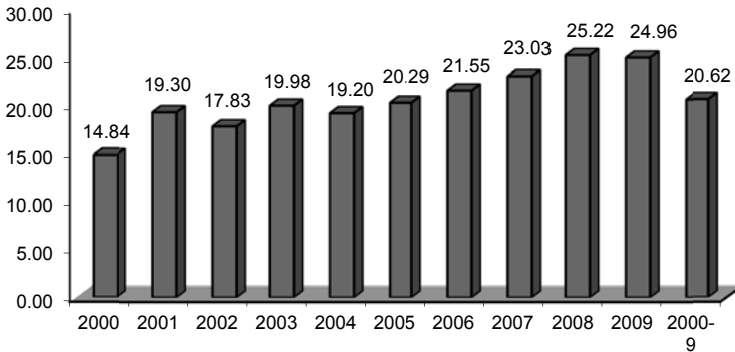
Source: compile by author
Table 1 combine murder rates of Caribbean countries 2000-2009
Source: Compiled by the author

Fig. 2-1 Murder rates of Caribbean countries 2000–2009

Second, a number of countries established new records over this period of time; Antigua and Barbuda recorded 19 murders in 2007, Bahamas, 94 in 2010, Belize, 132 in 2010, Dominica, 13 in 2009, Guyana, 206 in 2003, Jamaica, 1682 in 2009, St. Kitts and Nevis, 27 in 2009, St. Lucia, 44 in 2010, and Trinidad and Tobago, 547 in 2008 (table 2-1). Third, among these countries Jamaica (with an average of 51.7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants), Belize (35.8), St. Kitts and Nevis (29.2) and Trinidad and Tobago (26), led the region with the highest murder rates. Fourth, the most significant increases were observed in Antigua and Barbuda (from 4 in 2000 to 16 in 2009), Bahamas (from 43 in 2001 to 86 in 2009), Belize (from 47 in 2000 to 97 in 2009), Dominica (from 2 in 2000 to 13 in 2009), Guyana (from 74 in 2000 to 117 in 2009 with a peak of 206 in 2003), Jamaica (from 887 in 2000 to 1682 in 2009), St. Kitts and Nevis (from 6 in 2000 to 27 in 2009), St. Lucia (from 20 in 2000 to 37 in 2009) and Trinidad and Tobago (from 120 in 2000 to 506 in 2009 with a high of 547 in 2008). Fifth, the data also refuted the popular claim that Trinidad and Tobago is the "murder capital of the Caribbean" as asserted by Frederick (2010) because the country never recorded: i) the highest number of murders, ii) the highest rate (annually or over the decade) or iii) the highest year-on-year increase during the period under review (Hill 2011). Finally, while the spike in the murder rate was a contributory factor in the region being labelled the most violent and crime-prone region in the world, "the overall Caribbean murder rate of 30 per 100,000" (UNODC/World Bank

2007, 1) is contrary to the findings of this study and a subsequent UNODC study which found that the Caribbean had the fourth highest murder rate in the world at twenty-one per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010 (UNODC 2011).

Table 2-1: Murders in Caribbean countries 2000 – 2009

Year	Jamaica	T&T	Guyana	Suriname	Bahamas	Belize	Barbados	St. Lucia	Grenada	S.V.G	Antigua & Barbuda	Dominica	SKN
2000	887	120	74	68	74	47	20	20	15	20	4	2	6
2001	1139	151	79	79	43	64	25	33	6	12	7	1	6
2002	1045	171	142	57	52	87	25	33	14	20	9	10	5
2003	975	229	206	60	50	67	33	28	8	11	6	8	10
2004	1471	260	131	71	44	79	22	36	6	21	7	8	11
2005	1674	386	142	69	52	81	29	37	11	24	6	8	8
2006	1340	371	163	62	61	92	35	39	11	13	14	5	17
2007	1583	391	115	45	78	97	25	27	11	36	19	7	16
2008	1674	547	158	43	73	103	23	36	16	27	14	7	23
2009	1682	506	117	24	86	97	19	37	7	20	16	13	27

Source: Royal Antigua and Barbuda Police Force, Royal Barbados Police Force, Royal Bahamas Police Force, Belize Police Department Royal Grenada Police Force, Guyana Police Force, Jamaica Constabulary Force, Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force, Royal St. Lucia Police Force, Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, Ministry of Justice and Police Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago Police Force.

There are two possible explanations for this finding: 1) the UNODC/World Bank (2007) study may have used a sample of selected Caribbean countries with high murder rates; or 2) low population figures were used to calculate the rates. It is possible to get a higher murder rate for the Caribbean if a sample using Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and some of the other non-CARICOM Caribbean countries such as the Dominican Republic, the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are used. Such countries have higher murder rates for the period under review. Alternatively, using dated population statistics with lower numbers can result in higher murder rates. Regardless of the countries and populations used in the 2007 UNODC/World Bank study, because of the disparity between that study and the UNODC 2011 study, coupled with the findings of this paper, the earlier finding is very doubtful because the increases

in murder rates began in the earlier part of the decade. More importantly, the findings of the 2011 study which included twenty-two countries (UNODC 2011) and this study, which covers thirteen countries, showed that the Caribbean never recorded thirty murders per 100,000 inhabitants.

Gangs in the Caribbean

In recent times, a number of studies have indicated that many Caribbean countries have been affected by gang violence with varying degrees of intensity and numbers of fatalities (McCree 1998; Moser and Holland 1997; Ohene, Ireland and Blum 2005; UNODC 2011; UNODC/World Bank 2007). Table 2-2 categorizes the countries of the Caribbean in terms of the level of intensity of gang violence. Countries in the low category are experiencing gang violence as an emerging trend but do not require suppressive responses. Countries that have either experienced a relatively moderate level of gang violence in the past or are currently experiencing a surge in the phenomenon are placed in level two. The countries with the highest murder rates and most severe cases of gang violence based on the percentage of gang-related murders or other gang-related crimes are placed in level one.

Table 2-2: Intensity of gang violence in selected CARICOM countries

Level of Intensity	Country
Level 1 High murder rate + high level of gang violence	Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, T&T, Belize
Level 2 Currently experiencing or previously experienced a moderate level of gang violence	Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia, the Bahamas,
Level 3 Emerging trend	Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Suriname

Low level: Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica and Suriname

In 2008, the government of Antigua and Barbuda requested technical assistance from the Organization of American States (OAS) to assess the magnitude of the country's gang violence. A subsequent study found, *inter alia*, that while gang violence was an emerging trend, it did not pose a serious threat, law enforcement and security stakeholders were not very knowledgeable about the phenomenon, and more social intervention programs instead of suppressive methods should be used to curb the problem (Katz, Meeks-Garner and Rosenblatt 2008).

There was one gang-related murder recorded in Dominica in 2004 and one in 2008.[7] While the numbers are small, the impact of these gang-related murders in Dominica is underscored when viewed in the context of the eight murders reported in 2004 and seven murders reported in 2008 in Dominica. The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force have indicated a moderate degree of gang violence while a recent study (Zimmermann, Lawes and Svenson 2012) showed that there is no information to suggest that current street gang activity poses a threat in Suriname.

Medium Level: Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia, The Bahamas

According to the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) there are at least ten active gangs in Barbados. These include the "Crips", "Bloods", "Red Sea", "Red Square", "Red Zone", "Dog Pound", "Red Beard", "Academics", "Gulf" and "Shotta Ville", some of which have international connections. The RBPF found a low level of organizational structure consisting of a leader and members below, but did not find a threat to peace and security. The Barbados government, in contrast, offers a very different assessment of the situation. The Delegation of Barbados, addressing the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States Committee on Hemispheric Security at a special meeting in 2008 stated that "Our intelligence suggests that there are over 150 gangs/groups in Barbados with a total membership of 4000".[8] While these estimates appear high, readers must be cautioned that the estimates include "groups" as well as "gangs",

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[7] Memo from Dominica Police Force.

[8] Statement by the Delegation of Barbados at the Special Meeting of the OAS Committee on Hemispheric Security on the Phenomenon of Criminal Gangs in the Americas January 17, 2008 Washington D.C., p. 6.

and it may be the case that many groups which were counted are not nec-essarily criminal gangs. The authorities also claim that gang members have been convicted of a range of crimes including murder and other seri-ous crimes culminating in the decision in *Bend et al. v. R* where the Court of Appeal stated, *inter alia:*

> "…that the punishment for manslaughter committed by a group in public with excessive violence barring some exceptional circumstances must be greater than that of manslaughter committed by an individual in private with little violence."[9]

Gang violence mushroomed in the Bahamas in the late 1980s and early 1990s mainly in the islands of New Providence, Grand Bahama, Eleuthera, The Abacos, Andros and The Exumas. According to the Bahamian author-ities, gang members were generally between sixteen and thirty-five years of age, with a mean age of seventeen, were from single parent homes, were repeat offenders, and predominantly male. Major gangs include Re-bellions, Gunhawks, Gundogs and the Syndicate and demonstrate a low level of organizational structure. Government officials claim that gangs grew from neighbourhood warfare. Gang activity generally started as acts of hooliganism such as disrupting public functions and vandalizing public and private buildings, but later developed into criminal activity including harming innocent citizens and a proliferation of violent activity among youths.

The Bahamian authorities' response mechanism included the creation of a community policing program, improved inter-agency cooperation and development of various social and youth programs by Government and civil society organizations (in particular, religious organizations). Accord-ing to reports, major gangs were broken up and the murder rate decreased. Following this intervention, there was a resurgence of gang activity in the Bahamas alongside school violence in which young people were the prin-cipal victims and perpetrators.

The Royal Grenada Police found that local gangs comprised young people of various ages. Gang members were identified by the colours of their scarfs (red, blue or black), other types of clothing and the area they were from. Gang members engaged in violent acts against rival gang members, either because they attended events located in the other gang's turf or because of reprisals for previous attacks. The main weapons of choice were cutlasses, and maiming occasionally resulted from these at-tacks. In order to reduce gang violence, the Royal Grenada Police Force

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[9] Statement by the Delegation of Barbados.

engaged in four major initiatives: 1) the School Visit Program which involved discussions in schools which were involved with gangs; 2) bringing parents with their children into the meetings in the schools to discuss issues such as violence, gangs and other issues; 3) meeting with youths who lived in areas of high gang activity; and 4) searching individuals who were gang members or suspected gang members for weapons. The escalation of gang violence in Grenada in 2008 resulted in government intervention and a truce entitled "Badness out of Style" was brokered between the main gangs that ushered in an era of reduced gang activity and gang violence.[10]

The gang violence situation in St. Lucia appears to be escalating as this problem is now the second most important cause of the number of reported murders for the period 2000-2010, with domestic disputes leading the list. The numbers peaked in 2006 and 2010, when there were a total of seventeen gang-related murders in each year out of a total of forty-three and forty-eight murders respectively. The only years that gang violence did not feature in the murder statistics were 2000, 2002 and 2003. The RSLPF reports that 26 per cent of murders between 2006 and 2010 were gang-related.[11]

While gangs are a fairly new phenomenon in Guyana, they represent a challenge to law enforcement agencies. The Head of the Guyana Police Force Criminal Investigation Department noted in 2008 that criminal gangs have been "causing headaches for the police force" and that the prevalence of gang robberies and the use of illegal firearms added to the "very high level of violence and fear within the society." He noted that, notwithstanding police success in dismantling some gangs, it was the increase in gang-related violence and organised narcotics and firearms trafficking that were instrumental in triggering an increase in general and serious crimes. While the size and scale of criminal gangs are not clearly evident, it is believed that unlike in Jamaica, the situation of gangs in Guyana does not entail a complicated social structure of highly organized gangs, but gang activity in Guyana is more loosely organised and oftentimes cannot be separated from conventional drug related or ethno-political violence in Guyana. While gangs are a serious concern in Guyana, the 2010 end of year report by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Guyana stated that "The Guyana Police Force was successful in dismantling the activities of several gangs that were contributing to the violence in our society" (Guyana. Ministry of Home Affairs 2010, 29).

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[10] Memorandum from the Royal Grenada Police Force August 2008.
[11] PowerPoint presentation by the Royal St. Lucia Police Force 2011.

High: Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, Jamaica, and St. Kitts and Nevis

The impact of gang violence and concern over the growing problem in the Caribbean prompted a regional stakeholders' meeting on gangs in Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis on June 22-23, 2009, entitled "Taking Back Our Streets" (Williams 2008). Interestingly, St. Kitts and Nevis, the location of the meeting, is one of the nerve centres of gang violence in the Caribbean. One of the highlights of the meeting was the challenge facing the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) in formulating a regional response to the problem (Williams 2008). The countries with the highest murder rates—Jamaica (No. 1), Belize (No. 2), St. Kitts and Nevis (No. 3) and Trinidad and Tobago (No. 4)—have been set apart from their regional neighbours because of their high murder rates and corresponding epidemic levels of gang violence and gang-related murders. These most severely affected countries underline the fact that gang violence in the Caribbean transcends economic prosperity, levels of development, and size, both in terms of land mass and population. In light of the impact of gang violence on the murder rate, crime in general and its threat to society in these four countries, this chapter further examines the phenomenon in greater detail in the following sections, beginning with the definitions of gangs, gang-related murders and the impact of legislative interventions.

Definitions: "Gangs" and "Gang-Related Murder"

There are no internationally accepted definitions of the terms "gang" and "gang violence" (Spergel 1990). However, some of the leading criminologists on gangs have proffered various definitions of the term. Klein (1971) suggested that a gang is:

> "…any identifiable group of youngsters who are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighbourhood; recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name); and have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighbourhood residents and/or law enforcement agencies."

Frederick Thrasher (1927) defines the criminal gang as:

> "…an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behaviour:

meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behaviour is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory." (p. 57)

Katz and Webb (2006) found that the definitions of gangs across several jurisdictions had many similar characteristics; these included "three or more members, common signs, symbols and names and pattern of criminal activity" (p. 148).

The definitions of "gang" and "gang-related activity" in the Caribbean are reflected in a mixture of loose policies among the various police forces and the passage of anti-gang legislation in Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis in 2011. The analysis of the definitions, therefore, considers the pre- and post-legislation positions in these two countries with possible implications of these laws. This analysis also includes the relative flexibility of the definitions and likely impact of the definitions on murder statistics. The analysis of the definition of gangs does not include Belize because the author was unable to obtain a definition of gangs from the BPD.

Jamaica

According to Moncrieffe (1998), the Jamaican Constabulary Force defines a gang as:

"…two or more persons who come together to form a lasting entity for which the main purpose is criminal activity. A formal organizational structure, identifiable leadership, identifiable territory/turf, recurrent interaction and engaging in violent behaviour are typical characteristics."

More recently, the Kingfish Unit of the Jamaican Constabulary Force defined a criminal gang as:

A formal or informal group, association, or organization consisting of three or more persons who:
1. Have a primary objective or activity to individually or collectively commit criminal or delinquent acts, which may create fear and/or intimidation, or secure financial gain by criminal means;
2. Have in common, an identifying name, leader, de facto claim of territory/division or colour;
3. May or may not be identified or linked by visible markings or mannerisms; and

4. May share and enjoy the proceeds of crime, as well as conceal such proceeds.[12]

It is at present unclear which of the two definitions are currently used in Jamaica. It is important to note here that Moncrieffe's definition uses a lower threshold of two or more persons while the JCF uses a minimum requirement of three people. To date, despite the many calls and proposals for anti-gang legislation in Jamaica, authorities are yet to take such action.[13]

Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis (Pre-Legislation)

Prior to the passage of the 2011 Anti-Gang Act, the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service defined a gang as:

"…an ongoing formal or informal association of persons, whose members or associates, individually or collectively engages in the commission, attempted commission, facilitation or solicitation of any unlawful or criminal activity and that has at least three individuals who are documented gang members".[14]

While the RSKNPF has no clear definition of gangs, they ascribe the "gang" label to "persons who group themselves together with an identity, usually a colour or territorial area, for a common purpose".[15] There are common components of the CAPA, JCF and RSKNPF definitions which include three or more individuals and the unlawful objectives of the groups. However, the JCF definition includes compulsory characteristics such as having a leader, gang name, and claims to territory/division or colour, while CAPA's definition does not. The RSKNPF definition includes some of these characteristics but they are not mandatory features.

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[12] Anti-gang section of the Kingfish Unit July 2008; in interview with the author.

[13] Garfene Grandison, "Anti-gang law could impact industry," *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 14, 2010; "Let's get that ant-gang law passed" (editorial), *Jamaica Observer*, January 19, 2012; "Hitting them where it hurts the most" (editorial), *Jamaica Observer*, February 24, 2012; Douglas McIntosh, "Jamaica advances key anti-crime legislation," *Antigua Observer,* retrieved from
http://www.antiguaobserver.com/?p=71672.

[14] Memorandum from the Crime and Problem Analysis Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

[15] Members of the Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force in interview with the author.

Therefore, the position before the 2011 legislation resulted in CAPA's definition being more flexible than those of its counterparts in St. Kitts and Nevis, and Jamaica.

Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis (Post-Legislation)

The Anti-Gang Act No. 10 of 2011 and the Gang *(Prevention and Prohibition)* Act of 2011 passed by the parliaments of Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis respectively, now provide clear guidelines on what constitutes a "gang" and "gang-related murder". The definitions in both pieces of legislation mirror each other as follows:

> "Gang" means a combination of two or more persons, whether formally or informally organized which, through its membership or through an agent, engages in a gang-related activity."[16]

 And

> "Gang-related activity" means "any criminal activity, enterprise, pursuit or undertaking in relation to any of the offences listed in the Schedule (First Schedule Trinidad and Tobago) to this Act acquiesced in, or consented or agreed to, or directed, ordered, authorized, or requested or ratified by any gang member, including a gang leader."[17]

Moreover, as the aims and objectives of the two pieces of legislation include criminalizing gang activity by imposing harsh penalties for specific acts associated with the proliferation of criminal gangs, they also clearly define various activities associated with the phenomenon. These include harbouring the leader of a gang or a member of a gang, and recruiting persons from schools or other places to become gang members. Indeed, the St. Kitts and Nevis bill appears to be a virtual reproduction of the earlier Trinidad and Tobago legislation as the provisions and language used in both pieces of legislation and the penalties for the various acts are identical, with cosmetic variation.

The implications of the passage of the anti-gang legislation in Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis are many and various. Firstly, the def-

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[16] Section 2(1) of the Gang (Prohibition and Prevention) Act 2011 of Saint Christopher and Nevis and Section 4(1) of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 of 2011 of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.
[17] Section 2(1) of the Gang (Prohibition and Prevention) Act 2011 of Saint Christopher and Nevis and Section 4(1) of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 of 2011 of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

inition of gangs is now clearer but much broader than in the pre-legislation period. For example, gangs are now defined as comprising a minimum of two instead of three people,[18] and colours, turf, leaders and other popular gang characteristics are not mandatory to constitute a gang under the Acts. What is required is "any evidence reasonably tending to show or demonstrate the existence of or membership in a gang".[19] Secondly, the legislation creates a number of new offences including membership in criminal gangs,[20] impersonating a gang member,[21] gang leader,[22] harbouring a gang member,[23] recruiting gang members,[24] and preventing a gang member from leaving a gang[25]-some of which have proven to be significant hurdles to the Trinidad and Tobago authorities (Simon 2011). It is yet to be seen what the impact of the legislation will be. Following the declaration of a state of emergency in Trinidad and Tobago between August and December 2011, everyone arrested under the controversial anti-gang legislation was released either without charge or after the Director of Public Prosecutions intervened to discontinue proceedings for lack of evidence (Simon 2011). The failure of the Trinidad and Tobago authorities to prosecute persons following the declaration of the state of emergency may have no impact on the current situation and could result in a spike in gang-related activity.

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[18] Section 2(1) of the Gang (Prohibition and Prevention) Act 2011 of Saint Christopher and Nevis and Section 4(1) of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 of 2011 of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

[19] Section 2 (5) of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2011 of St. Christopher and Nevis and Section 5(5) of the Anti-Gang Act of Trinidad and Tobago 2011.

[20] Section 3(2) (b) of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2011 of St. Christopher and Nevis 2011 and section 5 (1) (b) of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 of 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago.

[21] Section 3(2) (b) of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2011 of St. Christopher and Nevis 2011 and section 5 (1) (b) of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 of 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago.

[22] Section 3(3) of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2011 of St. Christopher and Nevis and Section 5(2) of the Anti-Gang Act No 10 of 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago.

[23] Section 9(1) of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2011 of St Christopher and Nevis and Section 10(1) of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago.

[24] Section 5 of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act of 2011 of St. Christopher and Nevis and Section 11 of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago.

[25] Section 6 of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2011 of St. Christopher and Nevis and Section 7 of the Anti-Gang Act No. 102011 of Trinidad and Tobago.

Conversely, we may see a decline in the phenomenon based on the deterrent effect of the legislation notwithstanding the challenges in securing convictions under the new law. Jamaica, Belize and other Caribbean countries may want to incorporate the lessons learned from the Trinidad and Tobago experience if they intend to pass similar pieces of legislation.

Gang-Related Murder

Like "gangs", the definition of murders as "gang-related" varies across the Caribbean. The methodologies for classifying murders as "gang-related" differ among the police forces in each jurisdiction. The BPD and RSKNPF utilize the most rigid methodology which requires both parties (victim and accused) to be gang members. In contrast, the TTPS definition (requiring that only one party must be a gang member) is more flexible while the JCF possesses the broadest approach which takes into account a number of factors apart from the status of the victim and accused.

Pre-Legislation

Murders classified as gang-related in Belize and St. Kitts and Nevis must involve gang members as both victims and assailants,[26] while in Trinidad and Tobago at least one party (victim or accused) must have been a gang member and the offence must be committed in furtherance of gang activity.[27] Interestingly, the JCF considers a range of factors, including surrounding circumstances and previous information, when classifying murders as "gang-related". The various methodologies resulted in a relaxing of the definition as one moved from Belize and St. Kitts and Nevis (very restrictive) to Trinidad and Tobago (flexible) and Jamaica (very flexible). The implications of the use of varying methodologies were highlighted in a study involving the Los Angeles Sheriff Department (LASD), the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Chicago Police Department (CPD) (Maxson and Klein 1990). This study showed that definitions of "gang-relatedness" or "gang activity" can impact "gang-related" homicide statistics. This is similar to the Caribbean experience.

North American law enforcement's definitions of gang-related murders in the 1980s are strikingly similar to those of their Caribbean counterparts in the 21st century. The CPD defined a murder as gang-motivated murder

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[26] Memorandum from Belize Police Department.
[27] Memorandum from the Crime and Problem Analysis Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

only if it occurred within the context of inter-gang rivalry (a gang fight) (Maxson and Klein 1990, 26). The LAPD required the victim or the suspect to be an active gang member (even where gang membership could not be verified). There the status of the parties was of paramount importance, while the Sheriff's Department focused on the motive of the group's activities as the primary ingredient for classifying activities as gang-related. Finally, the LASD's definition of gang-related murder focused on the motive in addition to the status of the parties. The Chicago definition was self-explanatory and extremely rigid as only instances where gang members were suspects and victims would suffice. The definitions can be placed in two categories; motive-based or status-based.

Examples of gang-motivated murders using the CPD model were considered the "purer" gang cases because both victim and suspect had to be gang members. According to Maxson and Klein (1990), this model was the most restrictive because regardless of the motive or surrounding circumstances, gang identification of both participants was critical for classification. Ostensibly, the status of the parties was the sole criteria in Belize/St. Kitts and Nevis and Chicago. With the LAPD, in contrast, the definition is more flexible since only one party (victim or suspect) in the murder had to be an active or a documented gang member. This definition seems to suggest that the status of at least one participant as a gang member is critical to classification as gang-related in Trinidad and Tobago and the Los Angeles Police Department. However, motive is the deciding factor in the Jamaican definition as neither suspect nor victim needs to be a gang member, provided that the killing is motivated by some gang-related activity. This situation mirrors the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. It is therefore reasonable to posit that, while in theory motive is the critical factor, the circumstances of each individual case may reveal that many of these murders involved at least one gang member or both suspect and victim are gang members (Maxson and Klein 1990).

The CPD methodology is similar to what obtains in St. Kitts and Nevis while, according to CAPA, the murder must have been committed by a documented gang member. However, in St. Kitts and Nevis, no documentation or recognition by the law enforcement agencies of gang membership is required. CAPA's definition expressly states that each gang member must be documented, which complicates the definition. The JCF, on the other hand, does not have a rigid methodology for classifying murders as "gang-related" and will do so based on a number of factors which includes the CAPA and RSKNPF methodology but also includes the information gathered from witnesses and suspected persons, surrounding circumstances, and prior information about the accused and victims.

The net effect of the varying definitions is that, while the JCF definition of gang is more restrictive than the CAPA and the RSKNPF definitions, their methodology for classifying gang-related murders is much broader. Consequently, and according to the various definitions, assuming the surrounding circumstances are similar in Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago, the number of murders classified as gang-related in Jamaica and, to a lesser extent, St. Kitts and Nevis, should be comparatively lower than in Trinidad and Tobago, owing to the rigid criteria in the former countries.

Post-Legislation

The situation in St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago is now similar to that in Jamaica where motive and surrounding circumstances are now the guiding factors in classifying gang-related murders. According to the anti-gang laws of Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis, the definition of gang-related activity is not predicated on the status of the victim or offender. What is now required is "any criminal activity, enterprise, pursuit or undertaking in relation to any of the offences listed in the specific Schedules of the Acts acquiesced in, or consented to, or agreed to, or directed, ordered, authorized, requested or ratified by a gang member including a gang leader.[28] Further, participation in gang activity also includes a gang member knowingly aiding and abetting a member in carrying out a gang activity" or "assisting in concealment of gang activity", or who "knowingly commits", "assists", "aids and abets", in the commission of an activity at the "direction of", or "in concert with", or "for the benefit of", the gang, or "conceals" or "assists in the concealment of the same".[29] Belize is now the only country among this group of countries which requires the parties to murder (victim and perpetrator) to be gang members for gang-related classification.

In light of the various definitions of the JCF, TTPS and RSKNPF, the police forces of the region need to develop a relatively standard definition of the terms "gang" and "gang-related murder". This would assist in analyzing the issue and the impact on crime, especially gang-related murders across the Caribbean. It would also assist in formulating a comprehensive

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[28] Section 3(3) of the Gang (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2011 of St Christopher and Nevis and Section 4(1) of the Anti-Gang Act No. 10 of 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago.
[29] Section 8(1) of the Anti-Gang Act No10.of 2011 of Trinidad and Tobago and Section 7(1) also provides an additional fine of EC$5000.00 apart from the twenty years imprisonment.

regional response to gang activities. Owing to the current variations in the definitions among these three countries, the information and statistics on gangs, gang activities, and especially gang-related murders, may be grossly inaccurate or, if accurate, expressed in different ways. The caution given in the earlier North American study is relevant here:

> "It seems clear, then, that estimates of the prevalence of gang violence can vary widely between cities using different definitions of gang violence. Within a given city, estimates of prevalence will be comparable over time only if the definitional operations remain constant. Comparisons across cities and across time must be made very cautiously; studies of the etiology of gangs and gang violence which use prevalence estimates must also be wary of the definitional problems." (Maxson and Klein 1990, 31)

Rising Gang Violence

In order to determine the impact of gang violence in the four countries, this paper examines the phenomenon from two perspectives: 1) The number of gang-related murders and 2) the percentage of other gang-related crimes as analysed by Maxson and Klein (1995) and Katz and Webb (2006). In this section I review the percentage of gang-related murders and accompanying trends. As data collection capacity in the Caribbean is not as developed as in the US (Deosaran 2004), the data for other categories of gang-related crime (apart from murder) are not available. However, while there are no quantitative data to support the position that gang violence is the main factor in the high level of crime in the Caribbean, there is evidence which suggests it is a significant factor.

Gang-Related Murders

Jamaica

With the exception of 2000 and 2003, Jamaica experienced a relatively consistent increase in the number of murders, with a record–breaking 1682 murders in 2009. In 2003, the number of murders in Jamaica increased by 66.3% from 2002 (1471 up from 975) and this began an upward trend in the country's murder rate in the last decade. At the same time, gang-related murders increased from 161 to 272, and steadily increased almost every year since 2004, except for 2008, which saw a minor reduction from 799 to 736 (7.9%). The percentage of total murders attributed to gang violence steadily increased from 2001, except for 2008, when there was a slight decline. Table 2-3 gives the related statistics. During the decade,

3942 (29.4%) of the 13,414 reported murders were gang-related. However, 770 (14%) of 5517 of all reported murders between 2000 and 2004 were gang-related, and 3172 (40%) of 7897 of the reported murders that were committed between 2005 and 2009 were gang-related.

Table 2-3: All murders and gang-related murders in Jamaica 2000–2009

Year	Murders	Gang-related	% Gang-related
2000	887	103	11.6
2001	1139	73	6.4
2002	1045	161	15.4
2003	975	161	16.5
2004	1471	272	18.5
2005	1674	322	19.2
2006	1340	436	32.5
2007	1583	799	50.5
2008	1618	736	45.5
2009	1682	879	52.3
Total	**13,414**	**3,942**	**29.4**

Source: JCF

Belize

The situation in Belize is different from those in the other countries with high murder rates. It is the only landlocked country (bordered by Honduras and Mexico), much larger, but more sparsely populated, than Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis. While Belize had the second highest average murder rate throughout the decade, gang-related murders first entered the statistics in 2007 and the percentage recorded between 2007 and 2010 is of growing concern (eighty-seven of 429 or 20.3%; table 2-4).

Table 2-4: All murders and gang-related murders in Belize 2007–2010

Year	Murders	Gang-related	% Gang-related
2007	97	13	13.4
2008	103	11	10.7
2009	97	15	15.5
2010	132	48	36.4
Total	**429**	**87**	**20.3**

Source: BPD

A number of factors affect the statistics in Belize and may even indicate the possibility of a higher number of gang-related murders than indicated using the classification methodology utilized by the Belize Police Department. First, Belize appears to be the only country with an established Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS-13) and an 18th Street gang that are noted for extreme acts of violence. Second, the BPD believes that of the 132 reported murders in 2010, the majority of those committed in Belize City were gang-related; the five grenade attacks in the last three years and most of ninety-seven shootings in Belize City were attributed to gang violence (BPD 2011). Third, the police have observed the increasing use of explosives by gang members (BPD 2011). Finally, Gale et al. (2010) cite gang violence as a major problem as 68% of persons surveyed agreed that it was the most problematic crime issue in Belize.

St. Kitts and Nevis

The case of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis is unique and problematic because of its small population (46,325 persons according to the 2000 census), the comparatively small number of murders in comparison to the larger countries in the region, and the negative impact of murders on the murder rate. Nevertheless, the rising number of murders (from six in 2000 to twenty-seven in 2009 or an increase of 375%) and the corresponding gang violence nexus is worrying to all stakeholders in the twin-island state. In this regard, the impact of gangs must not only be viewed in the context of the small number of murders, but should also be understood in terms of its impact on the sense of security of the people of the country. Gang-related murders in this country in the last decade were unpredictable, as evidenced in 2001 and 2005, when there were no recorded gang-related murders. Despite this, gang violence was a significant factor in the homicide rates for all the other years as shown in table 2-5.

While the authorities attributed the increase in gang activity to the change in the deportee policy of the United States and a corresponding increase in deportees to the country,[30] there is no empirical data showing the correlation between both phenomena. Moreover, the authorities have not provided any compelling evidence to support deportee involvement in gang violence as either a) suspected persons, b) persons charged with violent crimes, c) persons incarcerated, or released from prison, for violent crimes, or d) as victims of serious crimes. During the decade, fifty-three of 129 (41.1%) of all murders were gang-related. Between 2000 and 2004,

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[30] Interview with state officials in St. Kitts and Nevis.

twelve of thirty-eight (31.6%) murders were gang-related while forty-one of ninety-one or 45.1% of the murders committed between 2005 and 2009 were gang-related. This suggests that while murders increased in St. Kitts and Nevis, gang violence was the most significant factor in this increase.

Table 2-5: All murders and gang-related murders in St. Kitts and Nevis 2000–2009

Year	Murders	Gang-related	% Gang-related
2000	6	2	33.3
2001	6	0	0.0
2002	5	1	20.0
2003	10	3	30.0
2004	11	6	54.5
2005	8	0	0.0
2006	17	7	41.2
2007	16	5	31.3
2008	23	9	39.1
2009	27	20	74.1
Total	**129**	**53**	**41.1**

Source: RSKNPF

Trinidad and Tobago

The gang violence problem in Trinidad and Tobago was best described by its Minister of National Security, Brigadier John Sandy, when he said:

"Gangs have always been a concern to policy makers. The recent emergence of gangs and gang violence on our streets remain a matter of grave concern to this government."

In agreement with this, Deosaran (2010) identified gang violence as one of the major problems in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago has experienced one of the highest increases in murders among CARICOM member states in the last decade, moving from 120 in 2000 to 547 in 2008. At the same time, gang violence, which first entered the Trinidad and Tobago police statistics in 2001, accounted for a substantial proportion of all classified murders in Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2001 to 2010.

The impact of gang violence on Trinidad and Tobago's murder rate was highlighted in a local newspaper article which stated that "gangs are at

the centre of today's high murder rate" (Baldeosingh 2009). Gang-related murders increased from 2001 to 2003 with a reduction in 2004. However, the upward trend continued from 2005 to 2008 with a decline in 2009 and 2010 (table 2-6).

Table 2-6: All murders and gang-related murders in Trinidad and Tobago 2001–2010

Year	Murders	Gang-related	% Gang-related
2001	151	3	2.0
2002	171	17	9.9
2003	229	42	18.3
2004	261	32	12.3
2005	386	81	21.0
2006	371	98	26.4
2007	391	205	52.4
2008	547	278	50.8
2009	506	176	34.8
2010	472	75	15.9
Total	**3485**	**1007**	**28.9**

Source: Crime and Problem Analysis Unit TTPS

Trinidad and Tobago is among the countries that were most severely affected by gang violence between 2000 and 2010. Of the 3485 murders committed during the period, 1007 or 28.9% were gang-related. The impact of gang violence was more pronounced in the second half of the decade as 913 of 2673 (34.2%) murders were gang-related for the period 2005 to 2010 compared to ninety-four of 812 (11.6%) for the period 2000 to 2004. A study by Maguire, King, Johnson and Katz (2010) argued that the number of gang-related murders in Trinidad and Tobago might be higher than that indicated in official statistics because of the faulty classification methodology used by the local police force.

Increasing Gang Murders

There was a sharp increase in gang-related murders in the countries focused on during the period under review. During the period 2000-2004, St. Kitts and Nevis recorded 31.6% followed by Jamaica which recorded 14% and Trinidad and Tobago which recorded 11.6% of its murders as gang-related. The second half of the decade saw increases in murders and a parallel but disproportionate increase in gang-related murders (see figure 2-2).
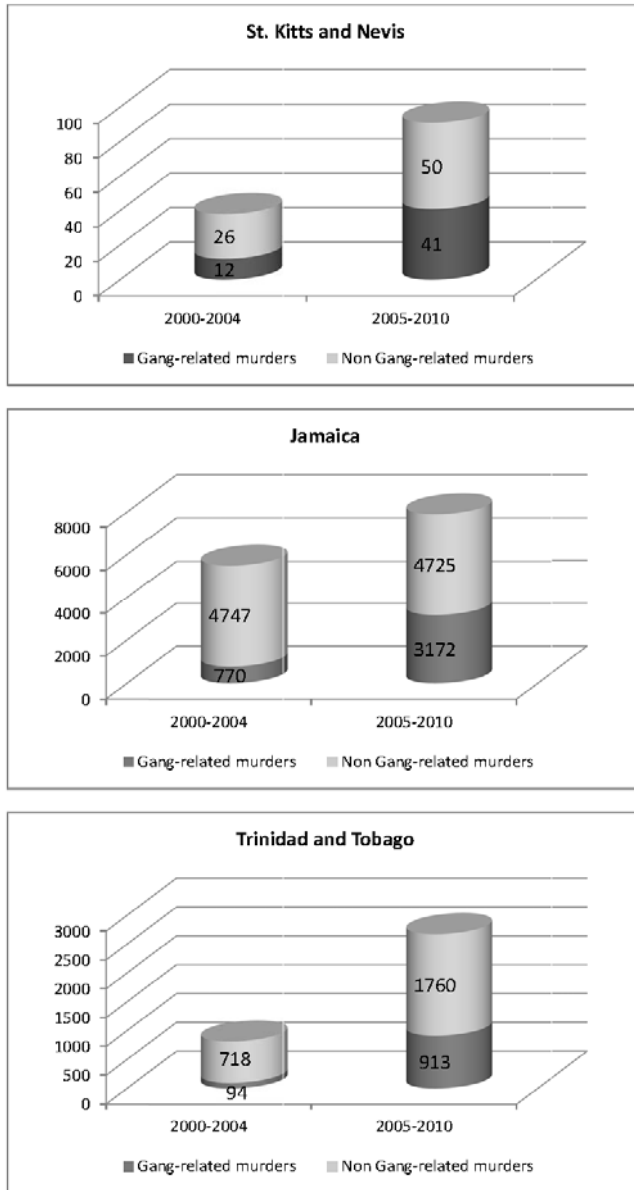
Fig. 2-2 Increases in all murders and gang-related murders

While the number of non gang-related murders in St. Kitts and Nevis doubled from twenty-six in the first half to fifty in the second half of the decade (an increase of 92%), gang-related murders increased from twelve to forty-one (an increase of 342%). While the number of non gang-related murders in Jamaica went from 4747 in the first half of the decade to 4725 in the second half (a decrease of 0.5%), gang-related murders increased from 770 to 3172 (an increase of 412%). While the number of non gang-related murders in Trinidad and Tobago increased from 718 in the first half of the decade to 1760 in the second half (an increase of 245%), gang-related murders increased from ninety-four to 913 (an increase of 971%). These data indicate that while St. Kitts and Nevis recorded the highest percentage of gang-related murders between 2000 and 2004 as well as 2005 and 2009, Trinidad and Tobago experienced the sharpest rise in gang-related murders in the corresponding periods. These data further indicate that the rate of increase in gang-related murders was higher than the rate of increase in non gang-related murders as well as the rate of increase in the total number of murders.

Other Gang Crimes

While the link between gang-violence and the rising number of murders during the period under review is clear, there is very little research which assesses the impact of gang violence on other types of crime. However, there is evidence from various studies which seems to suggest that gang violence is having an effect on other types of violent crimes in the Caribbean. Haylock (2006), for example, highlighted its negative impact on the Belizean society, while Gayle et al. (2010) found that 68% of youths surveyed agreed that gang violence was the most significant crime problem in urban Belize. The BPD also found gang violence to be the most significant national crime problem (BPD 2011). Two studies in Jamaica (Moncrieffe 1998 and Leslie 2010) estimated that 50% and 80% respectively of all crime could be attributed to gang activity. Two cross-national studies which compared gangs from Trinidad with those in the United States found that gangs in Trinidad were more violent than their US counterparts (Katz, Choate and Fox 2010 and Katz, Maguire and Choate 2011). In the first study, the Trinidad and Tobago gangs were found to have a greater propensity towards violence (37.1%) than their US counterparts (19.2%) and engaged in at least twice the violence, property crime and drug crime than non-gang members (Katz and Choate 2006). In the second study, it was found that Trinidad and Tobago gang members were more likely to have been arrested for violent crimes than US gang mem-

bers (52.5% vs. 23%). Seepersad (forthcoming) also discovered that in Trinidad and Tobago, the spatial distribution of gangs is closely related to the spatial distribution of murder, woundings and shootings, robbery, burglary and narcotic offences, but is not related to the spatial distribution of sexual offences and kidnappings.

Responses

National Level

There have been a number of national, sub-regional, regional and international responses to the gang violence problem. At the national level, both state and law enforcement entities in the region have responded to this new phenomenon and, while it may be premature to assess the impact of these initiatives, the loss of life attributed to gang-related murders continues to increase. Table 2-7 details some of the initiatives implemented at government and policing levels in the four countries under review.

The responses to gang violence and the relative lack of success are related to a number of factors. Firstly, the short time frame in which stakeholders (except Jamaica) recognized the epidemic stage of gang violence in the Caribbean along with the lack of information on, and knowledge of, the issues by both state and law enforcement officials has hampered efforts to address the phenomenon and secondly, the lack of research on gangs in the Caribbean has resulted in a situation where decisions are based on factors other than empirical data (Katz 2010). It can also be argued, especially in the case of Jamaica, that political factors have militated against strong actions against gang violence (Muggah and Leslie 2010). In fact, politics is believed to be related to the genesis of gang violence in Jamaica (Dennie 2010; Gayle and Levy 2007; Gayle et al. 2010; Harriott 2009; Mogensen 2005; Morris and Graycar 2011). In addition, Leslie (2010) and Morgenstern (2010) both found that state authorities in Jamaica had little knowledge about gangs. Leslie (2010) also found that, while some of the community-based initiatives of the multilateral institutions achieved success in reducing gang activities, they were neither sustained nor national in impact due to lack of coordination. Despite this, and as table 2-7 indicates, there are a number of initiatives in Jamaica which are focused on gang violence. These include the establishment of a gang unit within the Kingfish branch of the Jamaican Constabulary Force, occasional instances of curfews and declarations of limited states of emergency as well as proposed anti-gang legislation.

Table 2-7: Anti-Gang Initiatives

Country	Police initiatives	Government initiatives
Jamaica	a) Establishment of special gang unit within Kingfish branch of the JCF b) Hotspot policing	a) Occasional curfews and limited states of emergency b) Citizen Security and Citizen Security and Justice Program c) Proposed anti-gang legislation
Trinidad and Tobago	a) Establishment of a gang unit within the police service b) Repeat Offenders Program (ROP)	a) Anti-Gang legislation Act No. 10 of 2011 b) State of emergency/curfew
St. Kitts and Nevis	a) Establishment of a gang unit b) Police boys club and police drum core/cadets core	a) Hiring of former FBI agent to conduct assessment b) Operation Future c) Gang (Protection and Prohibition) Act, 2011 d) Use of former gang members for advice
Belize	a) Gang Suppression Unit b) Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) c) Belize Police Department Cadet Corps d) School Resource Officer Program	a) Operation Restore Belize b) Operation Jaguar c) Conscious Youth Program d) Youth for the future e) Anti-Gang Strategy f) Gayle et al. Commissioned Research project

Katz, Choate and Fox (2010) found that Trinidad and Tobago lacked primary gang prevention programmes and that some ministries resisted the implementation of such initiatives. They also found that stakeholders could not identify a primary program in their ministries which was aimed at reducing gang involvement and were not aware of any available in other

ministries. Stakeholders also suggested that other ministries were responsible, and that there was a general lack of support for suggested gang reduction initiatives. Within recent times, however, Trinidad and Tobago has undertaken the most significant crime and security initiatives compared to its Caribbean neighbours, not only in response to the surge in gang violence, but also with regards to citizen security. With respect to gang violence, the government passed the 2011 Anti-Gang Act, making it the first Caribbean country to pass such legislation. The TTPS also established a Gang Unit, which comes under the direction of a deputy commissioner of police. Officers attached to this Unit receive specialized training in gang-related matters. Additionally, the TTPS has also established a Repeat Offenders Programme which focuses on individuals identified as most vulnerable to gang membership and gang-related activities. Despite these advances, Katz and Choate (2010) found that police officers were not very knowledgeable about gangs in Trinidad and Tobago nor were they familiar with primary and secondary level gang prevention initiatives.

In response to increasing gang activity in St. Kitts and Nevis, in 2008 the government hired Mark Mershod, a former Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), to conduct an assessment of the problem.[31] It is noteworthy that Mershod's contract of services allowed for the provision of advice to the government but did not require the provision of training to the local police. The government also implemented Operation Future, which targets youths who are at risk of becoming gang members. A former gang member program was also initiated. This involved former gang members giving advice to young men about the dangers of gang activities. Most importantly, St. Kitts and Nevis is the second Caribbean country to pass anti-gang legislation which deals exclusively with gang violence and related matters. The Gang (Protection and Prohibition) Act No. 18 of 2011 contains sweeping provisions which prohibit criminal gang activities with accompanying severe penalties. At the police level, the RSKNPF established an Anti-Gang Unit and held a number of town meetings in an effort to mobilize the citizenry and galvanize support for the fight against gang violence.[32]

The response to rising crime in Belize does not specifically identify the criminal gang phenomenon but targets crime and violence in general. Operation Restore Belize and Operation Jaguar are multifaceted initiatives which target all sectors of society. They involve five ministries working in

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[31] See "FBI zeroes in on St. Kitts crime," December 3, 2008, retrieved from:
http://www.caribbean360.com/index.php/news/14137.rss.

[32] National security officials and members of the Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force, in interview with the author.

collaboration to provide both law enforcement-focused strategies while implementing community and social policies. These projects are being implemented by the Prime Minister's Office together with the ministries of Sport, Culture, Education, Community Development and the newly created Ministry of Justice and Police. The government also commissioned one study of the crime and violence problem (Gayle et al. 2010). At the police level, the BPD established an Anti-Gang Unit which is comprised of an Intelligence Unit and an Operations Unit geared to dismantling gangs in Belize. Despite implementing gang prevention policies such as Gang Reduction through Education and Training (GREAT), the BPD is seeking specialized training to deal with the gang problem (BPD 2011).

Beyond National Boundaries

The Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) of the Organization of American States (OAS) established a special Committee to review gang violence in the Hemisphere and passed six (6) General Assembly Resolutions between 2005 and 2010 calling on states to cooperate in the hemispheric response to dealing with criminal gangs.[33] Additionally, CARICOM produced a draft strategy on youth violence. The OAS also facilitated a preliminary assessment of the gang violence phenomenon in Antigua and Barbuda, which found *inter alia*, that state authorities were not very informed about the issue in the country and that, while criminal gangs represent an emerging phenomenon, it was not a significant threat and required more social policies instead of a law enforcement/suppressive intervention response (Katz, Meeks-Gardner and Rosenblatt 2008). Two factors are relevant here. Firstly, the CARICOM draft Strategy was a reactionary initiative following the 2007 UNODC/World Bank report;[34] it is still in draft stage and more importantly, is a joint initiative with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and, as such, funding is subject to the discretion of the latter agency. Secondly, the OAS response has not moved beyond the discussion stage in the CSH. In sum, there is no current concrete strategy to respond to the gang problem at the regional and sub-regional levels and there are no apparent initiatives on the horizon from the larger multilateral institutions.

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[33] OAS General Assembly Resolutions 2144 (XXXV-O/05) 2005, 2247 (XXXVI-O/06) 2006, 2299 (XXXVII-O/07) 2007, 2380 (XXXVIII-O/08) 2008 2461 (XXXIX-O/09) 2009 and 2541 (XL-O/10)2010 retrieved from:
http://www.oas.org/csh/english/Dealing%20with%20Gangs.asp.
[34] See CARICOM Draft Action plan for Social Development Crime Prevention.

Previous Research on Gangs in the Caribbean

The main challenge in understanding the gang violence phenomenon in the Caribbean relates to the lack of research and the unavailability of reliable data on gangs (Katz, Maguire and Choate 2011; Leslie 2010; Morgenstern 2010). A review of the literature on gang violence in the Caribbean, for example, reveals that St. Kitts and Nevis appears to be virgin territory where research is concerned, despite possessing one of the most acute gang violence problems in the region (see table 2-2 above). However, other challenges exist. According to Williams (2009):

> "...there is an absence of a regional uniform definition, denial of gang presence by regional law enforcement officials in some jurisdictions despite indicators to the contrary [and] absence of proper systems for the identification and recording of gang data." (p. 5)

There is also tardiness of responses to requests for information by the central crime and security entities in the CARICOM security infrastructure. These issues become evident when attempting to do cross national-analyses on issues such as risk and protective factors, motivating factors for gang membership, and when attempting to construct profiles of gang members.

Despite these limitations, there are some notable examples of work on gangs in the Caribbean. The work of Professor Charles Katz and his colleagues represents some of the most important research on gangs in the Caribbean (Katz and Choate 2006; Katz, Maguire and Choate 2011; Maguire, King, Johnson and Katz 2010; Wells, Katz and Kim 2010). The research of Katz and Fox (2010) and Katz, Maguire and Choate (2011), which compared gangs in Trinidad and Tobago to gangs in the United States revealed that gangs in Trinidad and Tobago were more violent than gangs in the United States and in addition found that gangs in Trinidad and Tobago were less organized than their American counterparts, and lacked names, colours, signs and identifying dress. While Katz and his colleagues conducted a cross national-analysis of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago and the US, there are no cross-national analyses of gangs across the Caribbean. Katz and Fox (2010), Katz, Choate and Fox (2010), Katz and Choate (2010), Wells, Katz and Kim (2010) and Katz, Maguire and Choate (2011) also analyzed the magnitude of the problem based on number and size of gangs and their contribution to high murder rates, their historical origin, the risk and protective factors, the motivating factors for gang membership, the areas of gang concentration, profiles, and areas of criminal activity.

Professor Anthony Harriott's work touches on gangs only in so far as it impacts on organized crime and violence in the Jamaican society. Harriott's work also focuses on police reform, organized crime and the subculture of violence in Jamaica. Gayle's and Levy's works are based on anthropological studies of violence problems in Jamaica with a focus on urban areas, particularly inner Kingston (Gayle 2009 and Levy 1996). Moncrieffe (1998) also conducted an important study on gangs in Jamaica while Leslie (2010) and Gayle et al. (2010) provide helpful insights into the gang problem in Jamaica and Belize. One study by Morgenstern et al. (2010) examined the dynamics of the various categories of gangs (corner gangs, area gangs and corner crews), and in addition, focussed to a lesser extent on the root causes and risk and protective factors of gang violence. Additionally, other work by multilateral institutions (e.g. USAID, IAD and DFID) produced much literature on crime and violence in general but has a limited focus on gangs, except as a contributory factor in the epidemic levels of violence in Jamaica. Previous works focused on the magnitude and historical underpinnings of gang-violence as ancillary factors in the violent culture in Jamaica, the dynamics fuelling gang violence, and the deep-rooted political nexus with gangs (Gayle 2009; Levy 1996; Levy, Gayle and Stultz 2001; Moser and Holland 1997).

What We Know about Gang Violence

Gang Locations and Gang Names

Gangs are generally concentrated in the urban areas of the four countries under consideration. Gangs are concentrated in Kingston, Jamaica, Port of Spain and environs in Trinidad (Katz 2010), Belize City (especially the south side) and semi-urban areas of Belize (Gayle et al. 2010) and Basseterre and Charlestown in St. Kitts and Nevis. According to Hagedorn (2005), this pattern is consistent with international trends. The only country for which detailed data on the location of gangs are available is Trinidad and Tobago. Data from the TTPS indicate that of the sixty gangs which were known in 2009, the majority were located in the Port of Spain Police Division (16) followed by the Western (12) and Northern (12) Divisions. The Eastern Division had six gangs, while the North Eastern Division had five gangs. All other Divisions had three or fewer gangs. More recent data from Katz and Choate (2010) indicated that the five police station districts with the most gangs were, in order of priority, Besson Street (19), San Juan (8), Sangre Grande (8), St. Joseph (7) and Belmont

(6).[35] The five police station districts with the highest number of gang members in order of priority were Besson Street (385), Belmont (165), San Juan (130), Careenage (100) and Sangre Grande (90).

While the Crips and Bloods were the gang names in St. Kitts and Nevis (data from RSKNPF) and Belize (along with one MS-13 and one 18th Street Gang), in Jamaica, noted gangs included the Shower Posse, Clansman Massive, One Order and Tivoli Gardens. While names were not a dominant feature of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago, there were a few gangs with names. These included the Gambinos, Nelson Street and Hell Yard gangs. These were some of the more active and popular gangs in Trinidad and Tobago (Wallace 2011). In Trinidad and Tobago, gangs are more associated with turf or territory than names. Accordingly, while Pashley-Church Streets, Nelson Street, Troumacaque and Sea Lots all refer to localities and village names, these names were also used to refer to the gangs in each area (Wallace 2011). Wallace (2011) also found that, in Trinidad and Tobago, gang names were associated with gang leaders, and the names of the gangs changed with changes in leadership.

Number of Gangs and Gang Members

While the data are generally incomplete on gang size, except for Trinidad and Tobago, Moncrieffe (1995) estimated that there were approximately seventy-nine gangs in Jamaica, while a later estimate by Leslie (2010) put the number at approximately 260 gangs in Jamaica. In comparison, the Kingfish Unit of the JCF estimated that there were approximately seventy gangs which were active in Jamaica (Nelson 2008). The BPD (2010) and Gayle (2010) both agreed that there were approximately thirty gangs with a total of approximately 450 to 500 members in Belize. The RSKNPF reported that there were a total of 10 sub-groups of the Crips and Bloods and other gangs in St. Kitts and Nevis,[36] while Katz, Choate and Fox (2010) found that there were ninety-five gangs with a total of approximately 1269 gang members in Trinidad and Tobago. Katz, Choate and Fox (2010) based their estimates on research data, while the data sources for the other estimates are less clear.

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[35] Police station districts refer to the area of jurisdiction of each police station.
[36] Memorandum from the Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force.

Organizational Structure

Apart from the infrequent use of gang names in Trinidad and Tobago, Katz, Choate and Fox (2010) found that 47.7% of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago had colours, signs, symbols or clothes to identify their members as opposed to 86.5% of gangs in the US The study also found higher percentages of meetings (81%), gang leaders (61.9%) and turf and rules (both 90.5%) compared to gangs in the US.

Gayle et al. (2010) found that gangs in Belize were not well organized and possessed simple structures, with predominantly a leader and the "shottas" or gunmen. However, the Belize Police Department indicated that gangs had intensified their recruitment drive and were becoming increasingly organized (BPD 2011). Gayle et al. (2010) found that gangs in Belize were associated with colours, blue representing the Crips and red representing the Bloods. The RSNPF also found that there was similar gang identification in St. Kitts and Nevis with the red and blue colours of the Crips and Bloods.[37] Unfortunately, there are no additional data on the structure of gangs in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Moncrieffe (1995) first posited a three-tiered organizational structure of Jamaican gangs as highly (14%), moderately (49%) and loosely organized (37%), based on factors such as "formal hierarchy, assigned roles (usually specialized), specific territory, activities that increase cohesiveness and formalized roles and rituals" (pp. 16-17, 30-31). According to Moncrieffe (1995), most Jamaican gangs (86%) were not highly organized. Harriott (2008), Gayle (2009), Gayle and Levy (2007) and Gunst (1995) mentioned the dons and soldier/gunman structure of Jamaican gangs while Moncrieffe (1995), Morgenstern (2010) and Leslie (2010) described the dynamics of the "area dons", "corner dons" and "corner crews" based on turf dynamics. The JCF also ascribed first, second and third generation labels to gangs based on various factors including profiles, assets, resource capability and area of specialization.[38]

Criminal Activity and Political Links

Gayle et al. (2010) linked gangs to politics in Belize, but reported a stronger nexus between gangs and illegal drug trafficking and extortion. Gangs were also involved in courier services, robberies, informal bodyguard services and, to a lesser extent, legitimate business. The BPD (2011)

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[37] Memorandum from the Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force.
[38] Members of the Kingfish Unit of the Jamaican Constabulary Force; in interview with the author.

found that the main gang activity involved the illegal drug trade, with a high incidence of robbery, extortion, witness intimidation and killings, and drug and gun sales. Katz and Choate (2010) and Katz, Maguire and Choate (2010) found that gangs in Trinidad and Tobago frequently used alcohol and drugs, while two-thirds were involved in fights with rival gangs. They also found that gangs were frequently involved in drug sales, robberies, firearm activities and homicides. Seepersad (forthcoming) also discovered that in Trinidad and Tobago, the spatial distribution of gangs was closely related to the spatial distribution of murder, woundings and shootings, robbery, burglary and narcotic offences, but was not related to the spatial distribution of sexual offences and kidnappings. Townsend (2009) described the fluctuating degrees of politicians' reliance on gangs for support in Trinidad.

Jamaican gangs have a history of involvement in a range of criminal activities including murder, illegal drug trafficking, extortion, kidnapping, robbery, rape, political intimidation and turf protection (Moncrieffe 1995). Moncrieffe (1995) refuted the claim that criminal activity was the reason that Jamaican youths joined gangs. A number of writers mention a political nexus with the gang culture in Jamaica (Dennie 2010; Gayle 2009; Gayle and Levy 2007; Griffith 2010; Gunst 1995; Harriott 2009, 2010; Levy 2007; Morris and Graycar 2011). Gunst (1995) found that, while historically there was a very strong nexus between gang activity and politics in Jamaica, with the disintegration of political patronage, gang activity shifted to trafficking in illegal drugs, extortion and gun running and was also associated with the migration of the "Posses" and "Yardies" to North America and Europe. Leslie (2010) maintained that gang violence remained the most significant factor in the crime landscape of Jamaica while Dennie (2010) and Griffith (2010) reported the threat posed by gangs to state sovereignty. There is no evidence to suggest a link between gangs and political parties in St. Kitts and Nevis, however, according to the local police, the main activities of gangs included murder, assaults, thefts, fights and graffiti.[39]

Risk and Protective Factors

Previous researchers on gangs have tended to suggest the usual profiles of gang members (for example, low socio-economic status, violent environment, low levels of education and presence of other family members

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[39] Member of the Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force; in interview with the author.

who are gang members) as predisposing factors for gang membership. Katz and Choate (2010), however, posit that the factors motivating gang membership vary within communities, even within the same country and, as such, that researchers must go beyond describing the profiles of gang members and must examine the factors which motivate gang membership. This implies that gang members from different countries may have similar profiles, but their motivation for joining gangs may vary. Policies which focus on the profiles of gang members may lack the level of specificity required to address gang issues in specific communities as the reasons for joining gangs may vary from one community to the next.

Katz and Choate (2010) found that four risk factors were significantly associated with joining gangs in Trinidad and Tobago. Those who reported community mobility, more guns in their community, early initiation into antisocial behaviour, and the intention to use drugs were significantly more likely to report being in a gang. Katz and Choate (2010) also found that persons who reported more risk factors were more likely to join gangs, and that persons who reported more protective factors were less likely to join gangs.

Gayle et al. (2010) interviewed twenty-three gang members in Belize and found that gang members possessed multiple risk factors for membership and identified poor police detection rates, protection, turf identity crisis, masculinity and the effects of unemployment and lack of food as the reasons for gang membership.

Moncrieffe (1995) found that most youths in Jamaica join gangs because of friendship, belonging and the opportunities provided for participating in a range of group activities. Interestingly her study found that there was no link between gangs and drugs; on the contrary, drug use was discouraged and frowned upon and youths did not join gangs to engage in criminal activity. The sample size (n=70) and the age factor (11-25 years) may have impacted upon the findings of this study.

It is important to note here that, while Katz and Choate (2010) describe the limitation of their study as focusing only on Port of Spain and surrounding areas, the sample employed was significantly larger (n=368 gang members) than those employed by Gayle et al. (2010) who collected data from twenty-three gang members in Belize and Moncrieffe (1995) who interviewed seventy gang members in Jamaica.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Rising Levels of Murder

There are compelling data which demonstrate that murders are at epidemic levels in a number of Caribbean countries and that gang violence is an important contributory factor in the countries with the highest murder rates. This paper covered the period 2000-2009 when nine countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, the Bahamas, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago) established new murder records. In the year 2000, the murder rate of the Caribbean stood at 14.8 murders per 100,000 inhabitants per annum, and steadily increased to 24.96 per 100,000 in 2009. For the period 2000 to 2009, the average murder rate of the Caribbean was 20.6 murders per 100,000 inhabitants per annum. Of the countries in the Caribbean, those with the highest murder rates, as well as the most serious gang problems are Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and Belize.

Rising Levels of Gang Violence

There is evidence that gang violence is a clear and present danger, not only as it relates to the murders statistics of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis, but possibly also to those of Belize. Of the 13,414 murders which took place in Jamaica in the period 2000 to 2009, 3942 or 29.4% were gang-related, while of the 429 murders in Belize in the period 2007 to 2010, eighty-seven or 20.3% were gang-related. Official data for St. Kitts and Nevis for the period 2000 to 2009 revealed that of the 129 murders which took place, fifty-three or 41% were gang-related, while in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, of the 3485 murders which took place during 2001 to 2010, 1007 or 28.9% were gang related. Quite apart from the four countries under review, there is evidence that gang violence is becoming an important factor in crime and violence in other Caribbean countries. There is a need for the region to adopt a working definition of criminal gangs and gang-related murder. The relative success or failure of the legislation in Trinidad and Tobago will determine the extent to which other countries will pass similar legislation tailored along those lines. While legislation and suppressive efforts represent important factors in the fight against gang violence, preventative measures must not be neglected.

Need for Accurate Crime Statistics and Research on Gangs

There is uncertainty about the level of accuracy of crime statistics in the Caribbean due to a variety of reasons, a number of which readily stand out. First, there is an acute lack of capacity of the police forces in the region where data collection and analysis are concerned (Deosaran 2004). Despite this, a number of police forces are now establishing dedicated statistics departments. During a five-country mission in the Caribbean in 2008, for example, it was observed that some countries were establishing such units while one police force had recently secured the services of a statistician. Second, there are acute inconsistencies in the data within the police forces themselves (Maguire, King, Johnson and Katz 2010). Third, there is no consensus on definitions of gangs and gang-related crime which underscores the challenges in conducting comparative analyses among Caribbean countries. Fourth, there is a lack of empirical research on gangs in the Caribbean. Such research represents one means by which accurate data on crime and gangs may be collected. Finally, the variation in the methodologies used by researchers to analyze gangs underscores the challenges involved in making sense of what is already known about gangs in the Caribbean. Among other things, this variation includes the use of different definitions and operationalizations of key terms. Such differences complicate the processes involved in making sense of what data already exist.

Recommendations

- Interim assessments, such as the one conducted in Antigua and Barbuda in 2008, should be conducted to determine the countries with the most severe problems and interim initiatives should be implemented;
- Individual country assessments of the gang violence situation should be conducted to determine the magnitude of the problem in each country;
- A regional response mechanism, taking into consideration the findings above, should be established;
- Surveillance mechanisms should be designed to closely monitor the situation in each country;
- Law enforcement officials should receive training in responding to gang issues;
- Both state and law enforcement entities should tailor their policies based on the findings of specific country assessments;

- Legislative provisions, where necessary, should be established. However, this should be done after careful consideration using the lessons learned from Trinidad and Tobago and St. Kitts and Nevis;
- The region needs to establish common definitions that take into account the peculiar circumstances of the region;
- Additional research on gangs and its impact on the Caribbean should be conducted. Such research, *inter alia*, should inform policy development. The University of the West Indies can perform a critical role in this regard.
- The gang issue should not be seen as only a local issue and regional cooperation should be sought in the development of solutions. The OAS and CARICOM are examples of organizations which can assist in a regional effort;
- Programmes should be created to educate the public and make them more aware of the issues and approaches which could assist in preventing the proliferation of gangs in the Caribbean.

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CHAPTER THREE

"DONS," SO-CALLED "COMMUNITY LEADERS" AND THE EMERGENCE OF "UN-CIVIL" SOCIETY IN THE CARIBBEAN

CLIFFORD GRIFFIN AND RAJESH PERSAD

Abstract

Among the hypotheses advanced to explain crime and gang-related violence in the Caribbean are urban drift, economic instability, including high unemployment, inequality in income distribution, high levels of illiteracy, increased numbers of criminal and other deportees from the US and other countries, relaxed immigration laws allowing for organized crime groups from Russia and Asia to gain citizenship and use the islands as bases for illegal activities, over-centralization of power and authority that leaves communities without the wherewithal to solve their own problems or to settle disputes, ineffective channels of communication between the community and the police, and depressed economic conditions. While providing useful insights into the nature and extent of crime and gang-related violence in the region, these hypotheses overlook a more structural foundation to these phenomena that is central to this analysis. This chapter, therefore, a) describes, contextualizes, and summarizes the causes of crime and violence in the region; b) conceptualizes and contextualizes the gang phenomenon; and c) offers a structural model which argues that increasing crime and violence in the Caribbean is largely a function of organized gangs with deep, historical roots and with connections to the dominant political parties.

Introduction

Despite well-developed state institutions, including strong and independent judiciaries, and increasingly better-trained police forces, perhaps

no other complex phenomenon threatens to undermine the three-generation-old democratic political system in the Caribbean than organized, armed violence perpetrated increasingly in the form of gang-related activity. Manifesting itself in the form of kidnappings for ransom, murder, extortion, protection rackets, drug trafficking, gun running, prostitution, domestic violence, and trafficking in stolen automobile and automobile parts, human trafficking—all nestled within a culture of corruption—organized armed violence is increasingly part of the social and political landscape of the Caribbean from Antigua and Barbuda, the Cayman Islands and Jamaica to Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (Griffith 2011; Llewellyn 2011). For example, between 2006 and 2010, Jamaica, with a population of 2.87 million, reported a total of 7,647 homicides, with 12,954 over the past decade of which 71 per cent were committed using illegal guns. Over the past 10 years, the Jamaican police seized 5,661 illegal guns, 147,797 rounds of ammunitions, and made 21,658 arrests for illegal gun and ammunition possession (Lewellyn 2011). The country's murder rate per 100,000 people was 62.5 in 2005 and 50 in 2010 (Griffith 2011). Trinidad and Tobago, with a population of 1.23 million, reported a total of 2,299 homicides between 2006 and 2010, and its murder rate per 100,000 people rose from 9.2 in 2000 to 24.5 in 2005, to 39 in 2010 (see table 3-1). The number of guns seized by the police increased from 140 in 1998 to 437 in 2008 (Lewellyn 2011). Other countries with much smaller populations, such as Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia, report exceedingly high levels of homicide of which a very high proportion is gang-related.

These developments are of growing concern for the world's most tourism-dependent region (Nurse 2002), where the tourism sector accounts for approximately 25 per cent of all exports and services, contributes 31 per cent to the region's gross domestic product (GDP), is the primary generator of foreign exchange, provides the largest number of jobs, and represents the region's greatest potential for growth. With stability, safety and security critical to tourism and to the emerging service sectors, Caribbean leaders and stakeholders are increasingly concerned about the potential for significant diversion of tourism and other service sector revenues, should stability, safety and security be compromised by rising levels of crime and violence. For these leaders, national security—including human security[1]—and the very foundations of their democracies are under threat (Allison 2000).

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[1] Rather than conventional modes such as military strength and government stability, countries are increasingly defining their security in terms of energy supplies, food, natural resources, etc., which collectively constitute human security. Accord-

A number of hypotheses have been advanced to explain the causes of crime and gang-related violence in the Caribbean, including urban drift, economic instability (including high unemployment), inequality in income distribution, high levels of illiteracy, the strengthened US policy of deporting Caribbean citizens and other foreigners with criminal records to their native countries, the relaxation of immigration laws in Dominica in the early 1990s, which opened the door for organized crime groups from Russia and Asia to gain citizenship and use the islands as bases for illegal activities, over-centralization of power and authority that leaves communities without the wherewithal to solve their own problems or to settle disputes, ineffectiveness of channels of communication between the community and the police, and sagging economic conditions and protracted economic hardships, which have denied many citizens the opportunity to earn a livelihood or enjoy a meaningful existence.

While providing useful insights into the nature and extent of crime and gang-related violence in the region, these hypotheses overlook a more structural foundation to these phenomena that is central to this analysis. It is against these background issues, therefore, that this essay seeks to shed light on this growing problem of gang-related crime and violence by a) describing, contextualizing, and summarizing the causes of crime and violence in the region; b) conceptualizing and contextualizing the gang phenomenon; and c) offering a structural model that guides the theory that increasing crime and violence in the Caribbean is largely a function of organized gangs with deep, historical roots and with connections to the dominant political parties.

The Nature of Crime and Violence in the Caribbean

The most recent spate of violence began with the arrival of crack cocaine in the region during the early 1980s, and with the commencement of the payment of local drug dealers/traffickers in commodity as opposed to cash. As will be demonstrated, because of their wealth and power, the larger drug dealers, many of whom have connections in the governing and security sectors, can allow local drug dealers to make a little money in the small populations in the region because they make their money through the transhipment of these products. This arrangement created its own local

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ing to the Commission on Human Security, Survival, Livelihood and Dignity, human security complements state security, furthers human development and enhances human rights. It complements state security by being people-centered and addressing insecurities that have not been considered as state security threats. See http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/outline.html.

dynamic in terms of use, abuse, and gang conflict over drug turf. In addition, gun running and gun ownership, partly by-products of the drug trade and partly by-products of politics, also began to play a significant role in crime and violence as illegal weapons began to be used more widely in the commission of homicides, which have put the region's average at 30 per 100,000 annually. For example, the number of homicides committed in 2002 ranged from seven to eleven in Eastern Caribbean states—including the once tranquil Barbados—to very worrying levels in Guyana (142), Trinidad and Tobago (171), and Jamaica (1,045). These numbers have grown to alarming proportions with Trinidad and Tobago reporting a total of 2,288 homicides between 2006 and 2010 while Jamaica reported 7,651 over the same period (table 3-1).

Table 3-1: Caribbean Murder Data (2006-2010)

Countries	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Murder rate in 2010[a]
Antigua & Barbuda	14	19	14	16	7	8
Bahamas	61	78	73	86	94	30
Barbados	35	25	23	19	31	8
Belize	92	97	103	97	132	41
Dominica	5	7	7	13	11	15
Dominican Republic	2107	2,092	2607	2625	2638	26
Guyana	163	115	158	117	139	19
Jamaica	1340	1583	1618	1682	1428	50
Puerto Rico	738	738	815	894	955	24
St Kitts/Nevis	17	16	23	27	20	40
Saint Lucia	39	27	36	37	44	27
St Vincent/Grenadines	13	36	27	20	25	24
Trinidad & Tobago	371	391	547	506	473	39
US Virgin Islands	42	44	46	56	66	60

[a] Per 100,100 inhabitants

Complicating the challenge of combating crime are disclosures of crooked cops in the various police services reportedly linked with criminals from within drug-trafficking networks, as well as the kidnapping-for-ransom rackets in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, among many other countries in the region. Kidnappings in Jamaica in 2002 resulted in a number of deaths linked to drug trafficking and gun-running crimes, while the reported 19 cases of armed abductions in Trinidad and Tobago were primarily to meet monetary demands ranging from TT$200,000 to TT$5 million. Until 2001, kidnapping for ransom was not a feature of serious

crimes in Guyana. However, the deaths of at least three victims known to have been abducted among the estimated 60 people murdered elevated the level of fear that gripped that country during most of 2002. These developments have increased the level of fear that permeates the societies in the region.

Putting these data into context, the 2007 World Bank and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Report and the 2012 Caribbean Human Development Report both argue that high rates of crime and violence in the Caribbean are undermining growth, threatening human welfare, and impeding social development because increases in crime retard a country's ability to attract development financing, divert resources toward formal and informal security measures, and reduce the level of worker productivity. In general, not only does crime impact upon business but it also represents a major impediment to foreign investment. According to the authors, a one-third reduction in the homicide rate, for example, could more than double the region's rate of per capita economic growth (Cedeño and Jackson 2007; *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, April 23, 2005; Zimmermann, Lawes and Svenson 2012).

Buttressing these conclusions was the 2002 assertion by Jamaican Member of Parliament, Donald Buchanan, that drug dealers in Jamaica were attempting to use their power to control political candidates, and he called for legislation to prevent infusion of drug money into the electoral process. An example of this assertion is the now-incarcerated gang leader, Donald "Zeeks" Phipps, who was able to exploit the fact that he was half-brother to a member of parliament for Central Kingston by engaging in crime, violence and extortion with relative impunity. When "Zeeks" and members of his gang were arrested in 1998, rioting by his supporters shut down Kingston for two days. "Zeeks" was eventually released on $25,000 bail. In the wake of the arrest of "Zeeks" and members of his gang, this time on October 17, 2004 on illicit narcotics and ammunition charges, a shoot-out ensued between his supporters and police at the police station where they were being held.

In Trinidad and Tobago in 2003, then Prime Minister Patrick Manning commented:

> "...the illicit drug trade has created a criminal elite with considerable financial resources with which they corrupt public institutions and officials and recruit the country's children for all forms of criminal activity... Illegal drug profits [are] being used to buy weapons and ammunition that end up in the hands of feuding gangs, pushing up the murder rate."

Similarly in 2003, Guyana's former Home Affairs Minister, Gajraj, contended that

> "...some deportees have become criminal kingpins, corrupting government officials and organizing native Guyanese into gangs that are smuggling drugs into the United States and firearms into Guyana…." (Richard 2003)

Additionally, authorities in Jamaica began to express concern that one of the country's major criminal gangs had established branches or "gang incubators" in some schools in the Parish of St. Catherine (Rose 2006). And ostensibly because of their connection with high-ranking members of the incumbent government of St. Kitts and Nevis, Charles "Little Nut" Miller, Glenroy "Bobo" Matthew, and Noel "Zambo" Heath were able to delay their eventual extradition to the US on drug trafficking charges.

What factors contributed to these outcomes? This analysis asserts a linkage between organized crime and violence and the political system and processes in the region. The argument being advanced here is that organized gang activity, while rooted in the drug trade, is loosely, in some cases, and more tightly, in others, connected to the established political parties; this drives crime and violence in the Caribbean. These factors, together with a decreased capacity of national governments to provide a consistent set of public goods, have created the conditions whereby these "un-civil" society groups have emerged to occupy political space and social, economic and political prominence, enough to threaten the democratic foundations of these countries.

Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Gang-Related Violence in the Caribbean

The conventional wisdom holds that the legitimacy of a government is derived from its people, to whom it must be accountable. Equally true is the view that the legitimacy of civil society rests with the people as well, especially since civil society concerns itself with issues that are not being dealt with adequately by government. Civil society groups can be viewed as networks that provide mechanisms and procedures for dealing with complex problems that confront increasingly complex states and societies. For example, homelessness, health care, and crime are all viewed as problems that civil society networks can manage better than single organizations. This means that collaborative networks are appropriate vehicles to address public management problems and effectively coordinate political, social, and economic action (Raab and Milward 2003). Accordingly, de-

mocracies, which function on the basis of civil society, form part of the network and networking that complement the state in addressing some of these problems. And civil society groups can be viewed as "overt networks" that exist to further the development and security of the state. Overt networks utilize persuasion, exchange, and negotiation as the central mechanisms for management and conflict resolution.

However, because civil society groups are not accountable to direct democratic control, some of these groups may fulfil their function in ways and by means that contravene the democratic process. In this regard, a number of "un-civil" society groups, which can be viewed as "covert networks," whose interests centre most often on destruction or on enriching themselves at the expense of social and political stability (Raab and Milward 2003), have emerged in the Caribbean to challenge civil society organizations. For the most part, these groups are illegal organizations, whose activities are contrary to the law of the land, and whose members must conceal their activities and face constant risks if discovered.

"Un-civil" society groups have emerged in many inner city communities in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other parts of the Caribbean where the correspondingly high levels of violence are due in part to a failure of the state to deliver on its core functions—providing a consistent set of public goods, including security, education, care, and basic infrastructure needs. Instead, these functions are provided by these covert networks of "un-civil society" groups—gangs, headed by criminals, who are given legitimacy by political leaders, who consider them "community leaders" (Browne 2011). Figure 3-1, which presents perceptions of gang-related problems in 2010 reveals that, of a sample of seven countries surveyed, an average of 32.4% of respondents believes that the Caribbean has a street gang problem.

Asserting that violence in these communities is partly a function of unemployment, governments seek to manage and mitigate violence by developing public works projects. Examples from Trinidad and Tobago include the Unemployment Relief Program (URP) and Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program (CEPEP) which had a budget allocation of TT$300 million in 2008 (Brown 2008). Under the Manning administration, the URP program fell under the Ministry of Works and Transport. However, because many of these marginalized communities lack government facilities and amenities, including government offices, health clinics, public works departments, police stations, and even public schools, they are not viewed as being safe for civil servants and other government employees to work unless they are from those communities. Consequently, in order to fulfil its function of providing

goods and services to all communities, the government relies on individuals or "community leaders" from these areas to fulfil these roles and implement various government service programs.
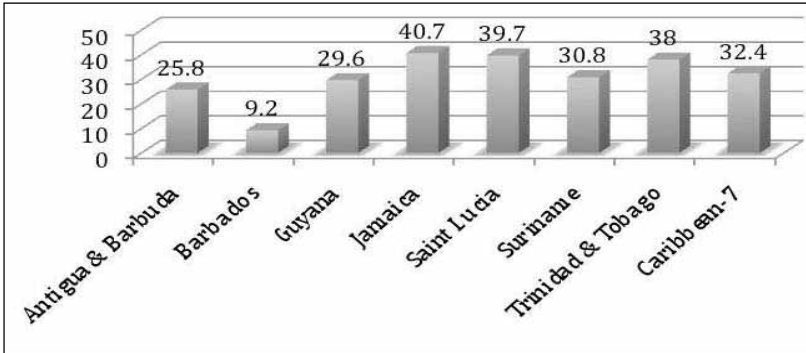
Source: Zimmermann, Lawes and Svenson (2012)

Fig. 3-1 Perceptions of street gang problems in the Caribbean (2010)

"Community leadership" is attained through violent, inter-gang, intra-community contestation for power, and is also derived from the leaders' connections to sources of wealth, including connections to drug dealers or to government officials, which in turn can be used to provide sources of income for followers. The violence, therefore, is not random but, instead, is directed and channelled to produce the maximum benefit to those in power. Leaders of gangs, who prevail in these conflicts, achieve notoriety in their communities, and are the ones to whom the government turns as arbiters of violence and promoters of stability to manage these inner-city, public works projects. These individuals are well aware of the additional economic power and societal prestige that comes with being authorized to dispense patronage jobs on behalf of the government. Not only does that individual secure the authority to determine who gets employment in these public works projects, but he also is expected to deliver the vote from that community to the incumbent during the next election cycle. This association with the government gives political cover and a veneer of legitimacy to these gangs, who are simultaneously engaged in drug-related and other criminal activities. Former National Security Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Martin Joseph, indicated that it is very possible that criminal gangs identified by the Government as the source of the nation's escalating homicide rate may be fighting over state-funded social programs.

It is, therefore, the linkage between these covert networks and the political parties, whereby these "un-civil" society groups seem to be setting up governments-within-governments, which helps to explain the nature and pattern of violence throughout the region. Put differently, gangs are the principal constituents of "un-civil society," and occupy the liminal spaces and serve as bridges between the formal, organized institutions and organs of society, and the marginal, ungovernable areas. So-called "dons" and "community leaders," who head these gangs, serve as mediators, arbiters, and agents of control, who manage public order and dispense government patronage to these communities. In this regard the word "gang" becomes a euphemism that obscures a complex network of corruption because it diverts attention from the root causes of violence by reducing it to street-level activity.

Upon closer examination of the nature, pattern and locus of gang-related crime and violence in the region, therefore, evidence reveals a deeply historical and structural link between the process of politics, the emergence and activities of gangs, and the region's role as a transhipment point for illicit drugs. Whether they are referred to as "dons," as in the Jamaican context, "community leaders," as in the Trinidad and Tobago context, or as "chimeres," as in the Haitian context, a direct relationship between gangs and established political parties in the Caribbean can be identified. The working hypothesis and testable assumption are that organized gang activity rooted in the drug trade, but loosely, in some cases, and more tightly, in others, connected to the established political parties, drives crime and gang-related violence.

The linkage of these gangs to the major political parties has produced relationships that have given them relatively high levels of legitimacy in their respective communities. These relationships are the result of political cultures that reflect intense competition for political power, political party patronage, and control of drug turf in many impoverished inner-city communities across the region (Edie 1991; Griffin 1997; Griffith 1993; Griffith and Monroe 1995; Stone 1986a, 1980, 1986b). As democratic polities, each constituency, whether marginalized, mainstream or affluent, must have political representation. Political parties, therefore, must secure votes from marginal and mainstream communities alike in order to win elections. Free speech in the form of campaign contributions by business and business organizations, trade organizations, religious and religiously-affiliated organizations, various non-governmental organizations (NGO) and special interest groups, is common to the process of politics. These entities exercise their franchise in support of the party of their choice with the expectation that the winning party will implement legislation and poli-

cies that advance their respective interests. That is, the intent of these NGOs is to secure government funding by "bartering" their followers' votes for political favours and government funding.

What should not be a surprise is that in many cases, it is the highly marginalized, underserved, under-resourced, and violence-ridden communities which often determine whether the incumbents will retain power or whether it is the opposition who will be the victors. Consequently, the contending political parties will compete for these seats by fielding candidates in these constituencies, which, in many instances, become strongholds for one party or another in part because of major public works projects, including housing, which they receive under a particular party government. Whatever the circumstance, leaders in those constituencies, who are in the main leaders of crime gangs, are expected to, and routinely do deliver the vote to one party or another. This is often accomplished through force, intimidation, and other acts of cruelty, including murder. In 2004, for example, the mayor of Spanish Town, Jamaica was quoted in the *Economist* magazine as follows: "When councillors are campaigning, most of them use gunmen as agents." The subsequent uproar forced a retraction but did not change the pattern (*Economist*, November 4, 2004). That is, while the contestation for votes in the broader, mainstream society is accomplished largely through the open, civil society process, contestation in these underserved communities is undertaken via an "un-civil" society process.

At the same time, however, these "un-civil" society groups behave in ways that mimic their civil society counterparts—rationally, meaning strategically. Over time, while they have become aware of the decreasing amounts of government resources available to guarantee the delivery of these votes, they remain cognizant of their role and worth in the larger political order and exact a price for endorsing a particular party's candidate to be their representative. It is also the case that some government officials who are unsatisfied with their salaries often associate themselves with gang members and accept payoffs or kickbacks for granting favours or for looking the other way when illegal activities are taking place. The political price for winning electoral seats in these marginal and underserved communities is the use of gang leaders, euphemistically called "community leaders" to act as brokers between the competing political parties and the residents of these communities, who receive contracts for providing public works in their communities, and to manage and mitigate violence while tacitly receiving a certain level of autonomy to control the illicit drug activity in their communities.

In short, these structural factors, together with a decreased capacity of national governments to provide a consistent set of public goods, have created the conditions for the emergence of these "un-civil" society groups that are driven by two factors: 1) a desire for access to and control of government funding for conducting public works projects, especially in the marginalized areas of these various countries, and 2) a desire to become important players in the flow of the highly lucrative, illicit narcotics that enter and transit the region. Their ability to occupy political, social and economic space, and to play prominent roles in the political, therefore, not only suggests the existence of corruption in many areas of the legal/judicial and political processes but also represents an existential threat to the democratic foundations of these countries (*Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, April 23, 2005).

Understanding Gangs in the Caribbean

Society divides normally, if not naturally, into groups. Some groups are permanent while others are temporary, composed of loose affiliations of people coming together for specific purposes. Some groups are highly structured, with barriers to entry and exit while others are unstructured and unrestricted. Gangs are among the types of groups in society.

There are definitional issues regarding gangs. A gang may be a group or band such as a gang of boys gathered around the winning runner. A gang may also be a group of people with compatible tastes or mutual interest, who gather together for social reasons. In this instance, it would not be unusual to say: "I am throwing a party for the gang with whom I play cricket." A gang can be a group of persons working together, such as a squad of police or a shift of workers. In this instance, it is common to speak about "a gang of labourers." Finally, a gang may be a group of persons, such as "a gang of thieves," associated closely—often exclusively—for some criminal or other antisocial purpose. The essential point here is that all gangs are groups, but not all groups are gangs—a distinction often not made (or not well made) when dealing with the issue of gangs in the Caribbean.

The state of Alabama in the US defines a street gang as:

> "...any combination, confederation, alliance, network, conspiracy, understanding, or similar arrangement in law or in fact, of three or more persons that, through its membership or through the agency of any member, engages in a course or pattern of criminal activity." (Alabama Code § 13A-6-26 2002)

The Chicago police department defines a gang as "…an organized group with a recognized leader whose activities are either criminal or, at the very least, threatening to the community." Sociologist Frederick Thrasher sees a gang as:

> "...an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict" and characterized by the following types of behaviour: a) meeting face to face, b) milling, c) movement through space as a unit, d) conflict, and e) planning. The result of this collective behaviour is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory. (Thrasher 1963, 46)

Generally, gangs are organizations of the street composed of either the socially excluded or alienated, demoralized, or bigoted elements of a dominant racial, ethnic, or religious group.

A number of countries are considering anti-gang legislation. Bermuda is considering implementing anti-gang legislation based on the Canadian anti-gang statute (*Royal Gazette* online 2012), as has Jamaica (*Caribbean News Now* February 24, 2012). Also considering similar legislation are St. Kitts and Nevis, and the Cayman Islands. However, Trinidad and Tobago is the only Caribbean country to have codified concepts of "gang," "gang member," "gang leader" and "gang-related activity" in its laws.[2] According to the legislation, a gang constitutes:

> "...a combination of two or more persons, whether formally or informally organized, that, through its membership or through an agent, engages in any gang- related activity."

A gang leader is a person who knowingly initiates, organizes, plans, finances, directs, manages or supervises any gang-related activity. A gang member is:

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[2] The Anti-Gang Act 2011 passed in May 2011 makes it unlawful to be a gang member, with a punishment of up to 25 years in jail. Committing a gang crime carries a 30-year sentence and aiding and abetting a gang member carries a 25-year punishment. Parents or guardians of children in gangs can be convicted of a crime. The courts can take into consideration mitigating factors such as any efforts made by the person convicted to reform or rehabilitate the child. Recruiting adults into gangs carries a ten-year sentence but if a child is recruited the maximum sentence is 15 years. Recruiting gang members in school zones carries a 20-year sentence.

"...a person who belongs to a gang, or a person who knowingly acts in the capacity of an agent for or an accessory to, or voluntarily associates himself with any gang-related activity, whether in a preparatory, executory or concealment phase of any such activity, or a person who knowingly performs, aids, or abets any such activity."

And gang-related activity refers to:

"...any criminal activity, enterprise, pursuit or undertaking in relation to any of the offences listed in the First Schedule acquiesced in, or consented or agreed to, or directed, ordered, authorized, requested or ratified by any gang member, including a gang leader." (Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Act No. 10 of 2011)

Schedule 4 of the statutes lists the following as constituting gang-related activity: 1) possession of imitation firearms in pursuance of any criminal offence; 2) larceny of a motor vehicle; 3) arson; 4) receiving stolen goods; 5) gang membership; 6) coercing or encouraging gang membership; 7) preventing a gang member from leaving a gang; 8) participation in criminal activity in association with a gang; 9) possession of bullet-proof vest, firearm or ammunition for the benefit of a gang; 10) harbouring or concealing gang members; 11) recruiting gang members; 12) threatening to publish with intent to extort; 13) demanding money with menaces; 14) murder; 15) shooting or wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, unlawful wounding; 16) robbery, robbery with aggravation, robbery with violence; 17) assault occasioning actual bodily harm; 18) possession and use of a firearm or ammunition with intent to endanger life; 19) possession of a firearm or ammunition without license, certificate, or permit; 20) trafficking in a dangerous drug or being in possession of a dangerous drug for the purpose of trafficking; 21) rape; 22) grievous sexual assault; 23) kidnapping; 24) kidnapping for ransom; 25) knowingly negotiating to obtain a ransom; and 26) an attempt to commit any offence listed in this Schedule (Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Act No. 10 of 2011).

The many definitions of gangs, therefore, do present problems for the legal/judicial system. Like many definitions, the Trinidad and Tobago statute includes the very behaviour (crime) it seeks to identify and explain. Most definitions have similar components and typically involve a congregation of individuals, primarily young males. However, not all congregations or informal gatherings of young individuals constitute gangs. One common definition is a group of three or more individuals who engage in criminal activity and identify themselves with a common name or sign. With regard to implementing this type of legislation, the following are

among the types of questions that need to be asked in order to determine whether the alleged perpetrators are actually members of criminal gangs or whether they are simply members of societal groups: 1) Do the individuals have a sense of "group awareness"? 2) Does the group have permanence or is it fleeting or temporary? 3) Do these individuals recurrently associate with one another? 4) Does the group have an internal structure, including leadership, as well as a sense of loyalty, solidarity, esprit de corps, or morale? 5) Does the group have identity markers—a name or a sign? And 6) is the group attached to a local territory?

While there remains some debate over whether or not the Jamaat al Muslimeen is a gang, the conventional wisdom holds that prior to this recent upsurge in crime and violence, the Dole Chadee gang[3] and the Jamaat al Muslimeen were the two prominent gangs in Trinidad and Tobago (*Trinidad Guardian*, April 23, 2005). That said, most so-called gangs in the Caribbean comprise groups of individuals with no barriers to entry or exit; informal associations of individuals, who have grown up together in the same neighbourhood, who have no formal/significant ties, and who come together temporarily to engage in criminal activity. These individuals have interchangeable accomplices. Moreover, while the evidence indicates that the number of gangs has increased over the past decade-and-a-half, many of which copy and try to emulate the various street gangs in the US, such as the Crips and Bloods, the following remains clear: that there exists a structural relationship between gangs and the political parties and political process in the Caribbean. While the relationship is loose in some countries, it is strong in others, including Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, where this link between gangs and the established political party structures is most clearly manifested.

The Political Nexus with Crime and Violence
in the Caribbean

One of the primary roles of government is to provide a consistent set of public goods to citizens. Global political and economic changes have witnessed governments being less able to deliver on these responsibilities, especially in the historically underserved communities. The past three dec-

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[3] In the case of the Dole Chadee gang, the "gang" reference is to those individuals who accompanied him to conduct the murder of a Williamsville family on January 09, 1994. It is therefore, misleading, because the phenomenon that should be the focus is the criminal network.

ades, therefore, have witnessed these functions increasingly being provided by an emergent "un-civil society," reflecting gangs, whose leaders and members employ violence as a rational means of exercising their authority over their "communities." As a consequence, an almost parallel relationship exists between the emergence of these "un-civil society" groups and an upsurge in crime and violence, which have not only increased in frequency and intensity in recent years, but have also changed in character, as demonstrated below. Perhaps no other complex phenomenon, therefore, threatens to undermine the two-generation-old democratic political system in the Caribbean than organized and un-organized armed violence.

Organized and un-organized violence has manifested itself in the form of kidnappings for ransom, murder, extortion, protection rackets, drug trafficking, money laundering, gun running, prostitution, and trafficking in stolen automobile and automobile parts, and trafficking in human beings. Another dimension to this violence is the issue of property crimes and domestic violence, which are related to drug trafficking and drug use. Thus, from Belize to Guyana, from Jamaica to Trinidad and Tobago, and from Antigua to Barbados and to parts in between, Caribbean countries are being forced to contend with increasing numbers of gangs and attendant armed violence that are threatening political stability and democracy.

Rival gangs in depressed, inner city communities fight one another for control over drug turf. Gang leaders also initiate conflict against rival leaders in order to assume the role of "community leader." This is often done when a leader is deemed to be out of control and, therefore, is selected for replacement by upstarts. As a "community leader," the gang leader then is viewed by the government as the individual most able to be the arbiter of violence, agent of stability and the person most capable of managing public works projects in these communities. The legitimacy acquired by this new role of community leader and power broker provides political cover for expanding his drug turf, which, in turn, expands and escalates the violence as new entrants into the drug trade seek to capitalize on the wealth and opportunity that gang activity presents.

As rational, strategic actors, the goal of these gang leaders is to maintain and enhance their power and prestige in their communities. At stake are hundreds of millions of dollars of government funding of public work projects in these communities. Maintaining their position as the nexus between the government and the community so that they can continue to be the power in these communities is fundamental. In recent years, not only have these individuals grown to recognize their societal worth; they have also learned well how the formal political process works. They are no longer loyal to any specific political party. They understand that elections

do produce changes in government. Consequently, like other interest groups, these dons and community leaders make financial contributions (from the funds received from the incumbent government) to both the incumbent party as well as the opposition during election campaigns. Should the opposition win, they are on record as having contributed to their campaign and, in turn, expect to be rewarded with the contracts to dispense the funding for the public works projects in their communities. The bigger the contract they receive, the more funds to be dispersed, and the larger the territory over which such disbursements may be made. Moreover, not only does the don, or community leader, decide on who is employed and in what capacity, he also sanctions who can and will be allowed to engage in drug trafficking in the community.

Unsurprisingly, these machinations are watched by younger lieutenants and others in the community who aspire to become the "don" or "community leader." Consequently, fierce competition exists in these communities between those who aspire towards leadership as well as between those who are leaders, and who must maintain their positions. Thus, much of the intra-community violence—the gang violence—is largely the result of leaders fending off challenges from rivals who seek to obtain larger areas of turf and, by extension, larger amounts of government funding. Leadership, therefore, often has to be preserved through brutality.

What the incumbents in government expect in return is that the community leaders will maintain public order by managing and mitigating the level of crime in their communities, such that it does not become widespread and overwhelm the entire society, and supervise various public works projects that demonstrate government providing resources and benefits to the community. Since, these are relatively ungovernable spaces, not many government facilities and services are available in these areas. Consequently, whatever level of services is available is usually provided by members of that community; outsiders will not risk working in these areas and may not be welcome. Finally those in power expect the leaders to get the community to vote for the incumbents at election time.

This is the symbiosis of the relationship between gangs and the political structure, which includes corrupt police officers, who are in league with these gang leaders, as well as corrupt politicians and other civil servants, who receive kickbacks to look the other way and/or claim ignorance of any collusion between themselves, their offices and gang-related activity. Nonetheless, there is significant suspicion on the part of the general public that corruption is endemic across the region, and that powerful criminals, including politically-connected criminals, manage to avoid and/or evade the law (see table 3-2).

Table 3-2 Perceptions of corruption in the Caribbean (2010)[4]

Country	Judges are corrupt	Justice system is corrupt	Powerful criminals go free	Politically connected criminals go free
Antigua & Barbuda	32.3	44.3	37.8	44.8
Barbados	24.5	33.8	40.1	41.9
Guyana	39.0	47.7	46.9	51.8
Jamaica	36.3	57.3	52.7	57.8
Saint Lucia	33.7	48.1	47.7	51.3
Suriname	35.6	45.8	38.9	47.0
Trinidad & Tobago	58.7	69.8	61.6	70.2
Caribbean-7	32.7	49.6	47.0	52.5

Source: Zimmermann, Lawes Svenson (2012)

Jamaica

Jamaica's approximately 286 known gangs are responsible for 64 per cent of all murders committed in the country. Jamaica retains the distinction of being a country whose two main political parties have long been associated with organized gang activity. The two main gangs are the "Clansman Gang," which is affiliated with the People's National Party (PNP), and the "One Order Gang," which is affiliated with the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). Following the country's independence in 1962, the PNP and JLP each became aligned with industrial trade unions and competed to represent the newly mobilized workforce. In the process, the desire for political patronage resulted in violence. This became a norm in unionism and politics alike. The importance of party and patronage initially manifested itself in 1966 when Edward Seaga embarked upon a "slum clearance project" in the West Kingston shantytown called "Back O'Wall," now known as Tivoli Gardens. This housing development, along with other inner city communities in Mountain View, August Town, Arnette Gardens (Concrete Jungle), Olympic Gardens, Wareika Hills, and Rema were aligned with one or the other political party. This signalled the advent of the "garrison community" phenomenon and the relationship between party loyalty, political tribalism, and the spoils of party patronage. The "garrison community" is an integral part of this structural relationship and refers to,

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[4] Figures represent the per centage of persons who agreed or strongly agreed that there is corruption in the Caribbean.

"...a political stronghold, a veritable fortress completely controlled by a party. At one level a garrison community can be described as one in which anyone who seeks to oppose, raise opposition to or organize against the dominant party would definitely be in danger of suffering serious damage to their possessions or person thus making continued residence in the area extremely difficult if not impossible. Any significant social, political, economic or cultural development within the garrison can only take place with the tacit approval of the leadership (whether local or national) of the dominant party." (Figueroa and Sives 2003, 65)

In other words, the garrison phenomenon is central to the practice of electoral manipulation in Jamaica in that their political significance extends beyond their borders to the wider political system.

The political tribalism that emerged from this garrison phenomenon manifested itself in the form of gangs aligned with both political parties. Within and between such communities, the quest for spoils was pursued by means of organized armed violence, bloodshed and murder. During non-election years, these gangs, armed with a few high-powered weapons, were engaged mainly in marijuana trafficking. It was also during this period—in 1967 and lasting for one month—that the first state of emergency occasioned by gang violence was imposed. .

By the 1970s, however, the fight for power based on political tribalism began to intensify. This was due in part to rising unemployment and an increase in the cost of living. It was during this period that the phenomenon of the "dons" or "donmanship" (gang leaders) emerged, and stiff competition for leadership became the primary contributing factor to the nature and level of violence and political killings. Some of these "dons" who were aided and abetted by friends in the constabulary, or by police on their payroll, became wealthy, influential and brazenly murderous while raking in millions of dollars (Williams, 13 November 2005).

During the 1970s, however, Prime Minister Michael Manley established a Peace Advisory Council, led by the Reverend James Bennett of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, to work with the Central Peace Council (comprising political and gang leaders) towards a lasting peace. While this intervention failed to secure a permanent peace among these gang leaders, politicians still maintained a relatively high level of control over area dons.

To underscore this point, when the PNP won the 1972 general election, open gun battles along the boundaries of rival neighbourhoods resulted in the establishment of a Gun Court to try persons accused of gun-related crimes. The government of Michael Manley imposed a second state of emergency, which lasted a full year. Some 593 persons, including dons

and politicians, were incarcerated. While in prison, a number of these gunmen began to discuss among themselves the reasons why they were fighting one another. Such conversations led to a growing sense of independence from the political parties among gangs and gang members and, as a result, the institution of "donmanship" became a legitimate informal social structure. By 1980, revolvers became passé; high-powered weapons became the norm. It was also during the 1980s that cocaine trafficking through Jamaica and the Caribbean helped change the criminal landscape. First, the 1980 general election became the most violent one resulting in 889 homicides—339 more than during the previous election in 1976. A total of 28 police officers were killed. By 1984, crack cocaine began to replace regular cocaine, and because of its lower cost, it became easier to market.

The period 1981-1987 witnessed a change in the focus of crime. Politically motivated murders declined while income-generating ones increased. During this period, it was realized that gang members were receiving financial support from their associate members in the US and Britain, and that increasing numbers of guns were being imported into the country. The gangs had now become fully independent of the political parties. Reports indicate that by the end of the 1980s, the following gangs—Shower Posse, Spangler Posse, Dog Posse, Tel Aviv Posse, Waterhouse Posse, Banton Posse, and Dunkirk Posse—had over 5,000 members. With the advent of the 1990s, M16, Tech9 automatic pistols, and .45 calibre automatic guns designed to carry more bullets and kill at longer ranges, became the most prevalent guns among the gangs. M16 rifles are military weapons, sold only to governments allied to the US, and are not for sale to the public. The fact that such weapons ended up in the hands of these gangs raises questions as to their source.

Among the PNP-linked dons were George "Feathermop" Spence, who, during the 1970s, accompanied then Prime Minister Michael Manley on a trip to Cuba. Others included Anthony "General Starkie" Tingle and Aston "Buckie Marshall" Thompson. Immediate past Prime Minister P.J. Patterson shook the hand of Donald "Zeeks" Phipps, the Matthews Lane "don," thanking him for keeping the roads in his area clear during a demonstration against the government. Zeeks, incidentally, paid for the construction of a school in his community, which is named after him. The JLP-linked dons included Claudius "Jack Parlance" Massop, "Jim Brown" Coke (and his son, "Dudus" Coke) and Carl "Biah" Mitchell (Williams 2005a).

The political patronage system created the foundation upon which "uncivil" society would emerge in Jamaica. To underscore this point, the *Jamaica Observer* published a story on Prime Minister Edward Seaga, who,

on September 27, 1994, issued a news release regarding the previous weekend's shootings in Tivoli Gardens that left five people dead and twelve wounded. The statement read in part:

> "I have given to the Commissioner of Police, a list of thirteen men in Tivoli Gardens and Denham Town who are the source of the violence in West Kingston. I have advised the commissioner where they can be found. So far, six of these thirteen men have been taken into custody by the police where (sic) they are being held pending charges. I will continue to advise the police where to find the rest."

The ringleader, identified as Michael Coke, alias "Dudus," son of the late Lloyd Coke, alias "Jim Brown," managed to remain at large (White 2005). At the time of that statement, Seaga had been that community's parliamentary representative for 32 years, and remained in that role until April 14, 2005, when Bruce Golding, who succeeded him as the new JLP leader, took over as the parliamentary representative. To his many critics as well as observers, Seaga's claim of personal knowledge of these individuals suggests the nature of the relationship between politics, patronage, and gang-activity in Jamaica.

Ironically, it was "Dudus" Coke who was partly instrumental in bringing down the Golding JLP government in 2011. Coke, who had grown up as a privileged child, being educated alongside children from middle class families, took over the drug trafficking gang called the Shower Posse following the mysterious death of his father while incarcerated. In 2009, the US government requested Coke's extradition, however, the government of Prime Minister Bruce Golding initially resisted before eventually relenting in May 2010, issuing a warrant for Coke's arrest. This decision prompted a bloody battle between Coke's supporters and the police and army in which more than 70 people were killed. Coke escaped but was arrested on 22 June and handed over to the US two days later (McGreal 2011).

Coke's close relationship with Prime Minister Golding, who was also the representative for Tivoli Gardens, led to suspicions that the government had intervened on "Dudus'" behalf to prevent his extradition to the US, where he was charged as leader of the Shower Posse, a drug gang allegedly responsible for some 1,400 murders. While Golding denied any claims of government interference, it turned out later that his party had hired a Washington law firm to lobby on "Dudus'" behalf.

Other striking examples of this type of relationship include Donovan "Bulbie" Bennett, one of Jamaica's most wanted men for over a decade, who was head of the Clansman gang. It is alleged that, because he was a supporter of the ruling PNP, he was able to elude capture until his killing

by the police on October 30, 2005. Joel Andem, leader of the Giddeon Warriors Gang (and "don" of August Town community) was the alleged right-hand man of Colin Campbell of the PNP. What the preceding demonstrates, therefore, is that the marginalized communities are just as important to the political process as are the more mainstream and affluent communities and, therefore, need representation in a democratic polity. Representation involves a tacit relationship that structures gang leaders, politicians, political parties, political patronage, relative autonomy (and often protection), and corruption in a relationship that links civil and political society with "un-civil" society.

Trinidad and Tobago

Despite its enormous wealth derived largely from the oil and gas sector, huge pockets of poverty exist in many parts of Trinidad and Tobago, but especially along the East-West corridor, which has witnessed the vast majority of crimes, especially homicides. In an attempt to address this income/development disparity and low levels of employment in these communities, various governments have instituted a number of public works programs, the most well-known of which are the Unemployment Relief Program (URP), Women's Programs (URP) and Community-Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Program (CEPEP) (www.ttconnect. gov). The government's webpage lists 16 URP offices: three in Port of Spain; one each in San Juan/Laventille, Tunapuna, Arima, Sangre Grande, Couva, San Fernando, Penal, Point Fortin, Princes Town, Fyzabad, Rio Claro, Chaguanas, and Tobago. There are URP Women's Program offices in Maraval, San Fernando, and Tunapuna. These offices and programs are administered in a number of economically depressed areas around the country, many of which are known for gang-based, illicit narcotics activity, homicide, and other acts of criminality.

Most reports, official and unofficial, attribute the substantial and increasing number of homicides to gang-related activity. In 2006, Trinidad and Tobago recorded 371 homicides of which 26.4 per cent were gang-related; by 2009, the reported number was 506, of which 34.8 per cent were gang-related (see table 3-3). And most studies link violent crime in the Caribbean, and gang-related crime, specifically, to the illicit narcotics trade. Another key element in the mix is weapons trafficking. Former National Security Minister, Martin Joseph, was quoted in the media as saying that almost 70 per cent of murders committed in the first four months of 2009 were gang-related, and also that approximately 190 criminal gangs were operating in the country (Ramjeet 2009). Further, reports indicate

that significant numbers of "unemployable youth" are leaving school and entering gangs, which are increasing in membership.

Table 3-3: Total Murders and Gang Related Murders in Trinidad and Tobago (2001-2010)

Year	Total murders	Gang Related	% Gang Related
2001	151	3	2
2002	171	17	10
2003	229	42	18
2004	261	32	12
2005	386	81	21
2006	371	98	26
2007	391	205	52
2008	547	278	51
2009	506	176	35
2010	472	75	16
Total	**3485**	**1007**	**29**

Source: Ministry of National Security.

Against this background, and with some variation, therefore, the depressed communities of Morvant, Laventille, Patna Village, Bagatelle, and Factory Road in Trinidad and Tobago are home to numerous criminal gangs, whose "community leaders" deliver blocks of votes in return for control of public works projects and other government funding. Initially organized around various criminal activities, the advent of cocaine (especially crack cocaine) in the 1980s, largely as a result of the country's proximity to Venezuela, was related to an upsurge in violence as these groups vied for turf. A number of these gang leaders were once members of the Jamaat al-Muslimeen, the local Islamic group responsible for the 1990 attempted coup d'etat in Trinidad and Tobago. Prior to the attempted coup, the Jamaat, under the leadership of the Imam Yasin Abu Bakr, was involved in a range of community services in the areas of education, health care, buyers' cooperatives, skills development, and spiritual development. During testimony before the Commission of Inquiry into the 1990 coup, community activist Lennox Smith testified that during the 1980s, the Jamaat al-Muslimeen infiltrated Laventille and persuaded unemployed young men to join their organization. Among them were Laventille residents and Muslim leaders Bilal Abdullah, Jamaal Shabaaz and Salim Muwakil (Baboolal 2011). Other Muslim leaders were Mark Guerra, a criminal deportee from the US, who became known as the "don of Laventille,"

and Sean Francis, who lived opulently in Laventille. Both men were known to be heavily involved in the URP and were both eventually gunned down. Guerra was a highly paid URP supervisor, earning approximately $150,000 per month, and who reputedly owned a number of properties. He reportedly campaigned in marginal seats for former Prime Minister, Patrick Manning, and appeared in photographs which showed him accompanying the former Prime Minister on the 2002 election campaign (Baboolal 2011; *Trinidad Guardian*, April 23, 2005).

To reiterate the argument, the pattern of gang-related violence is structurally related to established political process in terms of delivering constituency votes at election time in return for access to government funding via programs like the URP and CEPEP. In this context, therefore, the daylight gunfight between feuding gangs in downtown Port of Spain on April 21, 2005 is a perfect example. The police seemed certain that the shootings were linked to the allocation of URP jobs in Laventille and East Port of Spain, as the killings occurred while the feuding gang members were on their way to the Treasury to cash their URP pay cheques. Not only did the police know whom to arrest but they also traced this event to the 2003 killing of former URP foreman, Mark Guerra. Further, they correctly predicted the fallout; further carnage between the rival gangs (*Trinidad Guardian*, April 23, 2005).

In an effort to manage this violence, the government of Prime Minister Manning agreed to a meeting, organized by the Laventille Executive Council, with gang leaders at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Port of Spain on September 16, 2006. These gang leaders agreed to a peace pact entitled "It Must Work," which was aimed at reducing the level of gang warfare along the East-West corridor. Among the "community leaders" who met with the Prime Minister were both Mark Guerra and Sean Francis (Baboolal 2011). Following this agreement, the Prime Minister effectively "legitimized" these gang leaders as community leaders, who would undertake the responsibility of managing (meaning reducing) the level of crime and violence in their communities.[5] The incentive offered by the Prime Minister was the management of public works projects such as CEPEP and URP, with the expectation that the jobs and skills development provided by these programs would present the young men of these communities with alternatives to crime (*Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, August 17, 2008). Within less than two years of that meeting, 16 gang members, several of whom had met the Prime Minister, had been killed; they included Kerwin

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[5] Some critics have argued that the goal of making these individuals publicly known figures is to identify them for replacement.

"Fresh" Phillips of the notorious G-Unit gang. It is believed that subsequent internal wrangling for control of the G-Unit gang led to a series of killings, including that of Mervyn "Cudjoe" Allamby of San Juan, Sean Sandy of St. Barb's, and Ricardo "Boboy" Ali of Bagatelle, Diego Martin.[6] The perpetrators seemed intent on targeting gang leaders without concern about any retaliation (Seuraj 2008).

It was precisely these very programs, which provide tens of millions of dollars in government funding that explain much of the conflict in these depressed communities as leaders compete with each other over the right to become the dispensers of such funding. In 2005, Opposition Senator Jennifer Jones-Kernahan is reported to have stated during a meeting of parliament that:

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[6] On June 10, 2007, community leader Ricardo Boboy Ali was shot dead at Bagatelle in Diego Martin. Forty year-old Mervyn "Cudjoe" Allamby, one of several community leaders who had met with Prime Minister Patrick Manning at the Ambassador Hotel in 2002 to discuss the first peace treaty, was shot dead on July 21, 2008 in Aranguez, San Juan, as he was consoling the family of a couple who had been gunned down earlier. On September 16, 2007, 34-year-old Kerwin "Fresh" Phillip, G-Unit gang leader of Charford Court, Port-of-Spain, was shot 20 times on Oxford Street, Port-of-Spain. Twenty-year old Verne Pierre of Mt. D'Or was shot dead in Arouca on October 15, 2007. Sean Sandy, son of Selwyn Sandy, chairman of Laventille Executive Council, as well as his common-law wife, Avion Villafana were killed at their Laventille home in St Barb's on November 28, 2006. Just hours earlier, an attempt was also made on the life of the elder Sandy at his Cumuto home (Sorias 2008).

The following gang members were slain after the peace treaty. October 14, 2006: 22-year-old Quasi Phillip of St Paul Street was shot dead on Henry Street, Port-of-Spain; October 30, 2007; 22-year-old Stephen Alexander of East Dry River was shot in Laventille; October 5, 2007: Kwamie "Butters" Julian was shot at Harp Place, Belmont; September 19, 2007: 20-year-old Allan "Mento" Wills of East Dry River was shot dead in the same area; August 30, 2007: Kendell Francis of El Socorro, San Juan was shot in Laventille; August 23, 2007: 20-year-old Akeem "50 Cent" Joseph of Nelson Street, Port-of-Spain was shot dead at his home; January 8, 2008: 23-year-old Keron "Blood" Burnett of Cocorite was shot near his home; February 19, 2008: Rashawn "Monster" Williams was shot outside his Maloney home; March 3, 2008: 16-year-old Nigel Baptiste of Laventille, a member of the Rose Hill Gang, was shot in East Dry River; June 22, 2008: Herbert "Screw Up" John, former G-Unit member was shot dead at Upper Wharton Street in Laventille while on a URP project; and on June 29, 2008, Beresford Ash, 42, of Morvant was shot eight times (Sorias 2008).

> "…these gang leaders are provided with funds, through URP, to control the young men, and pay them to go out and commit horrible crimes such as extortion, kidnapping, murder, and revenge." (Baldeosingh 2011)

Criminologist Ramesh Deosaran, head of the Police Service Commission, was quoted as saying:

> "URP, like all its labour surplus predecessors, contains certain criminogenic elements in both structure and process…in structure, there is competition and rivalry embraced in a patronizing political environment facilitating abuse in labour selection. In terms of process, the major element is questionable accounting procedures and questionable work output…" (Baldeosingh 2011)

This intense competition and rivalry, therefore, underscores the nature of this structural relationship between the political process and gang activity, where the "community leaders" exhibit dual personalities. On the one hand, they are government contractors engaged in providing employment for the low skilled and unemployed; and on the other hand, they are gang leaders, managing criminal enterprises engaged in drug trafficking, murder and other criminal activities. Given the vast amounts of money at stake in these government programs—$322 million in 2005 and $300 million in 2008, and with the budgeted $320 million for 2012 already depleted within the first six months—it comes as no surprise that the death toll of gang leaders tells the compelling tale of the consequence of this relationship (Baldeosingh 2011; Singh 2012). Ironically, the provision of funding for employment purposes has increased rather than decreased crime and violence.

The realization that such vast sums of money were being made available to gang leaders to manage these projects intensified the level of violence as new individuals vied for gang leadership and the mantle of "community leader." Part of this mobilization-by-violence stemmed from the increasing realization that vast amounts of money were being made by many well-respected members of society, who had their own transhipment and distribution networks. Some looked with suspicion at the pleasure boat, Sea Prowler, owned by the family of Minister of Tourism Howard Chin Lee, which operates as a ferry for pleasure seekers traveling between Trinidad and Venezuela. Upon its return from Venezuela on the evening of January 19, 2005, a Dutch national was arrested for transporting 5.4 kilograms of refined heroin (Heeralal 2005). In a separate search of the vessel, a Venezuelan national was arrested for transporting some 4.7 kilos of pure cocaine. The street value of the drug seizures was $12 million (Paul 2005).

On May 8, 2005, the drugs were burnt by the Customs and Excise Marine Interdiction Unit (CEMIU). Surprisingly, the newspapers reported that the Venezuelan national was serving a 5-year sentence; however, no mention has been made of the case against the Dutch national. With the docket in the Trinidad and Tobago courts backlogged, two issues have arisen in citizens' minds: 1) Why was the Venezuelan national's case fast-tracked? 2) Why did he receive such a short sentence for such a large quantity of drugs? 3) What happened to the case against the Dutch national? And 4) if there is still a docket for the Dutch national, why was the evidence burned? These questions arose in light of the fact that, not only was Mr Lee a former Minister of National Security, but one of his predecessors, Selwyn Richardson, was reputedly murdered because of his involvement in the illicit drug trade. There are many who believe that prominent members of the community represent a local cartel that runs the country's illicit drug activity.

Another set of events that served to strengthen the allegation of a local drug cartel was the abduction and murder of prominent businessman, Dr. Edward Koury, whose decapitated body was found in an abandoned estate in Central Trinidad (*Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, September, 2005). This event highlighted what appeared to be a split within that cartel. Reports suggested that two major drug busts that occurred within days of each other in August 2005—one amounting to about $700 million and the other valued at approximately $1,200 million—reflected a tit-for-tat strategy as each faction vied for control of this lucrative trade, and sought to use their connections with the political structure to secure control. Koury's murder was followed by a $100 million fire ostensibly caused by a spark from a welding project that destroyed the A.S. Bryden warehouse in El Socorro (Connelly 2005; Wong 2005). Some saw a connection between this fire and the $700 million drug intercept at a luxury home on Monos Island because the home was said to be owned by one of the members of the Board of A.S. Bryden. The larger point, however, is that while many point to the local drug trade as an explanation for much of the gang-related violence, others contend that both the local market and the transhipment component of the trade cannot be the work of local street thugs, given the huge amounts of money and the system-wide network required for undertaking operations of this scope and scale. However, the "community leaders" do play a role in the structure of drug trafficking operations in that they use some of the monies obtained via their roles as directors of URP and CPEP projects to buy into the drug trade, and use their gang members as the local traffickers' hence, the structural relationship between gangs, drugs, and the political process that this analysis contends.

Political access is key, and these "community leaders" are well aware of this fact. Consequently, they use the monies available to them through the public works projects to try to "buy into" these larger operations. Such incursions are violently resisted, usually by rival gangs working for their wealthier and more politically connected rivals. This tactic by gang leaders is part of a broader strategy to use some of their public funding to make campaign contributions to the major political parties, thereby hedging their bets regarding electoral outcomes. Regardless of which party/coalition wins, the expectation is continued access to government contracts as well as relative autonomy to manage the criminal activities in their respective communities.

The consequences of this structural relationship between politics and gangs continue to manifest themselves in increasing rates of crime such that Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica seem to be competing for the undesired title of "murder capital of the Caribbean" and "murder capital of the world" as a number of sensational media headlines state. To address this state of affairs, the government instituted a state of emergency in 2011, passed anti-crime legislation, and launched a dragnet across many communities, including Laventille, Calvary Hill, and Nelson Street. During the first two months of this exercise, 4,000 street-level criminals involved in drug trafficking and murder were arrested (Rhodes 2011). However, no major drug kingpin was arrested.

The focus on drug-related crime is understandable. Trinidad and Tobago, situated approximately seven miles from Venezuela at their nearest points, has long been known to be a major transhipment point for illegal narcotics from South America en route to the US and Europe. The island's topography, consisting of numerous coves and inlets, as well as islands, makes it ideal for smugglers. Government estimates put the value of contraband smuggled into the country annually for transhipment in the several hundreds of millions of dollars. Illegal drugs are transhipped from Trinidad to Europe and the US in speedboats, yachts, and in containerized cargo. What is left is trafficked locally. The smugglers often bring in guns to protect their shipments, but once the drugs leave, the guns are sold on the streets.

Conclusion

The reduction of the state's role in the economy ushered in by this recent wave of globalization has tended to fragment social groups that long relied on the public sector for employment, income, and goods and services. Among the consequences of this fragmentation are increases in

crime, riots, demonstrations, strikes, human rights violations, and various manifestations of political instability (Griffin 1997). Filling the space in the underserved communities caused by the "withdrawal" of the state are a number of "dark (covert) networks"—"un-civil" society groups of organized gang activity loosely and not-so-loosely affiliated with the dominant political parties. These "covert networks" are criminal gangs, whose interests centre most often on destruction or on enriching themselves at the expense of social and political stability. "Un-civil" society groups are the result of a corruption of the political system whereby overt political entities seek short-term political gain by circumventing the overt political route to power. Having been created, these entities are proving that it is almost impossible to contain them, which, in turn, poses a threat to the stability of the political system that created them.

These "un-civil" society groups serve as a source of new recruits for organized crime groups; are used by organized crime groups to commit different crimes; provide support to organized crime groups in organizational development; gather useful information for organized crime groups; can be used by organized crime groups as security agents; are essential elements for trafficking drugs and committing related crimes within the structure of organized crime groups; provide protection in their territories for activities executed by the organized criminal structure; generate a political instability useful to organized crime groups; terrify the population, and, by threatening communities, they serve the purposes of organized crime groups. As Dowdney (2006) put it:

> "In addition to maintaining 'order' and providing 'justice' through fear and repression within the communities in which they operate, groups in this category often support community social projects in order to maintain community support." (p. 41)

Given that the countries in the region are highly dependent on tourism, and given that crime and violence threaten to divert tourism flows and revenues and undermine democracy and stability, the time has come for these countries to increase their levels of cooperation and coordination in managing the effects of crime and violence. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar has divided the URP program among several other ministries with the hope of weeding out corruption. Part of this corruption reflects a pattern whereby URP contracts are secured and the number of persons required to complete particular jobs is grossly (fraudulently) increased and, in the process, "ghost gangs" are created (Chan Tack 2012). However, all funds will be disbursed through her own office. As reporter Kevin Baldeosingh ruefully puts it, "it is the competi-

tion for this $400 plus million which may have started the gang wars that are at the core of T&T's daily murders." Perhaps the relationship between gangs, violence and patronage politics has planted the deep structural roots that have spawned the "un-civil" societies across the Caribbean. Therefore, the challenge of replacing the "dons" and "community leaders" in communities that have become politically, socially, economically, and strategically tied to them will not be easy to overcome. No legitimate employment opportunities can replace the lucrative, illegitimate, gang-based activities that the "dons," "community leaders," and their leading assistants now enjoy.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PARADISE LOST:
GANGS AND GANG VIOLENCE
IN ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

JANICE JOSEPH

Abstract

Gangs and gang violence have now become global problems. Once limited to developed countries, such as the United States, gangs can be found in many Caribbean countries. The presence of gangs in these countries has resulted in high rates of violence. This chapter examines the nature and extent of gang and gang violence in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis and the government's attempt to address these problems. Recommendations are also included in the chapter.

Introduction

Gangs and gang violence in the English-speaking Caribbean have become a major problem. Although the larger countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana were traditionally viewed as the most affected by gangs and gang violence, the smaller countries are now plagued with these problems. This chapter examines gangs and gang violence in St. Kitts and Nevis and assesses attempts by the government to combat gangs. Recommendations are included.

Description of St. Kitts and Nevis

The islands of St. Kitts and Nevis are located in the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean, approximately 225 nautical miles southeast of Puerto-Rico. The two islands have a surface area of 269 sq. km, (1½ times the size of

Washington D.C.). The twin-island state lies in close geographical proximity to Antigua, St. Maarten, Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Bartholomew, Anguilla, and Montserrat. St. Kitts and Nevis are in the transit zone between South America, Europe, and North America (U.S. Government of State 2007).

Fig. 4-1 Map of St. Kitts and Nevis

The island of St. Kitts was discovered in 1493 by Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the region. He named the island St. Christopher after his patron saint. The English and French colonized St. Christopher (whose English name was shortened to St. Kitts) from 1628 to 1713. During the 17th century, constant warfare between the French and English

settlers occurred until finally St. Kitts was ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

Christopher Columbus also discovered Nevis on his second voyage. The island was called *Oualie* ("Land of Beautiful Waters") by the Caribs, the indigenous people because it resembled a snow-capped mountain (in Spanish, "nuestra señora de las nieves" or our lady of the snows). Nevis was settled by English settlers in 1628 but the French seized Nevis in 1782. However, in 1783 after the Treaty of Paris was signed, Britain was awarded both islands. Nevis is of historical significance to Americans because it was the birthplace and early childhood home of Alexander Hamilton, the first United States Secretary of the Treasury (U.S. Government of State 2007).

The two islands, along with Anguilla, once formed a British colony. They also became part of the West Indies Federation from 1958-1962. After two rebellions in 1967 and 1969, Anguilla seceded from St. Kitts and Nevis and became a separate British dependency. St. Kitts and Nevis attained full independence on September 19, 1983. Regionally, it is a member of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the British Commonwealth, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU). The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) is headquartered in St. Kitts. Internationally it is a member of the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization of American States (U.S. Government of State 2007).

The last census was taken in 2001 when a total of 46,325 people were counted in the Federation. Of this number, 35,217 people resided on St. Kitts while 11,108 people resided on Nevis. A July 2011 estimate put the total population at 50,314 with a median age of 32 years (male, 32.1 years and female, 32 years). The majority of residents were primarily of African descent. The life expectation of the total population was 74.6 years. There were seven publicly administered high/secondary level schools in the Federation of St Kitts-Nevis, and several private secondary schools. Adult literacy was estimated at 97.8 per cent (SKN Vibes 2011).

The Federation has a bicameral legislature and an 11-member elected Senate, which consists of 8 elected seats in St. Kitts and 3 in Nevis. The Prime Minister is the Head of Government of St. Kitts and Nevis and is the leader of the majority party. The Prime Minister assumes general control of all aspects of the nation's business while the cabinet conducts the affairs of state. He is appointed by the Governor-General. Because the Constitution gives Nevis considerable autonomy, it has an island assembly, a premier, and a deputy governor-general. The Federation maintains

diplomatic relations with the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and Russia, as well as with many Latin American countries and neighbouring Eastern Caribbean states (U.S. Government of State 2007).

Extent of Crime in St. Kitts and Nevis

Police crime statistics showed that during the first three quarters of 2011 (January-September), there were a total of 1350 criminal offences compared to 1728 for the same period in 2010, an overall decrease of 21 percent. Police crime statistics also showed an increase of 55 percent in murders over the first three quarters of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010; with 28 murders compared to 18 murders, respectively. Over the first three quarters of 2011, the Federation recorded 23 woundings by gun compared to 12 over the same period the previous year, an increase of almost 92 percent. Drug-related crimes were also on the increase with 121 cases of possession of a controlled drug (compared to 118 in 2010). Possession with intent to supply increased from 25 to 37 cases and cultivation of controlled drugs increased from 11 to 20 cases in the first three quarters of 2010 and 2011 respectively (Hewlett 2012).

In 2010, police reported that a total of 1,877 crimes were committed in St. Kitts and Nevis. Figure 4-2 indicates that the number of crimes fluctuated between 2000 and 2010 (The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force 2000-2010).

Figure 4-3 shows that in 2010, there were 224 crimes against the person, 64 against morality, 1701 against property, and 254 against lawful authority. It also indicates that the most common category of crime was property crimes while crimes against morality were the least common. It also indicates that while the other crimes remained steady between 2000 and 2010, property crimes fluctuated.
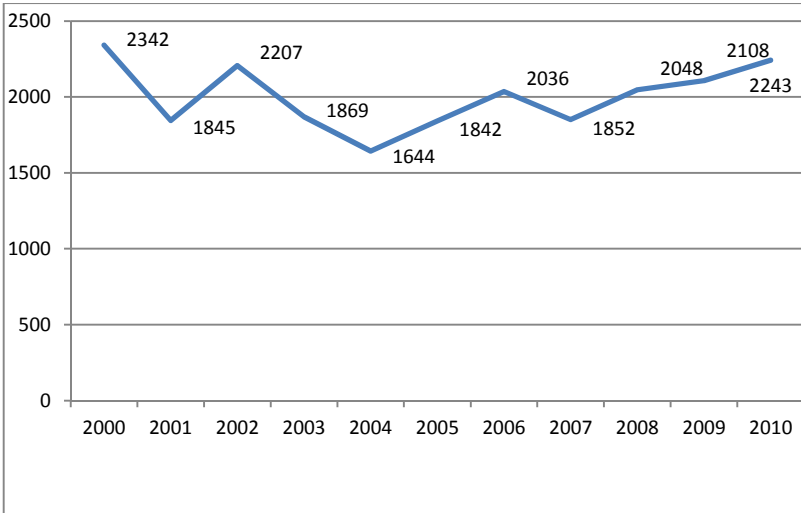
Source: The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force

Fig. 4-2 Number of crimes in St. Kitts and Nevis, 2000-2010
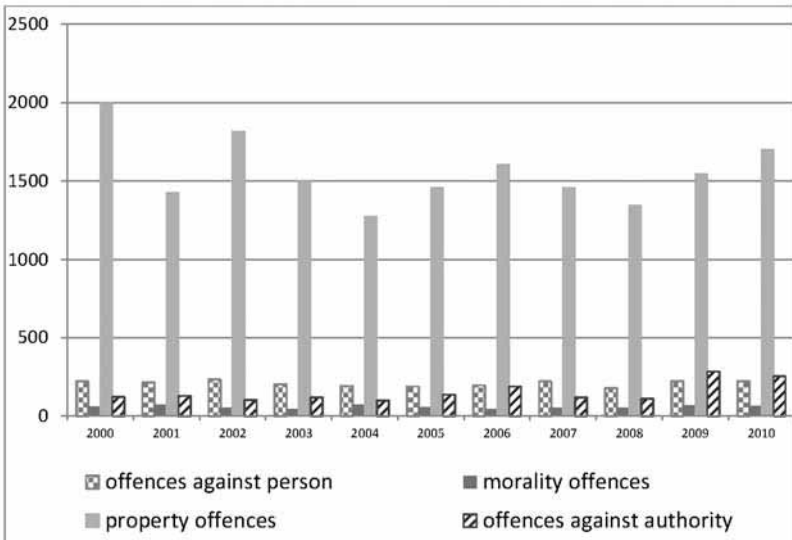
Source: The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force

Fig. 4-3 Major crime categories

Specific Offences

Violent Crimes

Violent crimes are of serious concern in many Caribbean countries, including St. Kitts and Nevis. Table 4-1 indicates the quantum of crimes as well as the rates of murder, shooting, sexual offences, rape and robbery for the period 2000 to 2010 for St. Kitts and Nevis.

Table 4-1: Violent Crimes in St. Kitts and Nevis 2000-2010

	Murder	Murder Rates	Shootings	Shooting Rates	Sexual offences	Sexual Offences Rates	Rape	Rape Rates	Robbery	Robbery Rates
2000	6	13.0	14	30.2	33	71	14	30.2	69	149
2001	6	13.0	3	6.5	39	84	17	36.7	43	93
2002	5	10.8	4	8.6	31	67	12	25.9	63	136
2003	10	21.6	6	13.0	24	52	6	13.0	54	117
2004	11	23.7	18	38.9	35	76	9	19.4	52	112
2005	8	17.3	11	23.7	30	65	11	23.7	90	194
2006	17	36.7	7	15.1	21	45	10	21.6	75	162
2007	16	34.5	12	25.9	28	60	7	15.1	119	257
2008	23	49.6	39	84.2	35	76	13	28.1	102	220
2009	27	58.3	36	77.7	36	78	14	30.2	108	233
2010	20	43.2	33	71.2	29	63	14	30.2	84	181
Average	**14**	**29.2**	**17**	**35.9**	**31**	**67**	**12**	**24.9**	**78**	**169**

Source: The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force

Even though the number of murders for each year, as shown in Table 4-1, is relatively small, the rate of murder based on population size may be relatively high in comparison to many developed countries. In 2000, for example, St. Kitts and Nevis had a murder rate of 13 per 100,000 inhabitants. In 2009 the Federation recorded its highest murder rate of 58.3 per 100,000. This was one of the highest rates of murder in the world in 2009. In 2010 it dropped to 43.2 per 100,000 (see Figure 4-4). This rate was 9 times higher than that of the United States which had a rate of 4.8 per 100,000 in 2010 (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2011). With the exception of rape and sexual offences, all other crimes listed in Table 4-1 recorded increases over the period 2000 to 2010.
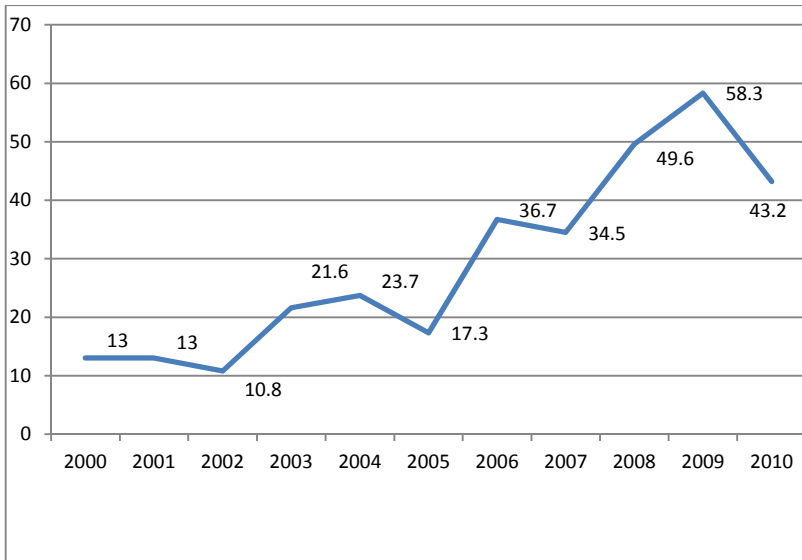
Source: Organization of American States (2011)

Fig. 4-4 Murder rate for St. Kitts and Nevis, 2000-2010

Illegal Drugs

Like many countries in the Caribbean, St. Kitts and Nevis have become a transhipment site for cocaine from South America to the US. According to the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for 2011, the government of St. Kitts and Nevis reported that drug imports were down but that local production of cannabis had increased. In 2010, the government reported that it eradicated 29.14 acres and 81,595 marijuana plants. In addition, the government illegal drug seizures for 2010 consisted of 41 kg of cured cannabis, 5 grams of hashish, 602.1 grams of crack cocaine, and 9.2 kg of cannabis seeds. There were also 165 drug-related arrests, 79 prosecutions, and 74 convictions in 2010 (US Department of State 2011). Police data indicated that between 2003 and 2010 drug offences increased (see Figure 4-5). Commissioner of Police, Celvin G. Walwyn, reported that between 2011 and April 2012, the Police Force drug units and Defence Force soldiers removed more than $57 million worth of illegal drugs from the streets of St. Kitts-Nevis. The drug squads eradicated 139,003 marijuana plants which were valued at EC $41,700,900 (US $15,444,777). They also removed from the streets 710.4 kilos (1566

lbs) of cured marijuana valued at EC$11,745,000 (US $4,350,000) and 8.1 kilos of cocaine with a street value of EC $524,880 (US $194,400) (Hewlett 2012).
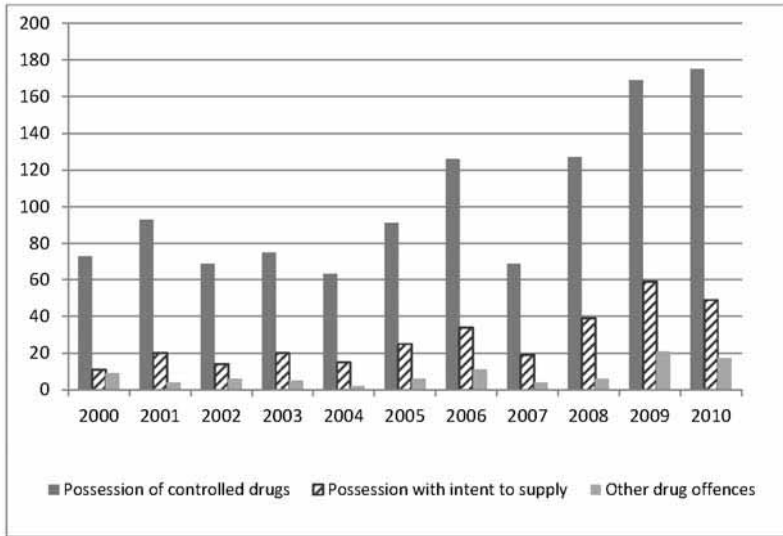
Source: The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force

Fig. 4-5 Illegal drugs offences in St. Kitts and Nevis, 2000-2010

Illegal Firearms

Like most of the Caribbean islands, illegal weapons enter St. Kitts-Nevis through lax and porous borders, by air and sea, and are then distributed to gangs and the wider community. In 2010, the total number of illegal firearms to be taken into police custody was 42 and, in 2009, the number was 33. In 2007 and 2006, twenty-one (21) and eight (8) firearms were recovered from the streets (The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force 2010). Figure 4-6 shows that the number of firearm and drug violations increased between 2000 and 2010.
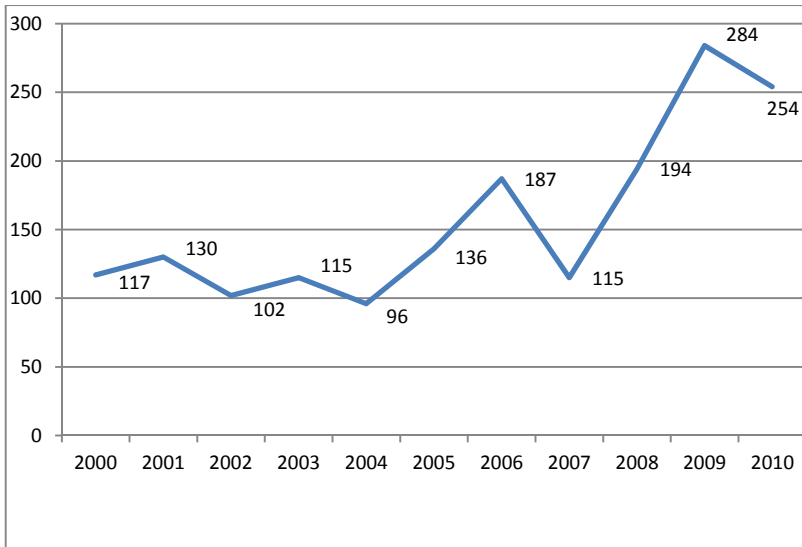
Source: The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force

Fig. 4-6 Firearm and drug violations, 2000-2010

Gangs

   Although there is very little empirical research on gangs in the Caribbean in general, government reports indicate that gangs and gang violence are major problems in many of the Caribbean islands. It appears that several youths in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis are embracing the "gangsta" lifestyle and culture which involve drugs, guns, and violence. The number of gangs in St. Kitts and Nevis is unknown. However, two gangs, the Blood and the Crips, are the most prominent on the islands (Hill 2012). There are no empirical data to indicate what the socio-demographic characteristics of street gang members are in St. Kitts and Nevis, but preliminary research from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago indicate that gang members are young and primarily male (see Katz, Choate, and Fox 2010; Meeks 2009). Police data from St. Kitts and Nevis do suggest that gang members are predominantly young males.

Gang Violence

According to Hill (2012), the nation of St. Kitts and Nevis has a high prevalence of gang violence. Between 2000 and 2004, only 12 percent of the murders in St. Kitts-Nevis were gang-related. However, between 2005 and 2009, this number increased to 41 percent (Hill 2011). According to police sources, over 200 people were murdered in St. Kitts-Nevis between 2005 and July 19, 2011; of these, over 71 percent were killed by illegal firearms. In addition, over 80 percent of shooting deaths were gang-related.[1]

The former Security Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, the Honourable Dwyer Astaphan, reported that the youth gangs in St. Kitts and Nevis were well organized. They sold drugs, were involved in prostitution, extortion and contract killing, and recruited children as young as eight years old. He further stated that the gangs and gang violence were major threats to national security in St. Kitts and Nevis and that the causal factors in gang formation and violence needed to be examined (Conway 2008).

Responses to Gangs and Gang Violence in St. Kitts and Nevis

Responses to gangs are often varied and multidimensional; they include (1) suppression, (2) community mobilization, (3) social intervention, and (4) prevention.

Suppression is the main approach that is used by many countries to respond to street gangs and gang violence. Suppression programmes are typically reactive in nature and focus on criminal law and law enforcement strategies which are designed to address existing gang problems and act as deterrents to future gang activities. Typical suppression programmes involve the creation and enforcement of laws, arrests, prosecution, and conviction.

Laws

On September 22, 2011, the government of St. Kitts and Nevis passed the Gang Prohibition and Prevention Act.[2] The purpose of this Act is to discourage membership in gangs, to suppress gang-related activities and provide law enforcement officers and the courts with more power in the areas of investigation and prosecution of gangs.

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[1] Freedom FM, "Gang related statistics are shocking for SK-N." Posted 19 July 2011; retrieved from http://www.freedomskn.com/?goto=articles.view&id =9BA13B9D-5056-A306-5D970D322A4D7C29.

[2] http://www.cuopm.com/pdf/First-Reading-Bills/2011_Gang_Prohibition_and _Prevention_Bill.pdf.

This law makes the following illegal: a) the formation of gangs, b) coercing or encouraging persons to become members of a gang, c) recruiting persons to become members of a gang, d) preventing a person from leaving membership of a gang, e) participating in a criminal activity in association with a gang, f) possession of bullet-proof vests or ammunition for the benefit of a gang, and g) harbouring or concealing a member of a gang. Section 3 (2) of the law states that any person who (a) forms or attempts to form a gang, (b) is or attempts to become a member of a gang, or (c) in order to gain an unlawful benefit, professes to be a member of a gang when in fact he or she is not, whether by telling anyone that he or she is a member of a gang or otherwise suggesting to anyone that he or she is a member of a gang, commits an offence and shall be, on conviction, liable to imprisonment for a term of ten years. A subsequent conviction will result in imprisonment for a term of twenty years. Section 6 states that a person who, whether by coercion or otherwise, prevents or attempts to prevent a person who is a member of a gang from leaving, that person commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twenty-five years. A person who is a leader of a gang commits an offence and shall be liable, on conviction, to imprisonment for a term of twenty-five years (Office of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis 2011).

In October 2011, the police of the Federation made its first arrests under this law. They arrested two men who were charged with the offences of being a member of a gang and preventing a person from leaving membership of a gang. Both were charged under Section 3 (2) and (6) of the law and were liable to receive between ten and twenty-five years in prison on conviction (Office of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis 2011).

On December 13, 2009 the government also passed the Firearms (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill as an addition to the St. Christopher/Nevis Firearms Act No. 23 of 1967. The 1967 Act was amended to include the offence of smuggling, since firearms are not manufactured in the Federation. The amendment also outlined that the maximum of twenty-years in prison could be applied if a person is convicted of the offence. This penalty, however, is in addition to any penalty imposed upon conviction of possession charges (McCall 2009).

Law Enforcement Strategies

The government of St. Kitts and Nevis established an anti-crime unit in the Office of the Prime Minister so that it could be provided with administrative and secretarial support; four members of the Cabinet are directly

involved in the management of this Unit in the fight against crime—the Deputy Prime Minister, the Attorney General, the Minister of Public Utilities and Public Works, and the Prime Minister. The involvement of these four ministers provides a team effort in the fight against crime and gang violence in the Federation. The Anti-Crime Unit works in conjunction with civilian agencies to address the problems of crime and gangs in St. Kitts and Nevis. The Prime Minister also created a Ministerial Task Force with him as the Chairman. This Task Force also liaises with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Crime and Violence.[3]

The government of St. Kitts and Nevis also established an Anti-Gang Unit which has been monitoring the gangs' activities, interests and meeting places, with the intent of containing their overall growth and development. This Unit has been working jointly with the security forces, the Drug Unit, and the St. Kitts-Nevis Defence Force to control drugs and gang activities (see The Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force, September 15, 2009; October 19, 2009). The Prime Minister also reported that the government has introduced a Gun Control Unit, closed-circuit TV and has established K-9 (or dog) units in both the Police and Defence Force (Government of St. Christopher and Nevis, 2010).

It also established a joint unit of the St Kitts-Nevis Defence Force and the Royal St Christopher and Nevis Police Force called the Delta Squad which is part of the Zero Tolerance Take Back the Streets Initiative. The zero tolerance approach to gangs and gang violence has given enforcement officers wide discretion in making arrests to control gangs and violence and to monitor the behaviour of repeat offenders. The zero tolerance approach in the Federation includes deployment of police patrols in known hot spots of high criminal activity, the maintenance of high police presence in vulnerable areas, and random stops and searches (*Caribbean Journal* 2011).

In 2011, the government of St. Kitts and Nevis hired Celwin Walwyn as the new Police Commissioner. He had worked for 25 years in law enforcement in the United States and held positions as Deputy First Class in the Orange County Sheriff's Office, Orlando, Florida, Deputy Sheriff, Harris County Sheriff's Department, Houston, Texas, Interim Chief-of-Police, Kendleton Police Department, Kendleton, Texas, and Surveillance Director at Equifax Services, Houston, Texas. He was involved in investigations with the FBI, ATF, DEA, and CBP (formerly INS). He owned and operated his own private investigation company, a security guard and pri-

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[3] "St. Kitts Gets Special Anti-Crime Unit," *Caribbean 360*, posted September 2, 2011; available at http://www.caribbean360.com/index.php/news/st_kitts_nevis _news/500843.html#axzz2BMDjrm7p.

vate investigations academy, and four defensive driving and state-mandated alcohol and drug awareness schools in Texas before moving to Florida in 2003. He had a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice, a Master of Science in Security Management, and had completed his formal studies for a Ph.D. in Public Safety-Leadership *(SKN Vibes* 2011a).

Since taking the position, the Police Commissioner has given gang members an ultimatum to quit their lifestyle and promised to support those who would like to leave the gangs and re-enter society. He, however, noted that, as the incoming Commissioner, it was his responsibility to aggressively reduce gang violence in both St. Kitts and Nevis and would retake the streets of St. Kitts and Nevis (*SKN Vibes* 2011b).

Preventive Strategies

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has developed a gang and gang violence project which is designed to reduce levels of violence and crime in the member states of CARICOM. The major aim of the project is to assist member countries in designing programmes that will address the formation of gangs and gang violence by using a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach. The countries in which this project will initially be implemented are Belize, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago. On November 14, 2010, the technical team in charge of this project convened in Basseterre, the capital of St. Kitts, on which date St Kitts and Nevis' Minister of Social Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, the Honourable Marcella Liburd, addressed the issues of gangs and gang violence. She outlined a number of interventions that the government had taken to combat gangs and suggested that a two-pronged approach (law enforcement and social intervention) was needed to tackle the problems of gang violence in the Federation agenda (CARICOM News Network, 2011).

In 2005, the government of St. Kitts and Nevis launched a crime prevention programme called Operation Future which was initiated by members of the Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force. It was designed to educate children about the dangers of youth crime, violence and drugs. In 2010 it launched a primary school intervention programme, The Discovery Club, and in 2011 they began to address the issue of gangs in the secondary school system. The programme offers classes, organizes field

trips for students, provides information on how to report crimes, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and organizes conferences.[4]

The government has also introduced Project Strong to help secondary school students who are at risk of getting involved in crime. It was created to assist marginalized youths to return to mainstream society and the employment sector. It offers an 18-month programme which provides training in non-traditional skills such as beekeeping, agro processing, basketry, computer application training, business/finance management and sports. Every year in November, Project Strong also operates an Induction Camp.[5]

Recommendations

Despite the attempts by the St. Kitts and Nevis government to address the issue of gang violence, much remains to be done. There is the need to develop innovative strategies and programmes that will effectively control and prevent crime and violence. It appears that the high rate of violence in the Federation is centred on the issues related to guns, drugs, and gangs. As a result, the government of St. Kitts and Nevis needs to develop a comprehensive programme to get guns off the streets and out of the hands of criminals and eliminate the dangerous mix of gang violence and illegal drugs. Because gun ownership also seems to be an outgrowth of the drug trade, long-term and sustained reduction in the demand for guns will be dependent on the ability of the government to combat drugs. Government programmes and policies should simultaneously focus on guns, drugs, and gangs.

Because the issues surrounding gangs and gang violence are complex, there is no one "ideal" solution. The government, therefore, should not rely predominantly on the criminal justice approaches to reduce gang violence. Gang control and prevention programmes and strategies should be multifaceted and holistic. The government of St. Kitts and Nevis should, therefore, implement more opportunity provision strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of crime. These strategies should focus on improving the academic, social and economic opportunities for young people. It should also continue to devise coherent intervention and prevention programmes and strategies for a more integrated response to the gang problem on the islands.

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[4] http://sknoperationfuture.com/7712.html.
[5] http://projectstrongskn.web.officelive.com/aboutus.aspx.

Research

While the Federation collects police data on arrests and police clearance rates, it does not collect comprehensive data on victimization. There is also a notable absence of data as they relate to the predictors of gang membership and offending specifically, and crime generally. This major gap in data collection can hinder the formulation of effective anti-crime measures. It is, therefore, essential for the government of St. Kitts and Nevis to conduct victimization surveys which, along with police data, would present a more complete picture of gang activities in the islands.

Summary

Like many of the Caribbean islands once associated with idyllic beaches and blue sea, St. Kitts and Nevis have become a country with a serious gang problem. The major source of gang violence is the explosion of the international illegal drug trade, and the availability of firearms. The location of the two islands has made them a route for illegal drugs from South America to the United States and Europe. The accessibility to illegal drugs and weapons, primarily guns, contributes to gang violence, especially murder. The culture of lawlessness that appears to exist in this small country is of concern and will continue to have devastating effects unless the government makes a concerted effort to curtail gang violence. To achieve this, the government needs to reform the criminal justice system, address the lack of opportunities in the islands, place emphasis on poverty alleviation and assist in the reduction of the social exclusion of young people, and formulate a national crime control plan which is research driven and based on empirical data derived from St. Kitts and Nevis.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE NEXUS BETWEEN STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF GANGS: THE CASE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ANN MARIE BISSESSAR

Abstract

A voluminous literature has been written on gangs and the predicators that give rise to gangs. Some argue that poverty, child abuse, poor parental supervision, parental attitudes supportive of violence, and gang involvement by family members are factors that tend to give rise to gangs (Wyrick and Howell 2004). Others suggest that rejection by peers at a young age, leading to low self-esteem and unhappiness, are partly responsible for many young persons seeking refuge among gangs (Thornberry et al. 2003). Yet others suggest that gangs may be formed along racial lines and this kind of gang formation is usually defence oriented and status driven (Spergel 1995). Much of the literature on gangs, however, is primarily based on the experiences of more developed societies such as the United States, Canada and the countries of Latin America.[1] The critical literature that has been written in the case of the Caribbean has been limited to the experience of Jamaica (Harriott 2000) or, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, to a working paper of the Small Arms Survey (2009). This chapter argues, however, that while no doubt the predicators highlighted by various scholars do have some validity, in the case of a small, vulnerable society such as Trinidad and Tobago, the phenomenon of gangs emerged as a critical issue after the introduction of structural adjustment

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[1] For a comprehensive review of the literature, much of which has been included in the references of this chapter, see Lafontaine, Ferguson, and Wormith (2005).

measures in the 1980s. The paper contends, therefore, that the primary predisposing factor that has led to the proliferation of "gangs" in this country has to do mainly with the downturn in the economy and the concomitant expansion of the drug trade in this country.

Introduction

Many people argue that, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, there are no real gangs. Part of the problem of course is definitional. Townsend (2009) suggests that:

> ...a street gang or gang or organized crime or criminal street gang means any combination, confederation, alliance, network, conspiracy, understanding or other conjoining in law or in fact of three or more persons with an established hierarchy that, through its membership or through the agency of any member, engages in a course or pattern of criminal activity. (p. 20)

In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, though, as Townsend observes, except in one or two cases, most gangs are ephemeral. Many of the gangs are also small and in one district there may be a number of gangs fighting for limited turf. The so-called gangs in Trinidad and Tobago also have no linkages to other gangs, and in many cases, the head of the gang is referred to as a "community leader".

The term "gang" is not new to the Trinidad and Tobago lexicon. Indeed, one report on the introduction of the steel pan noted that in the late 1800s, drums were used as a "call" for neighbourhood "gangs" or groups to collect and "mash" up with the other gangs. As a result, the colonial administrators decided that drums were considered illegal. Apart from this reference, however, there has been little documentation on gangs during the period 1900 to 1980. Interviews with police officers in Trinidad and Tobago, conducted in early 2012, suggested that during the 1950s and 1960s, one group, the "*Marabuntas*", was closely related to political parties who used their "services" during election campaigns. Also, there were steel-band organizations like *Casablanca* and *Invaders* who exhibited many of the features which are seen as common to gangs today. Interview data suggest that a number of members of these steel band movements had criminal records, belonged to specific communities, were closely knit and were fiercely protective of what they considered to be their turfs. Indeed, the steel-band phenomenon was very much a lower-class activity during the 1950s. The clashes between the various steel-band groups were often violent, particularly during the carnival period and, in the true sense of the definition, these groups had distinctive symbols. For example, each band

had a leader and there was a distinct hierarchy in which group members were assigned specific tasks. However, the reports of the various commissions reporting on national security issues made little or no reference to "gangs" or "gang" related violence.

A Historical Overview of Reported Crime 1960-1984

During the period 1960 to 2000, with the attainment of independence (1962) and then republican status (1974), there was an exponential growth in the size of the population of Trinidad and Tobago (see table 5-1).

Table 5-1: Population growth 1960-2000 in Trinidad and Tobago

Census Year	Population	Change	% Change	Growth Rate
1960	834,350	271,128	48.14	2.85
1970	945,210	110,860	13.29	1.26
1980	1,079,791	134,581	14.24	1.34
1990	1,213,733	133,942	12.40	1.18
2000	1,262,366	48,633	4.01	0.39

2000 National Census Report of Trinidad and Tobago

It should be noted that since the late 1960s, Trinidad and Tobago has been experiencing rapid urbanization as evidenced by the increase in population concentrated in certain locations such as the county of St George and in the wards of St Ann's and Diego Martin. The population of the capital, Port of Spain, increased in 1960 to just under 100,000, on account of intense rural migration. According to the report of the Population and Housing Census 1980 (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Finance, Central Statistical Office 1984b), the resident working population in the area was less than 20% of the total working population in that city. By 1980, too, the development of the urban population in Trinidad and Tobago had resulted from an increasing rate of growth and concentration in certain areas. In the case of the city of Port of Spain, there was significant immigration particularly from outlying areas such as Tobago and St. Patrick. Out of approximately 18,501 people living within the confines of the capital city, 12,543 people claimed that they had a job (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Finance, Central Statistical Office 1984a). In other words, approximately 68% of the population residing in this city was gainfully employed during this period. The trend in the level of unemployment over the period 1970-1984 presents a relatively vivid summary of the economic changes in the country. The total unemployment rate in the country increased from 12.5% in 1970 to 15.5% in 1974. From 1975 to 1980, it declined to 10.0%, remain-

ing at that level until 1982. In 1970, as well, it was found that 36.69% of the total population in the capital city of Port of Spain owned their own homes while 52.27% lived in rentals (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Finance, Central Statistical Office 1987).

While crime, particularly larceny and burglaries, always seemed to be one of the pressing issues in the country reports of gang-related violence did not appear to be a major issue and, among reports of serious crimes, those against property seemed to be more prevalent than those against the person. Property crimes peaked at 11,722 in 1980 and declined to 9,989 in 1982 before increasing once more to 11,077 by 1984 (Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Finance, Central Statistical Office 1987). Between 1970 and 1980, the number of crimes against property increased dramatically by some 155.4%, while crimes against the person attained a peak of 716 in 1983—an increase of 76.8% over the 1970 figure of 405. Felonious wounding, rape and unlawful carnal knowledge were the most prevalent among reported crimes against the person. Table 5-2 presents the reported incidents of serious crimes for the period 1970-1984.

Table 5-2: Serious reported crimes 1970-1984

Year	All crimes against the person	Murder	Manslaughter	Felonious Wounding	Rape / unlawful carnal knowledge	All crimes against property	Breaking and burglary	Larceny	Robbery
1970	405	56	15	105	92	4610	2015	1289	287
1971	449	49	19	108	134	5454	2461	1717	273
1972	584	57	21	133	144	6550	3160	1710	400
1973	591	60	25	145	139	7032	3471	1733	398
1974	496	58	17	133	127	8628	4265	2242	384
1975	510	60	17	121	123	9276	4434	2529	407
1976	488	68	14	105	124	9284	4218	2738	271
1977	525	62	21	152	113	10138	4706	2946	348
1978	478	57	17	141	88	9397	4118	3046	308
1979	571	66	19	148	134	10272	4454	3383	459
1980	442	46	16	142	129	11772	5464	4084	783
1981	607	74	11	230	138	10689	6421	2322	964
1982	691	81	10	264	158	9989	6867	904	1610
1983	716	77	13	289	159	10642	7261	951	1646
1984	636	74	6	255	128	10077	7443	1178	1626

A number of theories can be advanced to explain the kinds of crime committed during the period 1970-1984. One theory, of course, had to do with the rapid increase in the size of the population. Another factor that may have been responsible for the large number of incidents of property crime may have been the high level of internal migration. Finally, it might be suggested that another challenge may have been the transition from colonial administration to independent administration. With that change, officers responsible for national security were then the new local recruits who commanded less respect than had their British counterparts and who also did not have the skills or sometimes the necessary training to monitor and effectively curb the rise in the number of cases reported.

 For the most part, many of the crimes were committed by individuals. Even in 1970 with the occurrence of what was referred to as the Black Power Revolution, many of the people involved in that affair were university students; in other words, the uprising was to a large extent driven by the "privileged" few in the society. The explanations offered for this uprising included:

a. The broad economic strategy—industrialization by invitation—which meant that the government had no active policy of direct involvement in production through state ownership, was perceived domestically to have failed;

b. Employment expansion had not been sufficient to absorb a growing labour force and unemployment was rising with a consequent increase in labour unrest;

c. There was little evidence that localization was occurring and the largest enterprises in the economy remained in foreign hands;

d. The increase in inequality over the period exacerbated racial divisions so that the East Indian and African populations comprising 43% and 40% of the population respectively became antagonistic to the government and its economic policy.[2]

e. The Black Power riots or Revolution, though, as suggested before, was not confined to any one group. In the initial stages it consisted of staged marches by university students and later there was a near toppling of the government by an army coup in the same year.

The Revolution or riot had a significant impact as this event led the government to undertake a fundamental shift in its economic strategy. The government embraced the notion of public ownership under the guise, as Adam, Cavendish and Mistry (1992) pointed out, of localizing the economy, accelerating the development process, rationalizing the provision of

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[2] For more of this discussion see Adam, Cavendish and Mistry (1992).

public services and aiding the development of non-traditional production sectors.

This change in policy was accompanied by the rapid growth in the revenues of the government as a result of the increase in the price of its primary product, oil, along with the discovery of new natural gas reserves. The state owned sector was expanded in the 1970s and early 1980s through a policy of both nationalization and government-backed creation of new industries. So aggressive was this new thrust that, by 1985 the government became the majority shareholder in 48 firms, in 37 of which it owned 100% equity. In 1985, too, the total value of state enterprises and public utilities was TT $2.9 bn or some 16% of the gross domestic product. Total employment in the sector was 53,700 or 13% of the total formal employment sector and capital investment was TT $1 bn or 26% of national capital investment (Adam, Cavendish and Mistry 2002).

The sectoral distribution of the majority-owned state-owned sector revealed that the government had taken over the commanding heights of the economy and, as a result of the establishment of a number of different projects, there was a trickle-down of income to all sectors of the society. The expenditure of government included vast capital expenditure in heavy industries based on natural gas. Expenditure was also aimed at the expansion and improvement of economic and social infrastructure in water, telephones, electricity, highways and secondary roads, primary and secondary education and in the health services. With government spending more than TT $1.67 bn to acquire forty companies in the period 1974 to 1978, it was to be expected that state ownership of these companies would lead to an increase in the number of jobs available to nationals. Thus, by 1974 the level of unemployment had declined to 10%. In addition, a number of short-term opportunities provided by public work programmes such as the Development and Environmental Works (DEWD) programme provided temporary employment for a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled employees.

The oil boom in the 1970s had both favourable as well as unfavourable effects on the economy. Among the favourable effects were:

a. Vastly increased financial resources for the Government on both recurrent and capital account;

b. Personal expenditure on consumer goods and services increased in current prices from TT $1,569 to TT $7,141.2 million in 1981, or by an average rate of about 21% per annum;

c. Government expenditure benefitted the lower-income group, considerably increased wages and salaries in the public sector, improved the

stock of economic and social infrastructure and was used to establish heavy industries based on natural gas;

d. Between 1973 and 1982 prices rose by 14.3% per annum and by 13% per annum between 1977 and 1982. Also, between 1977 and 1982, average weekly earnings increased by 20% per annum so that real average weekly earnings rose by 6% per annum between 1977 and 1982.

Perhaps, however, the adverse impacts of the oil boom were even more damaging.

a. There was an overheating of the economy, particularly in the construction sector. Productivity fell as unskilled and semi-skilled persons were often hired to do skilled work. Because of the relative ease with which money could be obtained, very bad work attitudes were created, especially among young people. Businessmen, too, it was suggested had become accustomed to making quick profits and one consequence of this was that investment patterns became distorted.

b. Virtually all sections of the population indulged in high levels of conspicuous consumption of goods and services, either directly imported or with a high import content.

c. The wage and salary levels outside of the oil and heavy industries became even more inappropriate than they had been at the beginning of the oil boom in 1973.

d. Both domestic and export agriculture became weakened as a result of the higher wages and other incomes obtaining outside of the agricultural sector—particularly in the special public works programmes such as the Development and Environmental Works (DEWD) programme;

e. The index of average weekly earnings for all employed workers rose from 100% in 1973 to 443.3% in 1982.

f. The economy became less competitive in both the home and export markets. In the first quarter of 1983 non-oil exports to CARICOM countries amounted to TT $17 million and non-oil imports to TT $113 million, a deficit of TT $96 million.[3]

The Impact of Structural Adjustment

By the early 1980s, it became increasingly clear that the state-owned sector was not performing as intended. In particular, the performance of

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[3] Much of the data is taken from the *Draft Development Plan 1983-1986*, submitted to the Honourable George Chambers, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on August 27, 1983 by President of the Caribbean Development Bank, Mr William G. Demas, 2-3.

the state enterprises and the public utility sectors was extremely poor. The public utilities had a cumulative deficit of TT $900 million between 1974 and 1979, while in 1986 the state sector posted a deficit of -3.3% of GDP, a total of TT $589 million (Adam, Cavendish and Mistry 2002). By the early 1980s, therefore, the government embarked on what became known as a "belt tightening exercise." Government embarked on a rationalization of the public utilities and state enterprises, on a comprehensive system of tax reform, and introduced measures to stimulate domestic financial savings. During this period, three broad approaches were decided upon for the rationalization of the sector:

1) Restructuring of the capital bases and improvements in the management systems in those enterprises, which because of their strategic national importance would remain under state ownership and control;

2) Reduction in government ownership in those enterprises where there were obvious benefits from foreign or local private sector participation;

3) Closure of those companies which had no real prospect of becoming commercially viable and whose continued existence could not be justified on the basis of social considerations.[4]

Consistent with these approaches, the National Hospital Management Company, the School Nutrition Company, the National Secondary Roads Company and the Meat Processing Company were closed. The Iron and Steel Company was leased to a foreign company in May 1989. Partial divestment of the Telephone Company, Trinidad Cement Limited, the National Commercial Bank, and the Development Finance Company were also carried out in 1989. In January 1989 the Cement Company sold twelve million shares held by the Government, whose shareholding was then reduced to 29%. Negotiations were also entered into for the Crown Reef Hotel, the Printing and Packaging Industries, and the National Fisheries Company. In addition, the Government decided to sell its share in the Arawak Cement Company, and restructuring and cost-reduction measures were taken in a number of enterprises including the methanol, urea, and fertilizer companies, the Agricultural Development Bank, and the Development Finance Company. Restructuring also took place in the Water and Sewerage Authority and at the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission.

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[4] Letter from Mr. William G. Demas, Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago to Mr. Michel Camdessus, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund, 14th March 1990.

Demas' letter to the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund also reported that, in an effort to adjust to the reduction in transfers from the Central Government, a number of public utilities and state enterprises continued to reduce employment levels through retrenchment and voluntary separation of employment plans. He pointed out that nearly 1,100 employees were separated from these institutions in 1989 and it was further estimated that 3,200 persons were likely to be terminated. In addition, in 1989 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago introduced a voluntary termination of employment plan (VTEP) which included a voluntary early retirement scheme for employees aged 50-60 and a voluntary severance scheme for employees less than fifty years of age. One of the more dramatic measures too was the reduction in the salaries of public officers.

Structural Adjustment, Drugs and Guns?

There can be no doubt that these austerity measures took a heavy toll on Trinidad and Tobago and led to a major re-modification of its entire stratification structure. Perhaps, as Gray (2001) pointed out in the case of Jamaica, it forced many of the urban lower class to turn to crime, and for the desperate minority, criminal employment became an attractive option as austerity measures and price hikes took effect. Like Jamaica, too, Trinidad and Tobago became a major transhipment point for cocaine. Unlike Jamaica, though, it was rumoured that while the lower classes were the "mules" and the "sellers", the actors behind the scenes were the wealthier business class. Indeed, one United Nations report noted that in Trinidad and Tobago unsubstantiated rumours regarding corruption and links to drug trafficking included ministers, politicians and judicial and law enforcement personnel at every level. By the late 1980s, therefore, there was, not unexpectedly, an increase of cocaine use in Trinidad and Tobago (see table 5.3).

As table 5-3 indicates, by 1985 the number of arrests made in the case of cocaine had increased by 100% and marijuana seizures had moved from an emphasis on seizure of marijuana trees to seizure of seedlings as well. In other words, the illicit trade in drugs had become a lucrative business. However, the report by the Commission of Enquiry (1986) did not make any reference to gangs but rather named individuals who were involved with the trade.

Table 5-3: Cocaine and marijuana arrests and seizures 1981-1985

Year	No of marijuana arrests	Marijuana seized	Cocaine arrests	Cocaine seized
1981	2,356	5,294,650 trees 2,474 lbs cured 25,365 cigarettes	55	2,102 gm
1982	4.465	7,210,476 trees 23,575 lbs cured 700,369 cigarettes	89	4,465 gm
1983	2,308	150,000 trees 100,000 lbs cured 12,000 cigarettes	150	15,000 gm
1984	2,723	7,901,232 trees 5,085 lbs cured 2,999 cigarettes	376	11,844 gm
1985	2,885	1,109,134 trees 2,512 lbs cured 5,083 cigarettes 95,302 seedlings	619	16,560 gm

Taken from *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Extent of the Problem of Drug Abuse in Trinidad and Tobago* (February 1986).

Perhaps, what further reinforced the drug trade, though, was the attempted coup which took place in 1990. At this time, a group of armed Black Muslim insurgents stormed the parliament of the country and took the Prime Minister and members attending the sitting as hostages. Interestingly, what emerged in a recent enquiry was that a large number of arms and ammunitions were imported into the country at this time and was available to the insurgents. It may be reasonable to assume that there was a strong connection between the 1990 insurgence movement, the downturn in the economy, the increase in the drug trade, and the formation of gangs.

Maingot (1995) suggested that two major factors were the foundation for nefarious activities. The first was the geographical location of the country, and especially its close proximity to Venezuela. The second was

the necessary expertise in the culture, language, finances, and consumption preferences of societies in the United States and Europe. Unofficial interviews reveal that 6006 people were arrested for cocaine possession between 1990 and 1996 and 13,377 were arrested for marijuana offences. In the same period, 993.8 kilos of cocaine and 40,509 kilos of marijuana were seized. The problem had become so out of control that, in his book, Griffith (1997) observed that in October of 1996, after calling on the United Nations General Assembly for help in dealing with this problem, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Basdeo Panday, complained at a New York press conference that 75 to 80% of all crimes in Trinidad and Tobago were drug related (Griffith 1997).

By the year 2000, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, one hundred and twenty murders were reported, sixty-five of which were committed with the use of firearms. Harriott (2002) suggested that the demand for firearms and the supply of them were closely linked with the drug trade. He contended that the homicide trends indicated a strong association between drug trafficking/dealing and this form of violence. He also observed that the period of rapid acceleration in the murder rates corresponded with the period of greatest expansion in the cocaine and the cocaine derivatives business and its transhipment via the region. Associated with this as well was a mushrooming of organized crime. He noted that one variable that may have been responsible for the formation of gangs was the increase in the level of poverty. He suggested that in poor communities, more successful persons might migrate to higher status neighbourhoods thereby depriving the young people within those communities of conventional models of success and of authority figures. These processes, he suggested, in turn lead to reduced informal social control in the communities, the formation of youth gangs and a more general disorganization of the community.

But while many criminologists suggest that poverty is one of the predisposing factors in gang formation (which in the case of Trinidad and Tobago was directly linked to the structural adjustment imperatives of the 1980s), the culture of conspicuous consumption along with a poor work ethic are often overlooked as critical pre-disposing factors. Indeed, as was pointed out in the Demas report, fast and easy money available during the boom years promoted a culture in which productivity was largely overlooked. What was evident, however, was that during the period 1999-2003, the drug trade expanded and there was a direct link between the drug trade and the proliferation of gangs in certain neighbourhoods. As table 5-4 reveals, during the period 1999-2003, the number of cocaine arrests increased dramatically.

Table 5-4: Arrests and seizures 1999-2003

Year	Cocaine seizures kg	Cocaine arrests	Marijuana seizures kg	Street value at TT$6,000 per kg	Marijuana arrests
1999	137.11	1135	1558.47	93,508	2458
2000	303.29	1144	1546.1	92,760	2820
2001	772.26	776	633.71	38,022	2250
2002	486.17	1100	2638.6	158,316	3095
2003	473.67	914	720.18	43,308	3091
2004	590.00	ND	1513	90,780	ND

Source: Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit. Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, April 2005.

Over that same period, raw data became available on what was termed "gang-related murders". Indeed, in Trinidad and Tobago during the period 2001-2010, one thousand and seven murders, or 29% of all murders, were gang related. It was also reported that 45% of gang members arrested were in possession of illegal firearms (Crime and Problem Analysis Branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service).

According to reports, gangs were concentrated in five major districts namely, Besson Street, Sangre Grande, San Juan, St Joseph and Belmont (Seepersad forthcoming). Reports also suggested that two-thirds of the gangs in Trinidad and Tobago were involved in fights with rival gangs and that gang members frequently used alcohol and illegal drugs and engaged in the sale of such drugs (Katz 2012). Experts also emphasized that gangs were heavily involved in organized fraud, robbery and other forms of armed violence (Katz 2012). According to data from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, one third of all murders for the period 2001-2009 were attributed to gangs and the proportion of murders being committed by gang members in Trinidad and Tobago was on the increase. According to a recent study by Seepersad (2011), the proportion of murders committed by gang members increased from 11.3% over the period 2001 to 2003 to 45.6% during the period 2007 to 2009. He contended that, with the increase in illegal firearms available

for the commission of crimes, gang members might feel more empowered when in possession of such weapons.[5]

Conclusion

This chapter diverged from the run-of-the-mill literature on gangs. What it attempted to do, by using the available data on crime, was to form a direct association between the imposition of structural adjustment measures and their impact on the increase in organized crime and the eventual formation of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago. Unfortunately, one of the limitations in forming a connection between the impact of structural adjustment and the formation of gangs was that data on the time when gangs were formed were not available. The earliest reference to gangs and gang-related violence surfaced in 2001. What emerged in this chapter, though, was that in the 1970s and early 1980s, in the middle of the oil boom, the kind of crime that was most prevalent was crime involving property. Later, as state funding for major projects declined, the need to curb drug trafficking and illegal drug trading became a major policy priority of the state. By the 1990s, with the introduction of illegal weapons in the country, crime data revealed that there was an accompanying increase in the number of homicides and by 2001, it was reported that the majority of these homicides were gang-related.

It cannot be disputed that other factors were also critical in the formation of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago. Factors such as age, levels of unemployment, the creation of inner cities, the availability of illegal firearms, the role of the media and the role of internal migration also play a part in the formation and perpetuation of gangs and a gang "culture." However, perhaps the triggering factor leading to the formation of gangs in this country was the introduction of structural adjustment conditions during the 1980s. The introduction of structural adjustment measures, it was clear, led to a reduction in the real income of many people and also led to high levels of inflation. The increase in the level of poverty, the reduction of government subsidies, the breakup of the family structure, the increase in inner city housing, and the rise in the level of unemployment were all factors associated with structural adjustment measures. These very factors were cited previously as predisposing factors leading to gang formation.

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[5] Randy Seepersad. 2011. *Citizen insecurity in Trinidad and Tobago*. Document prepared for the UNDP's Caribbean Human Development Report on Citizen Security (forthcoming).

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CHAPTER SIX

WHITE COLLAR CRIME IN TRINIDAD

DYLAN KERRIGAN AND NIRMALA SOOKOO

Abstract

White-collar crime both internationally and regionally is understudied. This chapter addresses this gap and explores the phenomenon in Trinidad and Tobago from sociological, historical and anthropological points of view. The relationship between power, socialization, and local demographic realities is teased out to suggest that white-collar criminals are similar to gangs in several ways. In order to understand this local socio-cultural context, the approach known as "studying up" was used to explore the history, processes and dynamics of white-collar crime in this ex-colony. Modern Trinidad and Tobago demonstrates social hierarchies and economic legacies connected to the constitution of power tied into plantation society, colonialism and the transition to post-colonialism with all the concomitant winners and losers. This has influenced power in society and needs to be understood in relation to the failure to prosecute as well as the invisibility of white collar crimes. In Trinidad and Tobago there is a distortion of the real extent and impact of white-collar offenses. The public panics about violent robbery, drug use, and murder, and remains ignorant about the magnitude of white-collar crime. Qualitative content analysis of Trinidad and Tobago newspaper coverage of white-collar crime revealed that white-collar offenders usually are not punished in terms of convictions and fines. Further analysis also revealed that institutions may frequently turn a blind eye to the phenomenon. The findings led to the construction of a conceptual model based on Social Disorganization Theory which is traditionally used to explain street gangs but here was "flipped on its head" to explain the socialization of white-collar criminals in similar gang-like terms.

Introduction

This chapter presents an alternative perspective to the phenomenon of gangs in the Caribbean. Instead of the practice of studying down we borrow the anthropological idea of "studying up." Studying up according to Laura Nader (1972) is a way to study the rich and powerful in society, a way "to ask many 'common sense' questions in reverse" (p. 284). Studying up interprets the existence of social power and group formation in the present by recognising the relationship between history, social structure and elite formation. This anthropological perspective on crime reflects historical contexts, class and power differentials related to resource access, and economic and political motives for defining criminality (Jeroslow 2011).

Granted there are numerous methods of studying elites and this proliferation is driven as much by the distinctions in the constitution of elites and by the facets of the elites that are under study as by different disciplinary foci. Nonetheless, our aim in studying up is not to specifically investigate elites but rather to shine light on four aspects of the phenomenon of white-collar crime: 1) how white-collar crime is perceived in Trinidad, 2) what is the relationship between white-collar crime and social structure in Trinidad, 3) how white-collar criminals are treated in Trinidad, and 4) how white-collar crime might be better understood in a small island nation. This analysis does not solely examine white-collar crime in Trinidad as a phenomenon related to governance and economics, but also as a reality with cultural and structural roots that define and shape the phenomenon locally.

White-collar crime first became a clearly-defined object of study in sociology and criminology in the 1930s when Edwin Sutherland (1949) defined it as crime "committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation" (p. 9). Since then the definition has been developed and refined. For many authors today, not only people of high social status commit white-collar crime. For example, securities fraud and tax fraud are both considered to be forms of white-collar crime, yet research into such forms of fraud demonstrates that it is committed by people of different economic backgrounds (Croall 2001). Another development is the addition of "deception" to definitions of white-collar crime. White-collar crime for the United States Department of Justice is defined as "non-violent crime for financial gain utilizing deception" by persons with power through their occupational status and special technical knowledge (US Dept. Justice, cited in Strader 2002). On the whole, however, white-collar crime is a contested term with a variety of definitions.

The elements of deception and power are central to understanding white-collar crime in Trinidad. They also connect more widely to the reality that crime by high status groups in all societies is a phenomenon that has plagued the world for centuries, and of course is central to the work of Marx and Engels (1848). Asymmetrical power relations not only reflect such a reality but are also directly related to the crimes committed by members of high status groups and how they are perceived. White-collar crime as such is a term that has a complex and strategic relationship to power—not just in the execution of such crime but also in its perception by the rest of society. For the purposes of this chapter we borrow the definition of white-collar crime provided by David Friedrichs (1996), while adding to it the deceptive and clandestine face of the phenomenon:

> White collar crime is a generic term for the whole range of illegal, prohibited, and demonstrably harmful activities involving a violation of a private or public trust, committed by institutions and individuals occupying a legitimate, respectable status, and directed toward financial advantage or the maintenance and extension of power and privilege. (p. 10)

Despite the clandestine nature of white-collar crime that makes it difficult to quantify the extent of its effects, many authors suggest that white-collar crime presents a greater threat to society, and causes more harm than street crime (Mauro 1997; Reiman, cited in Tischler 2001). In small island nations like Trinidad and Tobago there is also some agreement that "white collar crime costs in terms of economic development" and that "economic crime undermines the integrity and validity of the national economy from within and therefore the risk of destabilisation to national security and prosperity" (Rider and Long 1988, 6).

That said, in popular culture and everyday common sense (Gramsci 1971) white-collar crime is most likely to remain invisible and is claimed to be victimless (Croall 2001). Discourse on white-collar crime is generated by many of the people and institutions who report and investigate white-collar crime—in particular the media, the government, the legal profession, and academics themselves—interestingly all groups in society we might consider powerful and mostly composed members of high-status groups. One of the problems with definitions of white-collar crime is that they make claims about white-collar crime that cannot be substantiated in the face of the evidence. This has the effect of misreading the phenomenon. So for example, as Strader (2002) points out, lawyers will often claim white-collar crime is not directly related to organised crime activities, or the common theft of property and narcotics—yet at the same time the evidence clearly demonstrates a direct relationship between white-collar

criminals, property theft, organised crime, and narcotics. Such disagreements in the context and relationships of white-collar crime only help to disconnect the phenomenon from social reality.

In the context of the media, their role in shaping and producing a particular perception of white-collar crime is achieved by under-reporting it and its consequences, while instead concentrating on sensational street and violent crimes that do not involve complicated discussions and background—something to which the current format of news programs and newspapers is not particularly suited. In this sense we can understand the perception and understanding of white-collar crime as socially constructed—its meaning and definition are related to how the information on the phenomenon is shaped by the most powerful institutions in society. The government's role in shaping narratives on white-collar crime should not be overlooked either. The composition and collection of records and statistics on white-collar crime is far less defined than the records and statistics on blue-collar and street crime. The judicial penalties too also demonstrate positional difference in how white-collar crime is penalised (Young 1990, 2008). Petty narcotic infractions involving possession of small amounts of narcotics for personal use carry much greater penalties than million dollar frauds that are certainly not victimless and often result in people losing their life savings, jobs and property, with all the structural violence and destruction such losses bring.

Some authors point out that it should not be surprising that the media and public more generally have a greater fear of crimes that affect them in direct ways, such as acts that cause bodily harm, or that affect their livelihoods immediately, than of white-collar crimes that supposedly on the surface are indirect and will not affect people for years. Two central problems with such arguments are, firstly, that the statistics on experiences of crime do not line up with people's fear of crime. In societal terms the latter is generally much greater than the former (Beck 1997; Pain 2001). The second problem is that such conceptions of white-collar crime as generally victimless, less immediate, and non-violent, are forms of myth-making about the phenomenon.

White-Collar Crime as Invisible and Hidden Acts

Typically, acts of white-collar crime are dismissed as unimportant and there is an apparent lack of concern about financial and social costs. This disregard of the harm caused by white-collar crime is seen in the high importance attached to controlling violent crimes committed by the poor. The invisibility of white-collar crime is produced and perpetuated by several

factors, such as the media's obsession with sensational acts of violence and the protection of white-collar criminals by political officials and businesspeople (Clinard and Meier 2011). Additionally, white-collar crime is often hidden in the release of national statistics in Trinidad and Tobago, as there is a lack of disaggregation in the various categories of white-collar offences. Furthermore, even social researchers, internationally as well as locally, ignore the magnitude of white-collar crime.

According to Friedrichs (2010), white-collar crime is characteristically less visible because it occurs away from the public eye, in offices and suites as opposed to the streets. The media is a fundamental source of the understanding of crime (Surette 2007). Crime has been depicted in the media through imagery which is typically sensational and violent (Altheide 2009). Headlines are filled with murder, gang violence and narcotics. Violence, blood, and gore are typical newspaper front page subject-matter. Media images and narratives of crime deflect attention from criminal acts committed by businesspeople, political officials, and professionals (Friedrichs 2010; Gitlin 1980; Potter and Kappeler 1998). According to Surette (2007), discourse surrounding white-collar offenders rarely casts them in the role of pathological lawbreakers and often white-collar crime is sanitised to the point of decriminalisation. The white-collar offender is mostly presented as one bad apple by the media as opposed to representing a particular group and elite mode of being and socio-cultural practice in society.

Illegal activity committed by white-collar criminals is further hidden from the public by political liaisons and institutions (Clinard and Meier 2011). In Trinidad and Tobago white-collar offenders are often involved in and connected with government agencies. As such, they are often sheltered, even at the point of exposure (Sharma 1998). An illustration of this alliance between government officials and businesspeople is the case of the Airport Enquiry in Trinidad and Tobago. The Enquiry, which in 2012 was in its seventh year, entailed fraud charges against businessmen Ishwar Galbaransingh, CEO of Northern Construction Ltd (NCL), Amrith Maharaj, Chief Corporate Secretary NCL, Steve Ferguson, Maritime executive, Peter Cateau, Ameer Edoo, former government ministers Sadiq Baksh and Brian Kuei Tung and former Airport Authority head Tyrone Gopee (Achong 2011). The charges brought against them resulted from the construction of the $1.6 billion airport terminal and included allegations of manipulation of the tendering process and pretending that the tendering process was transparent, candid and competitive. Former United National Congress (UNC) Works and Transport Minister, Senator Sadiq Baksh, was charged with corruptly accepting approximately $2 million from NCL, the

primary contractor on the Piarco Airport Development Project (Renne 2004). Furthermore, Former Minister Brian Kuei Tung was slapped with five other charges for fraudulently receiving money and gifts from NCL for allegedly favouring NCL for contracts in the Airport project. This case illustrated that corrupt companies did work hand in hand with top government personnel and thus, it was within the politicians' interest to shield businessmen, as they too risked exposure.

In a small island nation another explanation for the invisibility of white-collar crime is the tendency of businesspeople to associate predominantly with each another, both at professional and social levels, a fact that often averts the objective scrutiny of the repercussions of white-collar crime (Clinard and Meier 2011). Reflective of the post-colonial social structure of the island, businesspeople often originate in similar socio-economic classes, status backgrounds, neighbourhoods, schools, and membership clubs, which all create ties of comradeship, both social and business, which overlap and suggest that turning a blind eye to each other's corrupt practices might be potentially not an uncommon socio-cultural behaviour pattern.

White-collar crime is further made invisible by social researchers and national statistics. Professor James Q. Wilson, a political scientist and criminological theorist, dismissed the significance of white-collar crime by claiming that the essence of real crime is based on the following: arousal of fear of injury, violation of the social contract, and the perpetration of dangerous and immoral acts that violate the criminal statutes (Potter and Miller 2002). This viewpoint seemed more concerned with violent acts of criminal offending and presented white-collar crime as a technical violation of the law. Additionally, white-collar crime is under-studied by academics in Trinidad and Tobago, with few academic appraisals of the phenomenon (Ramdhan 2010; Williams 2007).

Furthermore, there is a neglect of white-collar crime in statistics devoted to describing and analysing crime in Trinidad and Tobago (see table 6-1). While there are mutually exclusive categories of blue-collar crimes, such as murder, rape, kidnapping, etc., white-collar crime is relegated to one category—fraud. In table 6-2, statistics for fraud and white-collar crime are collapsed into one statistic. White-collar crime, under the Crime Proceeds Act of 2009, does not only comprise fraud, but includes money laundering, embezzlement, insider trading, public corruption, and counterfeiting. The Central Statistic Office included fraud, embezzlement, and counterfeiting in its statistical summaries but there are no details on money laundering and acts of public corruption. The lack of disaggregation of white-collar crime shields and reduces the significance that white-collar

criminal offences have and lowers their visibility in the eyes of the public and academics alike.

Table 6-1: Number of people arrested and charged for serious crimes (2001-2011)

Year	Murder	Woundings & shootings	Sexual offences	Serious indecency	Kidnappings	Burglaries & breakings	Robberies	Fraud offences	General larceny	Larceny motor vehicles	Larceny dwelling house	Trafficking narcotics
2001	72	274	411	87	115	994	995	275	431	0	76	678
2002	115	388	476	136	192	943	937	388	374	0	80	636
2003	116	413	484	65	180	870	987	477	400	0	88	687
2004	86	316	432	31	130	1038	1017	340	444	0	93	810
2005	126	355	577	41	283	768	1334	303	436	141	58	674
2006	108	290	691	59	224	881	1289	319	453	106	13883	762
2007	71	287	501	55	126	835	1061	206	557	138	59	788
2008	75	219	396	28	92	572	791	146	441	88	51	671
2009	163	218	385	30	79	672	1023	223	423	127	82	691
2010	104	159	353	28	63	768	804	152	406	82	76	738
2011	96	185	365	36	65	625	710	158	414	79	62	726

Source: Crime and Problem Analysis Branch, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

In this statistical manner, the image of crime is distorted and, according to Reiman (2004), the image of crime is like that seen in a carnival mirror, in which crimes committed by the poor are seen as large and the crimes committed by the rich are deemed to be insignificant. The media, politicians, businessmen, academics and the criminal justice system reflect this distortion. What are criminal are primarily violent acts perpetrated by the poor while illegal acts of corporations are seldom described as law-breaking (Clinard and Yeager 2006). However, according to Potter and Miller (2002), white-collar crime causes more economic damage than street crime and injures a large number of people; "It makes the social contract a social joke by violating obligations to consumers, employees and the state" (p. 2). It is every bit as predatory as violent crime, if not more so. Counterfeiting, public corruption and fraud break the social contract between the consumer, the public, the corporation, and government.

White-collar offenders do immense damage and misuse public trust; however they are often hidden from view (Potter and Miller 2002).

Table 6-2: Persons arrested and charged for fraud and white-collar crimes (2001-2011)

Year	Arrested
2001	356
2002	410
2003	484
2004	344
2005	319
2006	343
2007	217
2008	154
2009	238
2010	161
2011	169
Total	**3195**

History and Social Structure in Trinidad

Scholars of small societies suggest that, due to demographic realities, nepotism and corruption are particularly common (Best 2004; Kamugisha 2007). As such, a useful way to conceive of white-collar crime in Trinidad is by borrowing David Harvey's (2005) notion of "class power". For Harvey, class power means that the surplus value a society generates has been and continues to be appropriated by, and centralised for the benefit of, those groups who already have access to political, economic and social power. In the context of Trinidad this is particularly salient as it provides us with a way to think about white-collar crime. Due to the historical relationship between racism, white supremacy, Creole nationalism, post-colonialism, and social structure in Trinidad, the way different people and groups have been produced socially (Graeber 2006) has had a direct impact on the levels of access to respectable institutional and individual power (Ledgister 2010). This reality connects to Friedrich's definition of

white-collar crime—that it is reliant and produced "by institutions and individuals occupying a legitimate, respectable status" (1997, 10).

Historically, throughout the Caribbean, race and ethnicity determined the social strata/class one could be associated with or was allowed into. It was also the basis for the distribution of production factors, which then allowed for the possession of power and wealth within society. Although slavery disintegrated, the stratification it influenced in Trinidad and Tobago had a major impact on the makeup of the criminal justice system at all levels (laws, policy, staffing, practice, imprisonment). The very definition of what constituted crime within local society historically created some level of disparity as to who would be targeted, prosecuted and imprisoned for their crimes (Trotman 1986). Society and, by extension, the criminal justice system label crime generally as violent acts, robbery, burglary, certain classes of theft, etc., and to a lesser extent, extortion, money laundering and the like, mostly committed by the working class. However, other acts which are associated with the rich and powerful do not fall into the category of crime. This begs questions of power and control: was the criminal justice system put in place to protect society or is it merely to protect the interests and property of the elite within society?

The issue of illegal drugs has also been a troubling issue in Caribbean society. When one looks at the justice systems in the different islands the majority of the individuals arrested, incarcerated or passing through the system are of the working class. These individuals are usually the transporters, distributors and users of the drugs and generally play no part in the funding and production of these illegal drugs. Yet legal policies and other law enforcement measures are focused on interdiction, incarceration and basically disrupting the trafficking and distribution of these illicit drugs. Strategies do not seem to be aimed at targeting the individuals who provide funding and the powerful that facilitate this epidemic.

Colonialism and post-colonialism transformed the standard of living in Trinidad for some more than others. Racial hierarchy laid the beginnings of inequality in Trinidad and, while there are many examples of successful Afro-Creole professionals such as lawyers emerging in 19th century Trinidad, their success was always premised on their adoption of, and assimilation to, white British cultural values and capital (Rush 2011). That the label "white-collar crime" contains the word "white", in itself indicates the historical nature of power in Trinidad.

This sense of Britishness had many characteristics. One in particular, British respectability can be said to be a central element of what became the Creole nationalism upon which the islands rode to independence (Ledgister 2010). Creole nationalism was on many levels a reproduction of

many of the conventions of power and institutions of Britain. The system of laws, the institutions of government, education, and everyday social conventions like wearing suits and where you lived became the public face of respectable power in Trinidad. On independence, entry to these spaces and forms of behaviour, often through certain schools, island scholarships and other tools of social mobility, went a long way to defining who gained access to power in the independence era. As such, a post-colonial situation of structural inequality—as is the case in most ex-colonies—was produced. Access to social, economic and political power in Trinidad then has always been and still is today to a lesser degree, connected to discourses of whiteness and the ability to fit foreign ideals, whether these be the use of standard English language over non-standard English in local education, politics and business or the levels of decorum expected in local politics, to take just two examples.

A further reality of the history of social structure and hierarchy in Trinidad is that the government developed certain geographical locations while other locations were neglected—again often connected to the legacies of colonialism. The lack of development of areas like Laventille, Beetham, and John John—the poor communities on the outskirts of Port of Spain—in comparison to the development of rich communities like Woodbrook, to name one example, is directly related to the populations that lived in them and their racial and economic backgrounds. This means that people from certain areas have had cumulative social and economic advantages over other people who have suffered cumulative disadvantages. It might also be suggested that some of those in poverty and without access to the economic, social and institutional power to transform their situation turned to street crime, while some of those persons with access to economic, social and institutional power were more likely to be involved in white-collar crime in order to maintain and increase their own level of social and economic power.

A final point worth considering is the observation made by Lloyd Braithwaite (1953) in his study of social stratification in Trinidad. For him, colonial education in the early twentieth century was a central means of social mobility for the black and coloured masses; however this was specifically within classes, not across. He believed that class had a caste-like quality in Trinidad. Hence, our class power analogy suggests that the majority of those with access to institutional and individual power in Trinidad gained it inter-generationally. In a general sense then, the social structure of Trinidad tells us much about the social production of people locally, and those who gained access to the institutional and individual power required to be perpetrators of white-collar crime.

What and Who Do We Fear?

According to the media, academic discourse and popular culture, the general public in Trinidad and Tobago live in fear of crime. However, as we have suggested, not all crimes are created equal in the eyes of the lay person. Beckett (1994) lays the blame at the feet of state actors and the media for selling violent crime sensationally and promoting concern over street crime as our biggest fear. White-collar crime is not visibly perceived as a social problem—or spoken of as such (Friedrichs 1997). In daily narratives and public statements the state and media signal out who are "real" criminals and where to find them. The narratives and discourse indicate who belongs in jails and reflects the definitions held by a biased criminal justice system designed to focus on blue-collar crime (Friedrichs 1997).

There is one commonly shared myth that offers ideological support to the traditional thinking about who and what make up the crime problem. This is the myth of a criminal type, which sensitizes the public to the type of people who are criminals and their socio-economic location in society (Boss and George 2002). Typically, the face of crime is seen as a poor black man. As Reiman (2004) notes, the criminal justice system tells the public that the visible threat of crime emanates from the poor.

This is explicitly seen in the strategy employed by the government of Trinidad and Tobago on "the war against crime". From August 21st to December 8th, 2011, a state of emergency was declared to arrest criminals and reduce drugs, guns and gang activity. According to the Prime Minister Kamla Persad Bissessear,

> The current crime spree dictates that more must be done and stronger action has to be employed now. The situation cannot continue like this without a response commensurate with the wanton acts of violence and lawlessness; it must be a response as well that will halt the current spike in gang activity and crime in general in the shortest possible time (Mohammed 2011).

Additionally, she remarked that:

> "...the nation must not be held to ransom by marauding groups of thugs bent on creating havoc in our society. We will hunt them down, search them out, and we will bring them to justice."

This statement demonstrated government concentration on the formal control of violent crimes, perpetuating the notion that crimes were within the domain of gang members who are seen as a danger to a harmonious socie-

ty and the real threat that pervades Trinidad and Tobago. Data released by the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch in 2012 reflected the concern over gang involvement and narcotics. Out of 1109 persons arrested during the state of emergency, 160 were arrested for gang activity and 223 were arrested on narcotic charges. Only 28 persons were arrested on charges of fraud, which was the only category which relates to white-collar crime.

The visible threat is depicted as the young African male from areas such as Laventille, John John, and Beetham. These persons are generally seen as threatening the fabric of society and endangering the lives of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Thus, just as it was in colonial times, there is the distorted image that crime is chiefly the work of poor, opportunistic Afro-Trinidadian males—and rarely the work of those supposedly more economically, culturally and socially well off. The practices of the criminal justice system seen in the arrest and conviction of poor criminals, their sheer number in prisons, and police patrols in certain geographic locations further reflected this image. The "value of this to those in power is that it deflects the discontent and potential hostility" of the middle class away from "the classes above them and toward the classes below them" (Reiman 2004, 4)—eroding forms of solidarity that might help to produce the political forces to tackle white-collar crime. Another big concern is the use of racial labels to characterise the common criminal. It sends a message that Afro/blackness explains criminality and that Afro/black people are somehow genetically predisposed to commit crime (Friedrichs 1997).

It is the media, the state and the criminal justice system that create a distorted image of who is responsible for crime. The young, poor and black are over represented while the threats caused by the wealthy and the powerful are underestimated.

> "They [white collar criminals] never become part of the reality in the criminal justice mirror, although the danger they pose is at least as great, and often greater than, the danger posed by those who do." (Reiman 2004, 61)

Differential Treatment of White-Collar Criminals in Trinidad and Tobago

The criminal justice system in Trinidad and Tobago has accorded differential treatment to white-collar criminality. Although there is immense concern over crime in general, the priority dedicated to white-collar crime as opposed to conventional crime (violent acts) has been significantly less (Friedrichs 1997). At the same time, white-collar crime's economic and social harm costs overshadow the cost of conventional crime (Friedrichs

1997; Potter and Miller 2002; Reiman 2004). This differential treatment of white-collar crime is witnessed in the punishment inflicted upon offenders (less jail time, fines vs. custodial sentences), the slashing of public corruption charges (former Prime Minister on corruption charges released from prison), the delayed justice for fraud (Airport Enquiry) and public mismanagement (Colonial Life Insurance Company—the CLICO fiasco) in Trinidad and Tobago.

In contrast to street crime, white-collar crime is treated leniently by the criminal justice system (Levinson 2002). Illustrations of this are seen in the punishment of white-collar and street crime. Perpetrators of fraud are liable to serve five years in prison under the Forgery Act Chapter 11:13, Section 34(1). Additionally, if a person is indicted for public corruption, he/she shall serve two years in prison and pay a fine of $20,000. On the other hand, if a person breaks into the house of another with the intent to steal, he/she can be sentenced to ten years imprisonment. Furthermore, a person who cultivates, gathers, or produces marijuana, upon summary conviction, can serve ten years imprisonment and pay a fine of $50,000 and upon indictment serve twenty years to life imprisonment and pay a fine of $100,000 or ten times the street value of the marijuana seized under the Dangerous Drug Amendment Act of 2000. It is clear that violent crime is given harsher punishment in terms of prison sentences and fines than white-collar crimes, even though the evidence shows that white-collar crime has greater financial costs and far more victims than violent street crimes. Senator Ramesh Deosaran addressed the differential treatment of white-collar criminals by pointing out that if banks were charged with liabilities, they were given a fine and a warning as opposed to a man caught in possession of marijuana, whose sentence was five years imprisonment with "no chances, no warning" (Ramdass 2011).

Further evidence of differential treatment of white-collar criminals could be seen in the removal of criminal charges by the state. For instance, in 2006, Basdeo Panday, former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, was found guilty on three counts of failing to declare a London bank account to the Integrity Commission for the years 1997, 1998 and 1999, which was an infringement of Section 27 (1) (b) of the Integrity in Public Life Act of 1987. Panday was sentenced to two years imprisonment, fined $60,000 and ordered to pay $1.6 million (the sum he failed to declare). In 2007, Panday's conviction was overturned on the grounds that the Chief Magistrate was biased against the former Prime Minister. Shortly after his overturned conviction, Panday reassumed leadership of the UNC.

There is often delayed justice in dealing with charges of white-collar crime. Again, the Airport Enquiry provides a lucid demonstration. In 2004,

several people, including prominent members of the UNC government and personnel from six companies, were arrested for illegally manipulating government contracts and obtaining $1.6 billion of taxpayers' money to build the new airport. These persons were arrested for conspiracy under Section 34 of the Larceny Act. Two of the top government personnel arrested were Sadiq Baksh and Brian Kuei Tung. Also charged were top businessmen, Ishwar Galbaransingh, Steve Ferguson and Amrith Maharaj. Sadiq Baksh was charged with corruptly receiving an estimated $2 million from Northern Construction Limited, the main contractor on the Piarco Airport Development Project, and it was alleged that the money went into the reserves of the UNC (Renne 2004). Thus, taxpayers' money and state funds went into the pockets of corrupt statesmen, businessmen and political parties.

Although charges were laid, in 2012 the case continued into its seventh year. It has been suggested that "justice delayed is justice denied". When the state wishes to prosecute offenders in a timely matter, it does so; for example people were arrested and convicted after the Black Power uprisings in the 1970s under the Emergency Powers Act. It appears that violent crimes, especially those perpetrated against the state are dealt with immediately, whilst the criminal justice system, when the elites in society are involved, can be slowed down and the course of justice rendered less effective.

Another compelling example of delayed justice is the current investigation into CLICO. Former chairman Lawrence Duprey and CLICO Investment chairman Andre Monteil are charged with mismanagement and misappropriation of CLICO assets leading to policy holders losing access to their life investments and threatening the stability of the country in 2009. At the end of January 2009, CLICO had policy surrender requests of $650 million and monthly payment for annuities and pensions of $40 million (Canterbury 2009). A lawsuit of 200 pages identified the various breaches of CLICO, which included breach of trust, violation of fiduciary duty, failure to act honestly, favouring personal interests, exploiting their position to create profits for themselves, choosing the interests of other businesses over the welfare of CLICO, infringement of legal and regulatory responsibility, failure to guarantee good governance, and failure to make admissions of matters affecting CLICO (Loutoo 2011). Additionally, according to Carl Hiralal, Inspector of Financial Institutions, CLICO had a long documented history of not adhering to the Insurance Act and committing several breaches (Bagoo 2011).

Although civil suits against Duprey and Monteil were filed, there was little investigation into the allegations against these individuals, and their

accountability remains almost non-existent. In 2009, CLICO was temporarily brought under state control and in 2010 the government opted to bail out the Company. Under the state action, the power of the few was intensified, especially when the rights of claimants to file lawsuits against the Central bank was removed under the Central Bank (Amendment) Bill 2011 (Raymond 2011). Raymond (2011) pointed out that there was a lack of transparency and accountability with respect to public expenditure on CLICO. After thirty-one months under state control, there was no improvement in accountability to the public. Moreover, when the State period for controlling CL Financial expired on June 11, 2012, the Group could return to the former management and owner, Duprey, who was declared "fit and proper".

To stress the point of one rule for those with power and another for everyone else, a July 15, 1996 "Circular Letter to Shareholders" issued by Republic Bank Limited under the hand of the then Chairman, the late Frank Barsotti, outlined the threats that a CLICO takeover of Republic Bank posed to the nation. It noted that CLICO's management was able to circumvent the law in acquiring more shares in Republic Bank than the law allowed and as such had failed the "fit and proper" test, to which the government turned a blind eye. That such lawbreaking was allowed is not surprising—that those with class power, influence, and connections wield it to their own benefit is corroborated by many authors including Harvey (2005), Reiman (2004) and Friedrichs (1996).

It is necessary to understand the scandals at CLICO as they demonstrate the differential treatment of white-collar crime. Although a 200-page long civil suit was filed against Duprey and Monteil by the Central Bank, there have been no criminal charges against the two. The law was allegedly broken in several instances, as pointed out in the civil suit, but yet no criminal charges were laid. Instead, there was even talk of returning Duprey to the helm of the Company. In addition the cost of investigation into financial crime is expensive. According to Anand Ramlogan, the current Attorney-General under whom this civil suit was initiated, the forensic investigation and legal fees of the CLICO investigation cost the government $105 million. Furthermore, he claimed:

> White-collar crime is notoriously difficult to prove. Often, it is an intricate web of deception spawned by complex and convoluted transactions that cross borders. The cost of investigating crimes such as deceit, conspiracy to defraud and misfeasance in public office is notoriously high. Financial crimes require specialist skills and expertise that are not available in Trinidad and Tobago (Ramlogan, cited in Andre Bagoo 2012)

Thirdly, according to Canterbury (2010), there was an inadequate legislative framework for the Central Bank to deal with the deficiencies. Finally, according to Raymond (2011), there was a lack of accountability and transparency under the Central Bank (Amendment) Bill 2011, as the public cannot sue the state (recall that CLICO was then under state control). In fact, the financial condition of CLICO continued to be one of the best kept secrets (Wilson 2011). Taxpayers would have to foot the bill of the CLICO bailout plan, costing each of 400,000 taxpayers $50,000 (Bagoo 2011). Another group of victims were the former employees of CLICO, who, like the general public, heard the news of the CLICO collapse from the media, and who met the doors locked when they went to work the following day (Canterbury 2010). They were only given one month's salary and no severance pay. Even though CLICO's alleged mismanagement had high economic and development costs and led to unemployment of CLICO workers, people affected were not allowed to demonstrate their grievance against the Company or the state by suing.

The differential treatment of white-collar criminals is seen in Trinidad and Tobago in terms of a failure to press criminal charges, delayed investigation and state protection of the elite. The rich and the powerful remain protected, as their crimes are perceived and portrayed as less damaging by the media and the criminal justice system. On the other hand, the prison continues to be the national poor house, as the poor and powerless are overflowing within its walls (Reiman 2004).

An Emic View From Below

Returning to the notion of "studying up" to get an idea of how middle- and street-level players in the drug trade view those people above them who provide the funding and finance for the trade is useful here. Frank and Shadow are two gatekeepers in ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in Trinidad between 2002 and 2012. One is a middleman in the drug trade, the other a retired police officer. Their perspectives on those who finance the drug trade paint a picture of white-collar crime that is distinct from that peddled by the media, the criminal justice system, and government; not least because their own viewpoint ties together many of the issues we have touched on about white-collar crime in Trinidad, by recognising the relationship between history, social structure and elite formation. At the same time it must be noted that what they say is hard to verify and submitted here not as fact but as a valid "emic" (Harris 1976) picture of what blue-collar criminals think of those from the upper classes in society whom they

perceive to be involved in a form of white-collar criminal activity—financing, funding and laundering monies connected with the drug trade.

According to these sources, local historical legacies were, in simplistic terms, overlaid by the local drug trade as it emerged in the 1970s and 80s. Those groups who traditionally had the money, power and opportunity in Trinidad and Tobago to be involved in white-collar crime were supposedly the same groups from which some of the original financers and funders of the drugs coming into and passing through Trinidad and Tobago came. For example, the "commodification of ethnicity" caused by the original division of labour in the island—whites as plantation owners and colonial authorities, the Chinese, Portuguese and Syrians in trading occupations, Africans, coloureds and urban East Indians in skilled manual occupations, and East Indians in the agricultural fields— had and continues to have implications of symbolisation in the drug trade. The least visible groups in local society by numbers—whites, Syrians and Chinese—all groups traditionally connected to the accumulation of capital through merchant trading, business and commerce, were according to Frank and Shadow those from which the main financers of the transnational drug trade that passes through Trinidad and Tobago came. This was the case throughout the 1970s and 80s, while in the 1990s elements of the East Indian community also became part of the financing group. If this is true, it should not be totally surprising as it would connect to our original definition of white-collar crime and Harvey's notion of class power that, traditionally, white-collar crime is "directed toward financial advantage or the maintenance and extension of power and privilege" (Friedrichs 2009, 8).

The most visible groups in Trinidad society—those of Afro and Indo descent—are those from which the main labour force of the drug trade—and the majority of its casualties—comes. These would be the persons working and controlling the fishing ports and coastline, as well as those persons selling and distributing, and those engaged in the protection and enforcement of the trade. Purchasers of drugs for consumption come from all groups in Trinidad and Tobago, the main difference according to Frank and Shadow is that the lower income drug purchaser does it on street corners, while those of a higher economic class get it delivered to their homes.

They went on to explain how huge profits could be made in the drug trade and had already been made by many. In 2012, a kilo of cocaine brought to Trinidad could be purchased for US $5,000 (in the 1980s it was US $2,000 per kilo) or $1,200 US per kilo if you went by small speedboat and got it yourself from Venezuelan contacts. The same kilo, diluted and cut to increase the quantity could then be sold in the United States for up

to US $35,000 to people who would then sell it on in smaller quantities with less purity at even higher prices. Trinidad, they continued, was more a transhipment point than it was a market for drugs. They went on to clarify, however, that profits could be made in Trinidad and Tobago by selling drugs to consumers. The major profits, however, were accrued by sending and selling the drugs to the United States and Europe. Drug profits cannot just be deposited locally in the bank. They must be laundered. According to Frank and Shadow, there were a few main ways profits from the drug trade were laundered in Trinidad and Tobago. The first and simplest was on the street black market and in casinos. The second was cleaning money through what appeared to be legitimate businesses such as shops in the mall and high streets. A third method was to use couriers to take and bring the illicit funds into and out of the country. Fraud and money laundering can be used to connect those pushing drugs on the street to those financing the transhipment of drugs into and through Trinidad and Tobago. It would be naive to believe that there is no connection at all between them. That said the connection is hard to prove, not least because the drug trade is not something new to Trinidad and Tobago but finely and firmly entrenched locally since the 1970s. As such it would not be too much of a push to suggest that, through the local social structure, demographics and history found in Trinidad and Tobago, the tentacles of the drug trade entangle elements of both white-collar and blue-collar offenders. This is a very different picture than the one of separation which the criminal justice system implies.

How Might We Better Understand White-Collar Crime Locally?

An analogy and connection between theories on street gangs and white-collar crime in Trinidad and Tobago can be made by modifying and flipping "Social Disorganization Theory" on its head (as illustrated in figure 6-1, and applying the lens of "studying up". Social disorganization theory is used by criminologists to explain gang formation and street crime. The theory was developed by the Chicago School and is discernible by several characteristics, mainly inequality, disadvantage, poverty and residential instability. Social disorganization theory is based on the premise that poverty is the main determinant of street crime. This is seen in the concentration of crime in low income neighbourhoods which lack social opportunities for the poor to come out of poverty, thereby driving them to a life of crime to meet their needs. Our modification is based on the premise that wealth is an important determinant of white-collar crime. This is
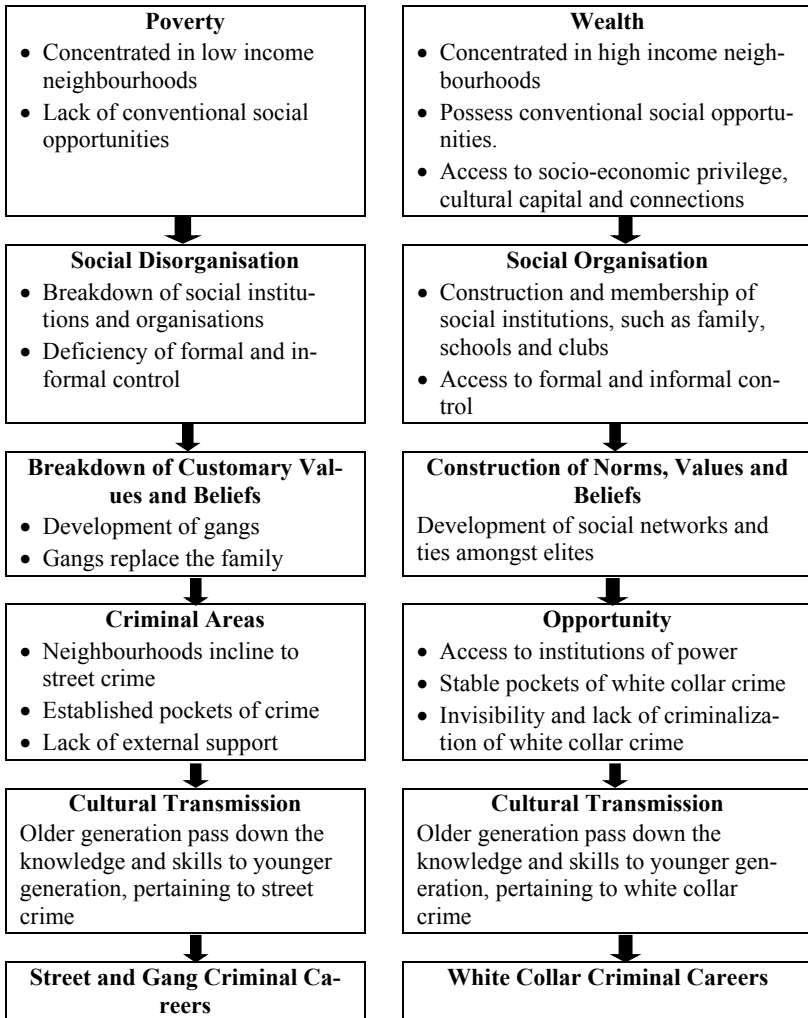
Poverty	**Wealth**
• Concentrated in low income neighbourhoods • Lack of conventional social opportunities	• Concentrated in high income neighbourhoods • Possess conventional social opportunities. • Access to socio-economic privilege, cultural capital and connections
Social Disorganisation	**Social Organisation**
• Breakdown of social institutions and organisations • Deficiency of formal and informal control	• Construction and membership of social institutions, such as family, schools and clubs • Access to formal and informal control
Breakdown of Customary Values and Beliefs	**Construction of Norms, Values and Beliefs**
• Development of gangs • Gangs replace the family	Development of social networks and ties amongst elites
Criminal Areas	**Opportunity**
• Neighbourhoods incline to street crime • Established pockets of crime • Lack of external support	• Access to institutions of power • Stable pockets of white collar crime • Invisibility and lack of criminalization of white collar crime
Cultural Transmission	**Cultural Transmission**
Older generation pass down the knowledge and skills to younger generation, pertaining to street crime	Older generation pass down the knowledge and skills to younger generation, pertaining to white collar crime
Street and Gang Criminal Careers	**White Collar Criminal Careers**

Fig. 6-1 Social Organisation Theory of White Collar Crime in Trinidad and Tobago

seen in the concentration of white-collar criminals in higher income neighbourhoods which provide the social opportunities to create social networks of the powerful. These, in the long run, are often at the heart of white-collar crimes. Wealth becomes the starting point for our "social organisation theory of white-collar crime in Trinidad and Tobago society"

and the white-collar criminal here would often be drawn from, and found concentrated in, high income neighbourhoods.

The second stage of social disorganization theory states that there is a breakdown of social institutions (family and school) leading to criminal activity. In our modified social organisation theory the second stage is adapted to indicate that social institutions of the wealthy would be seen as prestigious (high income families, prestigious schools and elite social clubs) and they provide high levels of academic standards. Instead of social disorganisation, as in the case of street crime, at stage two of our modification there is social organisation and elite formation as the social institutions of the wealthy provide members with forms of kinship, fictive kinship, and meeting grounds, which are important and fertile in constructing the formal and informal links, ties and networks needed to commit future white-collar criminal activities.

The third stage of social disorganisation theory states that there is a breakdown of traditional values that lead to gang involvement and street crime. In our white-collar crime situation the scene would be reversed; there is the reinforcement of the corporate culture, the drive for more wealth, prestige and power, and these ambitions would motivate and provide the opportunities for some members of the higher classes to engage in white-collar criminal activities. We suggest that these ambitions—what could be understood as the construction of norms, values and beliefs—induce group formation amongst the elite to guarantee success. The opportunities of corporate culture and white-collar crime are facilitated through access to social institutions of power. The tentacles of the elite would, as a consequence of networks, connections, ties, family and friends, be far ranging and enhance their power to influence many institutions which could be manipulated and used to facilitate white-collar criminal activities.

The fourth tenet of social disorganisation theory is the growth of criminal areas. Some poor communities are riddled with crime and develop into areas with a consistently disproportionate number of crimes. In these poor communities, there is a lack of external support in terms of access to the formal job sector and privileged schools. The fourth tenet of our modification states that elites have access to institutions of power, such as business organisations, the state, the criminal justice system and the media (Reiman 2004) which creates opportunity for some elite members to commit criminal offences within their occupation, i.e. what could be termed the growth of white-collar criminal areas. Like street crime, there is the maintenance of pockets of white-collar crime. Power and access to the aforementioned institutions of the elite paints white-collar crime as invisible and avoids criminalisation of white-collar criminals. Finally, in

the last stage there is cultural transmission of norms, values and beliefs from the older generation to the younger generation in both street and white-collar crime, thus perpetuating and stabilising both crime groups.

Conclusion

The reality of white-collar crime in a small island nation like Trinidad and Tobago is that there is a relationship between the historical circumstances of the nation, the way class, race and power shaped the nation to produce different groups, areas and individuals, and elite formation—i.e. the cumulative advantages that some people have over others. The demographics of the nation also mean that those with power know each other, went to the same schools and clubs, and are resources that could be called upon to perpetrate white-collar crime, or at the very least, offer individuals the opportunity to learn or be a part of white-collar criminal activity.

In order to explain white-collar crime in Trinidad and Tobago it is important to turn to explanations of the social structure, history, class and power differentials, and the way that access to governance and economics in the island have cultural and structural foundations which influence elite formation. The roots of this line of analysis can be found in Nader's (1972) suggestion of "studying up".

Anthropologists began their studies with small, deceptively simple societies; white-collar criminals we suggest emerge from groups, absorbing the cultural and social norms of their peers, and can utilize the networks, connections and ties they form to commit white-collar crime. As such, white-collar criminals can be viewed as a community with its own networks, modes of behavior, culture, ideologies, and self perpetuation; something we have sought to indicate by modifying social disorganization theory.

In this chapter we have illustrated some of the particularities of white-collar crime in Trinidad and Tobago. We have also tried to suggest that the identification of social, economic and cultural traits amongst a small sector of a larger social group—i.e., white collar criminals as a sector of the elites and upper classes—can improve the visibility of white-collar crime. That Trinidad and Tobago society is mostly fixed on policing, prosecuting and criminalizing street crime and not on tackling the problem of white-collar crime in any serious manner tells us much about who has power in society and who doesn't.

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Chapter Seven

A Gang Leader Through the Eyes of his Mother

Simon Alexis

Abstract

Violent killings of young men in Trinidad and Tobago have spiralled out of control, and are attributed to an increase in gang activities. Several factors have been subject to research, in an effort to understand gang activities. These gang activities were researched from the perspective of the family, and the life of a gang leader was explored. In-depth interviews with the mother of this gang leader, and follow-up interviews with eight members of his community, are the data source of this study. Some welfare programmes which were not properly managed were identified as the bedrock of gang activities. The short life and violent death associated with the lifestyle of gang members should be clear deterrents to becoming involved in gang activity.

Introduction

Gang leader or community activist? A rural village, a few kilometres from the city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, saw the birth, rise and demise of a leader. Many young men were drawn by the charm and charisma of this young, prestige-schooled, religious man. He was said to be responsible for several unlawful deaths and other criminal activities that spanned several villages. A single-parent mother took the reins as head of the household and nurtured that young man who, it was alleged, turned out to be a gang leader and, during his short life, was loved by some but hated by others. Those who hated him were bent on removing him from his power base as a young religious leader. Power, control and charity were associated with the leadership of this young man. Several encounters with

the law did not deter him from his pursuits. The end of his reign brought to mind the cliché "live fast and die young". It can be argued that he made a rational choice when he embarked on the criminal life he was said to have lived. Some commentators have posited that social programmes could have contributed to his early demise. This case study explores the life of a gang leader, with data derived from in-depth interviews with his mother.

The prevalence of gang activities is associated with a large number of murders in Trinidad and Tobago. Many murders are either drug-related or gang-related, more so in depressed communities.[1] The emergence of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago is a growing concern to the Government and society as a whole. This emergence can be attributed in part to North American influences, imported mainly via individuals who were involved in criminal activity in the United States and were deported as a result.[2] Other issues can be identified as contributors to the rise in gangs and gang activity. One issue that is commonly looked at is the social programmes offered by the Government, such as the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) and the Community-Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP). Poverty and illiteracy can also be deemed to be contributing factors of gang activity. The death of many young men in Trinidad and Tobago, and in particular the death of G, can be traced to these factors.

During G's life, several character and behavioural changes were identified, together with some illegal activities in which he was said to have been involved. The illegal activities sparked the intervention of the police, while the changes in his character led him to be given labels such as "community activist" and "gang leader". His position as foreman in the URP was regarded as a medium to legitimize some of his allegedly nefarious activities. The intricacies of his life attracted media attention, and they carried reports of his owning a million-dollar enterprise and being a philanthropist.

This research explored the life and death of G to offer insight into the behaviour and actions of a gang leader. It considered the fear that can be generated within families of gang members. Rational Choice Theory, Differential Association Theory, Differential Opportunity Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour were used to theoretically explain G's behaviour.

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[1] Data obtained from the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch (CAPA) of the Trinidad and Tobago Police service.
[2] Trinidad and Tobago Immigration Department's statistics.

The violent sudden death of several young ambitious men, inclusive of *G*, whose family was not known to be associated with violence, is of concern not just to the police but to Trinidad and Tobago society as a whole. *G*, a religious practitioner, rapidly gained a leadership position as an employer, and was a source of welfare for many members of several communities. Were *G*'s lifestyle and death results of associations or social programmes?

The family is the cornerstone of society, and has the task of socializing children (Haralambos and Holborn 2006). Matrifocal families see the mother commissioned with the socializing task, and consider her best suited to give an insight into the general character of the child. Formation of violent gangs is detrimental to any society. Studying the underlying causes of individuals gravitating towards gangs is essential for formulating solutions to prevent and eradicate such gangs. Viewing a gang leader through the eyes of a mother may lead to some solutions.

The main interviewee, the mother of the alleged gang leader, indicated that *G* was the eldest of her four children. She said that *G* was born on October 23, 1977 and attended a preschool and later the Maraval Roman Catholic School. He was successful at the Common Entrance Examination and attended the Diego Martin Junior Secondary School. Based on his academic potential, he was awarded the right to attend Trinity College, Maraval, where he attained five (5) Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) subjects. He met his demise in August 2005.

Mixed methods were used in this study. One of these methods was life history interviews. Although the mother of *G* was the main source of information, four community members were also interviewed. This served as cross-checks on the findings from the main interviewee. Such cross-checks validated the main interviewee's accounts of the admiration that members of the community had for *G*, and the charitable activities he managed.

In addition to interviews, documentary sources were used. The print and electronic media were explored; so too were police records concerning *G* and other gang leaders. This method was also helpful in cross-checking criminal activities linked to *G* and other gang leaders. One case in point is the criminal offences with which *G* was charged, and the account of the Aleong murder by the main interviewee.

This method was well suited for the research, as it allowed the researcher to explore a structure which emanated from the conversation with the main interviewee. The behavioural patterns of *G*, which she described, were examined within the contexts of appropriate theories. According to Messerschmidt (2005), when doing research that involves crime, using

different methods is recommended if we want to understand the "interrelationship among race, class, and crime" (p. 209). He pointed specifically to "historical and documentary research, ethnographies and life histories" as ways of achieving this understanding. From the standpoint of these methods, therefore, the character and life of *G* were examined.

Character and Behavioural Changes

The main interviewee said, "He was a father figure at home. His football coach says he is a leader. He had an excellent relationship with neighbours and children; a girls' man; all the girls liked him." *G* was well known in the small rural community of approximately 120 persons situated half a kilometre from the Maraval village. Interviews with people in his community supported the main interviewee's statement that he had relationships with many young ladies. It was stated during an interview with one community member that "*G* was a handsome young man the girls went wild over." It was clear, according to the main interviewee, however, that *G*'s behaviour was becoming unacceptable. *G* was nevertheless so well respected and loved that several school teachers were willing to be references at the court hearings for him when he was charged with criminal offences. Despite this, at the time of his demise he had thirteen (13) criminal charges pending, though he was never convicted of any crime.[3]

G's first stint of employment was a position in the government service where he was employed as an on-the-job trainee (OJT). He sourced and took up a position as an apprentice with the Ministry of Education performing in clerical duties. The main interviewee still had control over his movements and kept in touch with his supervisor, but it became evident that his obedience was waning. The first sign of unwanted behaviour was observed by the main interviewee. She reported that:

> "On-the-job training... Ministry of Education... is there it began. The boss called; he was not at work... he with friends in the village. Like he see big money or something; I don't know, I don't know. He say 'Mammy, I can't wait for the month to get a cheque.' I never encouraged him in the drugs. I never take drug money from him. When he was with the weed, he would come. One day he said, 'Mommy, I done with that, yes. I going and buy truck and tractor and hire people to work.' That was his last saying to me."

What was emerging was an obedient young man moving away from a value-driven upbringing and turning to crime as a means of income genera-

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[3] Criminal Records Office of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

tion. The interviewee saw further changes in *G*'s behaviour which she did not welcome.

Illegal Activities

G was involved with new friends who he found in a religious organization located away from his community. The main interviewee was very disturbed by her son's association with this particular religious organization. She conveyed her disgust at his decision when she saw him wearing the headgear used by members of the organization. She was so upset that her other children warned her that she might suffer a hypertensive attack. The main interviewee felt that, based on rumours she had heard, her son might have been engaged in criminal activities. According to the main interviewee:

> "He joined a religious organization; then I started to see changes—in the sense of the illegal things—for myself. People would tell me, '*K*, ah see *G* selling weed.' I say, 'You know, ah hearing something, and I don't like it.' Ah say, 'Don't get yourself involved in that, because the police would come.' I never liked it. I will scold him. He still used to listen to me until 18, 19 years. We used to quarrel every day, every day."

Activities involving illegal drugs and youth in Trinidad and Tobago are not new, and have been of concern to the police authorities since the 1960s. Ottley (1964) indicated that, in Trinidad and Tobago, drug addiction among young people had reached such proportions, and the use of marijuana become so widespread, that a narcotic squad was set up in 1964 to fight this social scourge. The need to have a special squad set up to deal with marijuana, also called "weed", was an indication that the concern about this illegal activity was a huge one. *G*'s alleged interaction with criminal elements was suggested to be the major reason for his being the subject of police investigations. This is consistent with Sutherland's (1939) assertion that criminal behaviour is learned through association with criminal elements.

In *G*'s case, the good values that the main interviewee claimed to have instilled in him were ignored. *G* continued his association with members of the religious group despite his mother's expressed objection to this association. In fact many heated quarrels occurred between the main interviewee and *G*. She kept advising him to turn away from a life of crime, but, as she stated, "He will not listen". An antagonistic relationship was developing between the main interviewee and *G*.

One wonders whether the behaviour displayed by *G* was beyond his control. The main interviewee felt that the bad behaviour *G* exhibited was one he acquired through influence from his associates. She boasted that it was well known that she was a fine mother and did a good job in rearing *G* and her other children. The use of prayer was an important facet in nurturing her children as she reflected on how her other children were not involved in anything negative. There was nothing she could say ill about her other two children. The main interviewee stated that she devoted time each day to prayer, especially for *G*. The main interviewee further commented that:

> "The police say they heard I'm a good mother and ah grow meh children up properly. Ah keep talking with him. It still didn't work. Ah pray, and pray. He said to meh, 'Mammy, I tired see people sell weed and ain't have nothing.' Ah say, 'What? Doh do it at all.'"

Police Intervention

G's name was being linked to several violent crimes that had taken place, but the main interviewee did not believe that her son was capable of committing such crimes. These crimes, for her, would have been perpetrated by *G*'s associates and not him. The main interviewee reported that one of *G*'s associates who lived with his mother, who was the sole parent in that home, also lived a life of crime. It was suggested by the main interviewee that it was by associating with this friend that *G*'s bad behaviour really began. She said, "I think it is the influence, knowing the friends that was around… is strange fellas." One crime in which *G* was said to be involved was one that the main interviewee referred to as the "Mr Aleong crime". She said "Mr Aleong was kidnapped and murdered or something like that." She claimed to have asked *G* if he had committed that crime, and he said, "Mammy, I know nothing about that." The main interviewee said: "Two of his associates came to him and tell him what they going to do—kidnap or so; he told them do what they want; he was not responsible." She stated: "Seeing that he was the head of the—I wouldn't say, gang; no not gang—community activist—he was arrested for the crime."

G resided in the Western Police Division. This Division, according to data from the Crime and Problem Analysis branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, has a disproportionately high number of criminal gangs. In 2009, of the sixty gangs for which the locations were known, twelve or 20% originated in the Western Division. Other Divisions with high numbers of gangs in 2009 were the Port of Spain Division (16 gangs) and the Northern Division (12). In 2012, of the one hundred and two gangs in Trinidad and Tobago, sixteen or 15.6% were located in the Western Po-

lice Division (see table 7-1). When Trinidad and Tobago is considered as a whole, for the period 2001 to 2012, 1244 or 29.5% of all murders were gang-related. The Western Division accounted for 17% (n = 212) of all gang-related murders in Trinidad and Tobago for the period under consideration. Figure 7-1 illustrates the proportion of murders in Trinidad and Tobago which were gang-related for the period 2001 to 2012, while figure 7-2 illustrates the proportion of gang-related murders in the Western Police Division for the same time period.

Table 7-1: Number of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago, by Police Division

Police Division	2009	2012
Port of Spain	16	44
Southern	3	04
Western	12	16
Northern	12	13
Central	2	3
South Western	1	2
Eastern	6	3
North Eastern	5	12
Tobago	3	5
Total	**60**	**102**
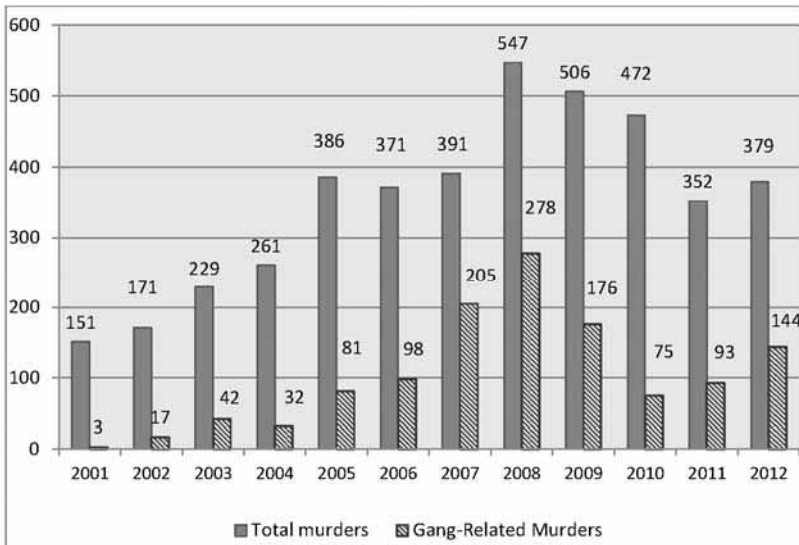
Fig. 7-1 Total murders and gang-related murders in Trinidad and Tobago (2001-2012)
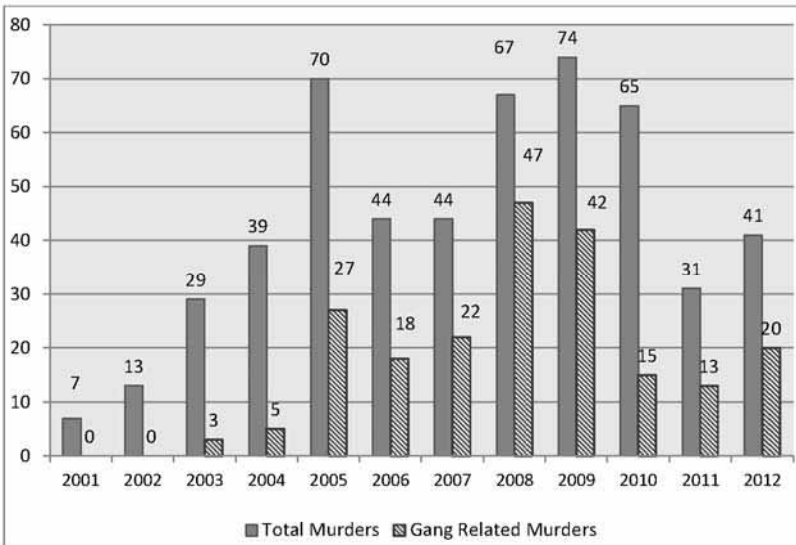
Fig. 7-2 Total murders and gang-related murders in the Western Police Division (2001-2012)

G's Role as a URP Foreman

The social programmes in which *G* was involved were said to have contributed to his lifestyle. Of specific importance here was *G*'s role as a foreman in the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP). The URP was one of Trinidad and Tobago's social programmes formulated to attract citizens and residents who had experienced difficulty in obtaining employment, and especially those who had little or no schooling. People who had been convicted for criminal offences were also employed under this social programme. Supervisors and foremen within the URP had to have the aptitude and ability to manage such programmes, taking into consideration that there might be many persons who were criminals, and who might be difficult to control. Supervisors and foremen had, therefore, to have a robust management style or other traits which would allow them to control ex-offenders. Traditionally foremen and supervisors of the URP were seasoned criminals who were seldom employed by any reputable or recognized employer.

The main interviewee agreed that *G* was a successful controller of many URP groups, which were informally known as URP gangs. She further argued that he was young and intelligent, which could have been the

envy of many persons, and which could be reasons for his early and violent demise. This is how the main interviewee explained *G*'s interactions with the URP employees:

> "It had about ten gangs, each with a foreman, a checker and female labourers. He was the Area Foreman for both Diego Martin and Maraval. When they kill him there was a lot of people saying, 'Is jealousy they kill him for.' Everybody find he was a young, young man, and as the police used to say, 'He was a fella with a lot of brain.'"

The title of "gang leader" attributed to *G* did invoke concerns for his mother. She was very reluctant, and vented her displeasure at having the label "gang leader" ascribed to her son. However, several minutes into the conversation with the main interviewee, she did admit to his being so ascribed. She indicated that the phrase "community leader" was a euphemism for "gang leader".

"Community activist" was the soubriquet commonly used to contain the brazen identity of criminal gang leaders. It was a label that was also accepted by these gang leaders and fit the fancy of the media when referring to them by other than their real names. One act connected to the community activist was making charitable donations to indigents in and around the community. This was also an activity that gang leaders were known to support. *G* was no different, and was well recognized as a "community leader" who supplied items and money to many persons in need of charity. He fed the poor and purchased school books, school clothes and shoes for a large number of needy persons in several areas, especially where he was in charge of URP gangs. One interviewee, a community member, reported that *G* would share out several thousands of dollars to single needy women every Friday after he took part in religious observances. The main interviewee mentioned how charitable her son was, and said:

> "Well, the way he used to help a lot of people, school children, everybody used to come, line meh gate; he would help the poorer class of people; he would help the old people, and everybody in need of anything used to come here."

Many acts known to be linked to gang leaders' activities were occurring with *G* and his associates. According to the main interviewee,

> "He was a strong influence to the youths or something like that. Sometimes they will go out there and do wrong things, and people would be calling their names. But they had him as an idol."

The interviewee reported that, in dealing with education for his admirers, *G* encouraged the young members who were his followers to go to school and learn their work. He further told them that he had learnt his work and achieved passes—referring to the CXC subjects he obtained at Trinity College. While *G* maintained good behaviour at home, several crimes with which *G* was involved were engaging the attention of the police; some led to his receiving criminal charges. The main interviewee began to lose trust in *G*, indicating to him that he was not to be involved in criminal activities. This would occur especially when she saw persons whom she felt were not of good character interacting with him. She continued to encourage him to move away from such behaviour, but without success. When she relentlessly pursued him to change and live a crime-free life, he told her, "Mammy, well, ah is a big man. Ah know what ah doing." She said, "All right [but]... Ah never did give up; never, never, never did give up." Based on what the people in the communities who knew *G* said about his being a gang leader, the main interviewee said that she would agree that *G* was a gang leader.

A Million-Dollar Enterprise

A URP foreman's legitimate earnings from his position were not an amount that would allow him to become very wealthy. Despite this, media reports indicated that *G* was a millionaire. Two possible sources of income included *G*'s earnings from the URP and income from the sales of illegal drugs. By the mother's account, however, *G* did not believe that selling illegal drugs quickly led to wealth. *G*, according to his mother said, "Mommy, I tired see people sell weed and ain't have nothing... Ah wouldn't do it at all." That statement implied that *G* was not interested in dealing in illegal drugs. However, she did say she told *G* about his alleged dealing in drugs, and said, "I would keep always telling him, 'boy, I hear you doing this'—which is selling of the weed."

Selling illegal drugs is well-known, not just locally, but internationally, to result in dealers accumulating great wealth. This form of earning can easily tempt vulnerable young persons to get involved in gang activities. The youth who is a failure at school and is only qualified for a menial job at a minimum wage can earn thousands of dollars, in addition to the respect of his peers, by joining a gang and engaging in drug deals or armed robberies (Siegel 2007). The large sums of money said to be handed out to persons by *G* could possibly be attributed to activities of drug dealing in which he was said to be engaged. It was publicly mentioned that the main interviewee may have benefited from large sums of money said to be owned by her son. She claimed that several local newspapers had sullied

her character and felt, "That is a nasty thing that they put. He leave 14 million for the mother; maxi taxi; and put my name—mother."

G was a young man who, no doubt, was considered a leader by several young persons, both within and outside of his community. It was felt that he had the leadership capabilities to control gang activities, especially those within his community. Many were of the opinion that he had the ability to control persons who were close to him and who were not well educated. *G*'s leadership was seen in his role as URP foreman. The URP, like other similar programmes, was justified on the basis that it played a role in controlling violence in certain communities. *G*'s ability to control potentially crime-prone people made him suitable to function as a foreman within the URP. Reporter, Darryl Heeralal, reported that:

> "…under Manning's PNM Government, several key crime figures identi-fied by the police, including ...*G* ...have amassed millions through the URP, and what was then the NHA refurbishing projects." (*Trinidad and Tobago Express*, February 25, 2008)

As such, the URP may have been an important source of *G*'s alleged wealth.

While *G* had amassed a great deal of wealth, on many occasions he would share such wealth with others. *G*, according to his mother, was a philanthropist. His charity to the needy and persons in his community were widely recognized. The interviewee knew better than anyone else of many such acts conducted by him. She reported that he planned, organized, and financed a yearly sporting/cultural event at the time of the country's inde-pendence celebrations. This event took place mere metres away from his residence, where hundreds of persons gathered to enjoy food, drinks and musical entertainment. Of his generosity, the main interviewee recalled that: "When school time, July, August, parents that don't have money for their children, line the gate and come with their booklists. He used to have a pile of booklists, and would buy the books."

Family Fear

G's role as a community activist/gang leader, as well as his possible involvement in selling illegal drugs generated fear among members of his family. Police were known to have often conducted searches at the home of the main interviewee and arrested *G* on many occasions. While *G* may have grown accustomed to interfacing with the police, the main interview-ee and other members of her family were not comfortable with the police searches, or with the media's publicity about *G*'s activities and perceived wealth. The main interviewee explained:

"It was very, very frightening—frightening in the sense that I could have gotten kidnapped; meh grandchildren and daughters too. So that had me scared for a while, even up to now [6 years after in 2011]. I still have this phobia; I does be very, very careful wherever I go. Since that I always uneasy."

Gang literature has contended that gangs can generate fear in their family members for a number of reasons. For example, feuds can occur between gang members who may not have kept their financial obligations. Gang warfare may also occur as various gangs vie for control of various geographic regions for the reason of selling illegal drugs, or the commission of crimes. Such feuds can have an impact, both physically and psychologically on gang members' families. In the case of *G*, selling illegal drugs can result in undesirable relations with other sellers, and can even lead to gang rivalry. It was said by interviewees in *G*'s community that persons who sold illegal drugs in the adjacent communities would pay *G* a fee to do so. *G*s' control of this specific geographic region could have been a possible source of conflict if other gangs or persons had wished to exert similar control.

Life as a gang leader or community leader is said to be a life of extreme tension where violence can easily be a threat to one's personal safety. According to reporter, Indarjit Seuraj (*Trinidad and Tobago Newsday*, December 22, 2008), gang-related murders accounted for an estimated 70% of the 530 killings in Trinidad and Tobago for 2008. Gangs operate in an area where they have control, and any other gang having an interest, however small, can create violence in that area. The constant possibility of violence might have affected *G* as well as his family.

Many gang killings occur when rival gangs are engaged in violent clashes arising out of events relevant to control at the geographic or economic levels. Sobel and Osoba (2009) posited that government policy guided at dissipating youth gangs would not succeed in reducing violent crimes; in fact, it might increase it. Darryl Heeralal (*Trinidad and Tobago Express*, February 25, 2008) reported that police statistics showed that over 100 of the victims of gang killings since 2002 were URP supervisors, foremen, contractors or workmen. In the same article, Heeralal alluded to the comments made by a judge with regard to a statement by an official who indicated that there were no criminals in the URP. Heeralal wrote,

"In freeing two men charged with one of the most brazen gang-related murders, Justice Anthony Carmona described as 'delusional' and 'irresponsible' the statements made by an official who indicated that that 'There are no criminal elements in the URP'."

It must be noted that while *G* was a well known URP foreman in the Maraval and Diego Martin areas, there were reports that similar foremen were employed in several areas, and gang wars were about to occur among them.

Government support for programmes like the URP implies that there is the belief that youth gangs may serve important violence reduction functions in communities that are prone to a high incidence of gang-related violence. These gangs are said to operate as a law authority, where they discipline errant gang members for in-gang breaches. They are subjected to little control by legal authority, and are entities unto themselves. It is felt that official organizations depend on some of these gangs for protection of their businesses, even using them as debt collection agencies. Sobel and Osoba (2009) argued that by not amply punishing delinquent youth offenders who infringe other persons' rights, the existing legal system has produced an environment that is conducive to the continuation of criminal gangs.

URP, CEPEP and other projects that generate large sums of money, create an environment in which gangs compete for these projects, which can lead to violent gang rivalry. This anticipated burst of violence was believed to be partly responsible for meetings of these "community leaders". The interviewee reported that, "Some peace meeting they had in Laventille, all the heads they say was there. I don't know who called them heads—the police? Heads of gangs? I don't know." The mentality of the various gang leaders was well known. Despite the apparent willingness to communicate with each other, violence was seen as the preferred means of resolving disputes. It became commonplace to read in the newspapers or hear in the electronic media that gang members, or even gang leaders were gunned down for being "disrespectful". This perceived "disrespect" when analysed, stemmed from simple issues that could have been easily resolved by persons willing to dialogue.

Some theorists feel that forgiveness—with its ability to facilitate beneficial emotion regulation processes, such as merciful thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Witvliet, Ludwig, and Vander Laan 2001)—is one of the most effective tools for restoring positive and cooperative relationships following conflicts. *G* and his associates, both in and out of his community, appeared to be willing to use dialogue by attending meetings of gang leaders. On the surface, this appeared to imply a willingness to cooperate and perhaps employ forgiveness if necessary. While this might have been the case, according to Siegel (2006), members of conflict gangs must be ready to fight to protect their own integrity as well as the integrity and honour of their gangs. Sobel and Osoba (2009) further indicated that

gangs, like governments, use coercion and violence to enforce their rules. Garoupa (2000) went even further by asserting that government should enforce less severe punishment on gangs that are not violence oriented, since criminal activity is more efficiently controlled by gangs than by government. It is however the case that while some gangs may be willing to use non-violent means to resolve conflict, the overwhelming propensity for violence in many gangs implies that membership in gangs, including those in Trinidad and Tobago, is associated with an increased risk of violent death.

G Murdered

It was previously indicated that *G*'s mother expressed great fear because of her son's lifestyle. The literature has shown that gang activity can result in the demise of gang members. The main interviewee, *G*'s mother, tearfully reported:

> "One guy come from Laventille and tell him [*G*] that he hear they want to kill him. I was at home and the phone rang. He was by one of his girlfriends, and on his way out they said—well, the phone rang and she said, well, he leave by her and he was coming down, some fellas jump the wall and shot him from behind [*Interviewee crying*]. Losing a son like that it was—it is still terrible. Ah grow him up good, and is every day, every day ah does talk about that. Ah grow him up so good. He make 27 years."

Darryl Heeralal (*Trinidad and Tobago Express*, February 25, 2008) said that *G* was the leader of the majority of criminals in West Port of Spain. At the time of his murder, *G* was described as a URP contractor worth $14 million. The reasons for his death can be explored, based on conversation with his mother, the main interviewee. She knew him best and stood by his side during all the encounters he had with the police. The early demise of *G* at the age of 27 was likely due to his choice of living and may be explained by a number of theories.

Rational Choice Theory

Siegel (2006) believed that regardless of motive, criminal actions occur only after individuals carefully weigh the potential benefits and consequences of crime. Choice is made for a variety of personal reasons including greed, revenge, jealousy or thrill seeking. The main interviewee stated that she nurtured and socialized *G* correctly to be a young man abiding by the rules of law. The path chosen by *G* was not one that showed him to be

trustworthy of good citizen status. The socialization given by her to *G* showed that he did not follow her guidance towards society's accepted values. Her various pleas for him to ignore criminal activities seemed to have fallen on deaf ears.

The main interviewee stated, "My grandson said, 'Mamma, why he choose that life?' I say, 'Daddy grow up properly. It is when he get big he went into that life, but your daddy grow up very good.'" She supported the police actions against *G*s' gang activities. This is unusual, as police actions against gang activities have been met with strong criticism from, not just the gang members, but also the relatives of gang members. The main interviewee said, "When I hear people talking about 'police bad', police have to do what they have to do; they go on what they hear, and deal with what they hear." *G* made a deliberate choice to follow a life of crime. This gives credence to rational choice theory as one explanation for *G*'s alleged criminal behaviour.

Differential Opportunity Theory

While rational choice theory can be used to describe *G*'s behaviour, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) stated that people of all strata share the same success goals but those in the lower class have limited means of achieving them. Even more importantly, such persons may have access to alternate illegitimate opportunity structures which may allow for the achievement of such success goals. According to Cloward and Ohlin, it is the access to illegitimate opportunities which may determine whether or not such persons engage in criminal offending. The environment in which *G* resided was one which was predominantly lower class, and one which presented numerous illegitimate opportunities. It could be argued as well, within the context of *G*'s life, that he created opportunities for such behaviour. An example of this relates to *G*'s selling of illegal drugs. While this was the case, even here, difficulties were evident. According to *G*'s mother,

> "When he was with the weed, one day he said, 'Mammy, I done with that, yes. I going and buy truck and tractor and hire people to work.' That was his last saying to me, about a month or two before he died."

G was accorded recognition and respect by persons from his community, as well as by persons from other communities. This may, to some extent, explain his access to illegitimate opportunity structures, and his ability to create such structures. The main interviewee stated "In and out the area… people really look at him as an idol; I would use Diego Martin, because I work Diego Martin, even when I went Tobago." Despite this, *G*

recognized the importance of legitimate opportunity structures. The main interviewee reported that

> "He used to tell the young ones around... he said, 'go to school and learn all yuh work. I went to school and learned my work. I have meh passes. [Don't] be like me.' His friends, they used to listen to him in the sense that—up to now (2011) they does still talk about him."

Differential Association Theory

The account of the main interviewee covered some of *G*'s many interactions with gang leaders and religious associates. Criminality is the manifestation of a learned process that exists in all societies. Political and legal processes are not the templates for criminality, but social learning is where such behaviours are acquired (Sutherland 1939). Sutherland suggested that criminal behaviours are learnt from peers who are involved in criminal activities. Very close friends—especially significant ones—and family members are the most influential conveyors of criminal activity. Intensity of exposure to criminal activity, according to Sutherland, is a critical factor in determining whether or not persons eventually engage in criminal activity. Thus the more exposure and exposure of a higher intensity will result in a person becoming more likely to engage in criminal offending.

In *G*'s case his mother was concerned about the friends or associates she felt would have led him away from the accepted values of the law-abiding community. She said: "I would say, 'you know these people? You know who around you?' 'Mammy, yes.' Ah say, 'yuh doh know all who around yet.' You understand?" The confidence *G* placed in these associates was strong. According to some theorists, this is as a result of poor self-perception, where others are viewed as more competent and self-disciplined and where one sees oneself as less assertive and views others as exciting and positive (Allik et al. 2010). It is possible that if one finds oneself in such a situation, that one may choose to emulate such persons, even if they engage in illegal behaviour. At the same time, given that *G* was well-respected and considered a community leader, it might have been the case that he too would have influenced others into similar lifestyles. In addition, as a leader of a gang, it would be expected that he would engage in certain types of activities, and this very expectation could have provided a source of motivation for *G*'s activities.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour, propagated by Ajzen (1988; 1991) suggests that one's choice to behave in a particular way is based on one's intentions to act upon the behaviour. Ajzen argues that these intentions are motivational factors in the execution of a specified behaviour. According to this view, the three factors that influence intentions are "subjective norms", "attitudes toward the behaviour", and "perceived behavioural control". Ajzen described the first factor, "subjective norms", as an individual's perception of social pressure to act upon or not to act upon the particular behaviour in question. It may be the case that G may have felt pressured, or that he felt that there was an expectation of his involvement in the serious and violent crimes in which he was allegedly engaged. Subjective norms consist of one's motivation to act when faced with social pressure. The second factor, "attitude toward the behaviour", is described as an individual's assessment of a definite behaviour, including one's perception of how likely an outcome—especially an outcome of negative consequences—will occur. Could it be that G examined the consequences that could occur and concluded that he was not likely to be convicted? Low detection and conviction rates in Trinidad and Tobago indicate that there is a very low probability that criminal offenders will be caught and successfully prosecuted. Knowledge of this could have influenced G and may serve to undermine the deterrent effect of the criminal justice system. Factor three is "perceived behavioural control" or an individual's ease or lack thereof in behaving in a particular way. This is based on past experience and expected obstacles or impediments in performing the behaviour. Ajzen based the third factor on Bandura's (1977; 1982) self-efficacy research. The potential obstacles to G's actions might have very well been considered, based on his experience with other crimes of a similar nature. This theory, like the others mentioned, contains elements which may assist in explaining the alleged criminal activities in which G was engaged.

Conclusion

The account of the main interviewee, G's mother, of the life of G encapsulated his life within the community, his character, behavioural choice and all activities pertinent to his life as a community leader, gang leader and philanthropist. Efforts to explain his behaviour and lifestyle were examined within the context of several theories. Rational Choice Theory, Differential Opportunity Theory, Differential Association Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour were used in an attempt to interpret G's be-

haviour, and give insight into what may have led to his life choices. While these theories are not guaranteed to give a full explanation of his way of life, they yield important insights into the potential causes for his particular style of life.

The lifestyle choices of *G* and his eventual demise can be utilized to discourage would-be gang members. Young persons may be tempted to become gang leaders because of the perceived control, status and wealth associated with such positions. However, the short life and violent death also associated with gang members' ways of life should be clear deterrents to becoming involved in gang activity. In addition, while lifestyle choice is a human right, illegal activities associated with a life of violence brings with them fearful experiences to many families. The family setting is one which is responsible for the primary socialization of young persons, and this plays an important role in the behaviour of such persons as they mature into adulthood. At the same time, socialization may play a contributory role in youth violence. Such socialization may come from within the family, or from within the community. Ironically, families which are not successful in instilling a commitment to normative behaviour may suffer the fear which comes as a consequence of having family members who are involved in violent behaviour.

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Chapter Eight

Girls and Gangs in Trinidad: An Exploratory Study

Wendell C. Wallace

Abstract

There has been little research on female gangs and female gang membership in Trinidad. As such, this exploratory study was embarked upon using primary and secondary data sources which included newspaper reports, interviews with ex- and current female gang members, police officers and prison officers. The study examined the roles and motivations of women in gangs in Trinidad, as well as the possible changing paradigm of women who are affiliated with gangs and gang members. Among other things, it was discovered that over time, the role of women in gangs seems to have changed from that of simply being partners at parties and indulging in hedonistic sexual activities to taking on more frontline activities. The findings suggest that in the modern gang landscape in Trinidad, females are operating in quasi-gangs as well as engaging in illegal economic pursuits in partnership with other gang members. The changing face of female gang involvement appears to be influenced by females' increased involvement in crime and other illicit money-making activities.

Introduction

Beginning in around 1990, most Caribbean countries have experienced an alarmingly high growth in crime rates. This has cast a gloomy shadow on the image that Caribbean islands often present in tourism journals. Tsvetkova (2009) argues that the crime rates for Trinidad and Tobago reveal a troubling pattern. She notes that the country has experienced a sharp increase in homicide rates, rising by more than 400% from 7 per 100,000 in 1999 to 30 per 100,000 in 2007. This alarmingly rapid growth in the

homicide rate is mainly attributed to the recent proliferation of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago (Tsvetkova 2009).

It has been argued that the majority of violent crime in Trinidad and Tobago is gang related and that some of the local gangs have connections to North America via persons deported from the USA (OSAC 2008; Ramjeet 2009). According to official statistics cited by the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC), 295, or 54.2 per cent, out of the 544 people murdered in 2008 were killed in gang-related shootings (Caribbean Media Corporation 2009). The Economist Intelligence Unit (2008) reported that 53 per cent of the killings that occurred between 2003 and 2007 were gang-related. Former National Security Minister, Martin Joseph, was quoted in 2009 as saying that almost 70 per cent of murders committed in the first four months of 2009 were gang related (Ramjeet 2009). Joseph indicated that there were about 190 criminal gangs operating in Trinidad and Tobago (Caribbean Media Corporation 2008). What was not known or reported was the level of female gang activity on the island. It has, however, been suggested that the main players in local gangs are males (Townsend 2009) and that there are no female dominated gangs in Trinidad and Tobago (Katz 2010). This is consistent with the findings of early international research such as the work of Thrasher (1927).

The academic literature largely ignores the role that females play in gangs and sees gang membership as a quintessentially male phenomenon. Presently, there are a number of theories which explain male participation in gangs. Explanatory variables include poor economic conditions (Perkins 1987; Zatz 1987), drug use and marketing (Molidor 1996; Spergel and Curry 1990), family dysfunction (Molidor 1996; Teilmann and Landry 1981), peer pressure (Campbell 1984) and poor self-esteem (Chesney-Lind 1989; Huff 1989). In contrast, the theories relating to female gang members are less comprehensive. Such theories consistently attempt to explain female gang membership by arguing that females who join gangs may be socially inept, physically unattractive or psychologically impaired (Bowker and Klein 1983; Rosenbaum 1991). Other explanations for female gang involvement were that female gang members were socially maladjusted, came from broken and unhappy homes, and did not relate well to the opposite sex (Spergel 1992). This has created an academic void where there seems to be few explanations as to why females become involved in gangs. Given that the 21st century has witnessed a dramatic growth in the number of male and female gangs in the USA, UK and Europe and that the academic literature has kept pace with this development (Hagedorn and Macon 1988; Klein 1995; Spergel 1995), it becomes imperative to examine this issue within the Caribbean context.

A number of researchers claim that many of the existing theories on crime, gang involvement, and delinquency can be extrapolated to explain female gang behaviour (Barton and Figueria-McDonough 1985; Sommers and Baskin 1993). Perhaps, the major reason why there are so few theories to explain female gang participation is that the roles of female gang members are often described by male gang members to male researchers, and interpreted by male academics, rather than being described by female gang members themselves (Horowitz 1986). Indeed, only recently have authors begun to question females themselves about their motives for participating in gangs (Campbell 1987; Taylor 1993). Miller (1996) notes that female gang involvement, which until recently was stereotyped or ignored, has now garnered new interest among researchers. This renewed interest is due in part to the work of feminist scholars such as Bjerregaard and Smith (1993), Chesney-Lind (1993), Fishman (1988), Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) and Lauderback, Hansen and Waldorf (1992) who have struggled to bring the study of women's lives as gang affiliates more fully into the academic world.

This new interest in, and public concern about, females in gangs is not just about their supposed "violent nature" but more importantly about their apparent violation of appropriate feminine roles. This apparent role violation was suggested by the comments made by curious onlookers when two suspected female gang members were shot dead in Tunapuna, Trinidad by a female police officer in October, 2010. The onlookers thought that "it was two male gangsters", while the police said that the women, Susan Frederick and La Toya Mars, were part of a gang based in West Trinidad and were connected to several robberies including three in the Central Police Division, three in the Northern Police Division and two in the Eastern Police Division. Despite the paucity of research on female gang involvement, the role of females in gangs is important, especially given the fact that serious criminal offences committed by female gang members have been increasing steadily and are becoming increasingly common (Spergel 1992; Taylor 1993; Vigil 2008).

Gang-related activities have not been examined systematically and consistently in the Caribbean, and more so female gang activities in Trinidad and Tobago (Decker and Weerman 2005; Heinemann and Verner 2006). As a result, there is very little available academic research literature on Trinidadian female gangs. The sources drawn upon for this study were mainly journal and newspaper articles, interviews with female gang and ex-gang members, and interviews with members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police and Prison Services. Indeed, gathering data on the female gang phenomena in Trinidad proved to be difficult as the Trinidad and

Tobago Police Service has only just begun to keep a central statistical record of gangs. To supplement this data, the present study also relied on unofficial accounts from police officers and other people who are familiar with the gang situation in Trinidad.

The Present Study

This study focusses on the emergence of a new type of femininity which is now being displayed by young females in Trinidad who join gangs, or who operate as accessories to male gangs, or who associate loosely with other females to commit crimes. In outlining this female subculture, the backgrounds, lifestyles, attitudes, norms, values and behaviours of these young women who are either in gangs, were part of a gang or who associate with gangs and gang members in Trinidad, were examined. The research concentrated on the existence of female gangs and, in the absence of a clear female gang structure, the existence of females in gangs and females acting together in the commission of crimes in Trinidad.

In light of the foregoing, this descriptive, exploratory study investigated more extensively the ecology of female gang membership in Trinidad, rather than focusing simply on their psychosocial characteristics. This approach was taken to satisfy the need for a systematic study of females in gangs in Trinidad. The aim was to understand the full range of contextual factors which motivate females to join gangs and associate with gang members on a consistent basis, and to investigate the extent of criminal behaviours which females in gangs, or who are associated with gang members, exhibit. While there has been extensive research conducted on the gang and crime phenomena in Trinidad and Tobago (Cain 1995; Lane and Chadee 2008; McCree 1998; Ryan, St. Bernard and McCree 1997) none has focused exclusively on female gang membership and involvement. However, due to the escalating prevalence of females in gangs and the possible negative life consequences for these young gang-affiliated women (Kontos, Brotherton and Barrios 2003), their various roles as members of gangs, communities and families must be clarified and situated in the current context of local gang involvement. The importance of the present study is underscored by the comments of a police inspector at the Besson Street Police Station who stated that "female gang membership in Trinidad is probably worse than what we [the police] with our limited information and records know." The fact that the police generally have limited, and in some instances no information on female gang members, un-

derscores how little is presently known, and indicates that it is imperative that systematic research in this area be conducted.

The present study utilized data obtained through interviews with four females who were gang associates at some point in their lives. Of these, only one identified herself as an active gang member while the others had been associated with gangs in the past. One of the female interviewees had been arrested for, and convicted of, assault, shoplifting and possession of marijuana, while two others had been arrested for robbery and possession of firearms, but were not convicted. The interviews were conducted in mutually agreed safe locations where each individual was free to speak. The purpose of the interview was explained to each female, anonymity was assured, and consent was obtained prior to the conduct of the interviews. None of the females consented to being tape-recorded due to the sensitive nature of the information. This presented a challenge to the researcher and represents a limitation of the present study. Additional data were derived from interviews with police and prison officers. Other data were sourced from investigations in several gang affiliated communities, and from newspaper and journal articles. The research data were collected over a three-month period. For the purposes of this study, a gang is defined as a group of two or more persons who share a common identity, adopt and use certain signs, symbols, and/or colours, and who individually or collectively engage in criminal activity.

Females in Gangs

Gang membership has long been seen as primarily a male phenomenon, and consistent with this is the fact that most research on gangs has focused on male gangs. The existence of female gangs and gang members, in contrast, has not received careful and consistent scrutiny. Recently, however, more attention has been paid to female membership in gangs as well as to the roles and functions they fulfil. Though early academic literature suggested that most females join gangs for friendship and self-affirmation (Campbell 1984, 1987), and the media usually depicted the "girl gang member" as overly masculine, "bad girls," typically of a particular ethnic background (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 2004), recent research has begun to shed more light on economic and family pressures motivating many young women to join gangs. Such studies have suggested that the majority of female gang members grow up in impoverished environments have relatives who are in gangs, and have parents who are on public assistance or who have unskilled labour jobs (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 2004).

Generally, when people use the terms "female", "young girl" or "woman", stereotypes such as "soft" and "feminine" may be evoked. The involvement of females in gangs, and especially violent ones, violates such stereotypes. The harsh reality is that there may now be little difference between males and females when it comes to gang involvement. According to a senior prison official who was interviewed, an estimated 30% of the female inmates at local correctional facilities in Trinidad and Tobago are incarcerated for gang-related crimes. This raises the question about the factors which encourage females to become involved in gangs. Female gangs and involvement by females in gangs are interesting phenomena and the reasons for such involvement may be complex and personal. Experts believe that some females are lured into gangs by the promise of financial reward, identity and status, but they are also more likely to hold a respectable job at the same time that they are involved in gang activity.

Morales (2000) argued that, for female associates of gang members, a void is created if their male counterparts die or are incarcerated. These females would have previously witnessed how the men ran the "business" and may begin to run it themselves. This statement offers one perspective which may be applicable to gang-associated females in Trinidad. However, Townsend (2009) noted that "few of the rank-and-file members of street-level gangs in Trinidad and Tobago are female." He further observed that females were not in the upper levels of the hierarchy in gangs in Trinidad. He said that:

> "…typically they serve as accessories rather than functionaries because they can travel more freely between turfs and they are sometimes used as messengers; these women are rewarded with proceeds from various criminal activities." (pp. 29-30)

Townsend therefore limited the role of females in gangs in Trinidad and their involvement to that of functionaries, messengers and rewardees. Indeed, the approach of Townsend concurs with the earliest academic literature on female involvement in gangs. However, that approach might be erroneous in contemporary Trinidadian society as females are increasingly carrying out frontline gang activities which had previously been reserved for their male counterparts.

Findings from interviews conducted with the four gang-involved females in the present study indicate that Townsend (2009) may well be incorrect in his assumptions about female gang membership/affiliation in Trinidad and Tobago. It was discovered, for example, that Beverly Nurse-Taitt took control of a notorious East Port of Spain gang in 2003 following the shooting death of her gang leader husband, Mark Guerra. Townsend (2009) may also

not have been privy to information about the notorious grandmother, Lilly Layne, who controlled the drug turf of, and numerous gang members in, Arima, Trinidad, from the 1990s to mid-2000s and who was executed in 2007 by unknown individuals. Perhaps due to the danger associated with gathering sensitive information on gangs, Townsend also might not have had knowledge of Muffin, a young female lieutenant from the Hell Yard gang who is revered by some and feared by many, and who had a frontline position in the gang with her intimate partner, Spanish. Katz and Choate (2006), using data collected from a sample of 359 gang members, indicated that 4.7% of these members were female. Interestingly also, the figures for female youth gang involvement in Trinidad and Tobago paints a fascinating picture. Katz and Fox (2010), in a study conducted on the risk and protective factors associated with gang-involved youths in Trinidad and Tobago, found that 4.4% of their female respondents were current gang members, 5.8% were gang associates, and 4.5% were former gang members. In a subsequent study Katz (2012) collected data from a sample of over two thousand youths in Trinidad and Tobago and found that 9.6% self-reported that they were either in a gang or associated with gangs and that, of these, 40.9% were female. The data from Katz and Fox (2010) suggest information that might have been in the public domain but which might not have been taken seriously; that females in the island are becoming involved in gangs. Female involvement with gangs in Trinidad should not be underestimated as this can lead to inappropriate policy recommendations.

Understanding Female Gang Involvement in Trinidad

Traditional gang theories stem from Robert K. Merton's Strain Theory and Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association Theory, while Albert K. Cohen's (1955) Subculture of Delinquency Theory attempts to explain youth gangs. However, these criminological theories focused on explaining male gang delinquency, thereby leaving the literature void of criminological theories explaining female gang existence and involvement. Therefore, this research paper utilized the Urban Underclass Theory, the License for Thrill theory, and the concept of Multiple Marginalities, in an attempt to explain female gangs and female gang involvement in Trinidad.

The Urban Underclass Theory

The Urban Underclass Theory is associated with the work of Hagedorn and Macon (1988) and Wilson (1993) that referred to the urban poor as the underclass. This theory postulates that, unlike minorities of the past, cur-

rent inner-city residents are permanently segregated and isolated from mainstream opportunity structures, and that gangs are a natural and permanently entrenched outgrowth of this ecological phenomenon. The underclass refers to people who are poor in a rich country, but it is more than just poverty. Wilson (1993) argues that the primary issue facing members of the underclass is "joblessness reinforced by an increasing social isolation in an impoverished neighbourhood" (p. 20). Residents in these communities not only suffer from lower socioeconomic status, minimal education, and lack of opportunities, but they are further victimized by a lack of community safeguards and resources. The underclass's defining characteristic is the absence of job opportunities, coupled with the absence of societal supports. Indeed, many inner-city neighbourhoods in Trinidad are characterized by crime, social disorganization, economic and social isolation, and hopelessness (UNDP 2012). The Urban Underclass Theory can therefore be used in attempting to understand female gang involvement in Trinidad.

Wilson (1987) is of the view that social isolation, which is "the lack of contact or of sustained interaction with individuals and institutions that represent mainstream society", is a result of decreased employment opportunities (p. 60). He also argues that when joblessness becomes a way of life for a community, its citizens:

"…experience social isolation that excludes them from the job network system that permeates other neighborhoods and [which] is so important in learning about or being recommended for other jobs, thus a vicious cycle is perpetuated through the family, through the community." (p. 57)

Wilson states that the problem of the underclass is not one of culture, but one of isolation from community and necessary resources.

License for Thrill

The answer to the question "why do females join gangs?" may also be their lust for thrills and desire to indulge in risky activities. According to Wickens (1997) some people seek a "license for thrill". In line with this premise, adventurous, risk-taking females may seek to join gangs in order to release the pressures of boredom. Such persons are often described as unrestrained "action seekers" who perceive that the dangers associated with their practices are not necessarily threatening and believe that such practices are more exciting when compared to their ordinary routines. Risk-taking refers to the tendency to engage in behaviours that have the potential to be harmful or dangerous, yet at the same time provide the op-

portunity for some kind of outcome that can be perceived as adventurous and, perhaps, positive. Voluntary risk-taking is a behaviour that involves individuals' participation in activities that they perceive to be in some sense dangerous, but which are undertaken deliberately and by choice (Lupton and Tulloch 2002). This rationale is aligned with those of Matza and Sykes (1961) who suggested that "courting danger, taking risks etc. are attempts to manufacture excitement" (p. 713) for some individuals and "the search for adventure, excitement, and thrills, then is a subterranean value" (p. 716). The license for thrill perspective also has an obvious connection with the general theory of crime (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Taken together, the above suggests that females who become involved with gangs in Trinidad may do so, at least in part, for the excitement which such a life is perceived to bring. Such females to some extent may also lack self-control.

Multiple Marginalities

The phrase "multiple marginalities" reflects the complexities and persistence of many underlying forces. As a theory-building framework, the concept of multiple marginalities addresses the ecological, economic, socio-cultural, and psychological factors that underlie street gangs, and youth and female participation in them (Franzese, Covey and Menard 2006; Vigil 2002). This perspective holds that gangs tend to form in economically distressed areas that suffer from multiple marginalities such as the combined disadvantages of low socioeconomic status, segregation, racial discrimination, and lack of education. Because females are also caught in the tangled web of "multiple marginalities" they can be indirectly coerced into joining female or male gangs or being involved with gangs. Such involvement may provide a means to compensate for the inadequacies which result from multiple marginalities. The concurrent existence of multiple forms of deprivation may create a situation where there appears to be no other alternative but to engage in non-conventional activities in order to provide for oneself and one's family.

Conversations with the Girls

In an attempt to understand the extent of female involvement as gang members and affiliates in Trinidad, four gang-associated females were interviewed. The research subjects agreed to be interviewed on their terms, that is, at a time and location suitable to them, on the condition of anonymity, and on the condition that no one would be arrested as a result of the

information provided. The interviewees also indicated that they would not provide information if the interviewer was a police officer. In all cases respondents were provided with proof that the interviewer was a university researcher and was collecting data for a study to be presented at a conference. After satisfying these conditions the young women agreed to be interviewed.

Though unstructured and largely informal in nature, the conversations with the four young women who were/had been intimately involved with gangs at various points in their lives yielded rich contextual information about female gang involvement in Trinidad. While the information which was gleaned from the interviews might lack external validity, it is certainly useful as it affords the reader, practitioner, policy maker, police officer, parent, and criminologist useful insights into the activities of females in gangs. It should be noted that the names and ancillary information of the interviewees were changed to protect their identities as part of their agreement to submit to the interviews. The interviews were conducted at locations in Port of Spain and Chaguanas and were of one hour duration.

The interviews were conducted in an informal manner and the researcher allowed the young women to direct the conversations with minimal interruptions. The young women were willing to be interviewed and spoke openly, frankly, and remorsefully in some instances, on a wide range of issues inclusive of their experiences in gangs with male gang members, activities with their "girls", their roles in gangs, experiences with the police and a host of other experiences. All of the female gang members/affiliates who were interviewed eventually expressed delight at being given the opportunity to share their stories. The following paragraphs offer descriptions of the young women's demographics, years of involvement, level of involvement, activities, reasons for involvement, and the rationale for eventually desisting from involvement with gangs.

Indian

Indian, as she was popularly called, came from a poor family in central Trinidad. At the time of the interview she was 29 years old and had gotten involved with gangs and gang members in the Chaguanas area because she felt constantly smothered by her parents who wanted her to become a doctor. Indian attended a prestigious secondary school in central Trinidad and, from her interview, appeared to be well informed about a range of local activities. She claimed to be the holder of four CXC ordinary level subjects but stated that she had never liked school and disliked studying. When questioned about her age of initial involvement, criminal convic-

tions, and her reasons for being associated with gangs, Indian replied: "*I was a young rebel at school, I would talk back to teachers when I felt they wrong, answer my parents because they were very protective. Ah had no freedom and they [parents] didn't like my friends—the Creole ones. At 17 they (my parents) wanted to marry me off to an older man who was an engineer, but the first time we had sex I knew he wasn't my cup of tea, so I ran away and stayed by a friend in town* [Port-of-Spain]."

Indian stated that she operated with three to five other girls at various times. According to her, they were not a gang but a clique of "Good/Bad Girls" (GBGs) which was the name they used among themselves in their operations. Indian stated that at times she and her friends would "put people in place", steal cars, steal clothing, assault and rob mainly females and would act as decoys for a group of PH taxi drivers [1] in Chaguanas by pretending to be passengers and encouraging women to travel in the cars before exiting and allowing them (female passengers) to be robbed and, in some instances, raped. Indian claimed that on several occasions she was held at police stations but because of her father's connection to a certain politician in central Trinidad, she never spent a night in a cell.

Kalea

Kalea described herself as a true "Trini" (Trinidadian). She was of mixed ethnicity as her father was African and her mother was of East Indian, Spanish and Chinese descent. She grew up as a Catholic in a middle-class community located close to a mall. Both her parents were gainfully employed and, as a consequence, she was well provided for when she was a child. She attended several established educational institutions before she landed a job at a financial institution. However, Kalea stated that her desire was for adventure, for though she had supportive parents, her life was generally boring. In other words, her foray into a life as a gang affiliate was driven by boredom and the need for excitement and adventure.

Kalea's involvement with gangs was as a fringe member and she never got too deeply involved with the gang culture because of the fear of shaming her family. She stated that she got intimately involved with the leader of a gang of kidnappers in North Trinidad when she was 23 years old and "*all I did was to give him information on people's bank accounts*". She further explained: "*In the beginning I did not know why he wanted the*

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[1] This refers to persons who ply cars registered for personal or private use (with registration numbers beginning with the letter "P") for hire without appropriate certification (cars for hire, i.e., taxis, have registration numbers beginning with the letter "H").

information, but after a while I realized that every time I gave him the in-
formation he needed on someone, the person would go missing and the
news kept saying that the missing person was kidnapped and that he
[name withheld] *is the main suspect*."

Kalea stated that she met [name withheld] one night while club hop-
ping with her girlfriends. She said that he introduced himself to her and
told her that he attended school with her brother. Kalea said that they
struck up a conversation and she soon realized that she had actually re-
membered him attending a birthday party at her home for her brother and
had even seen him with her brother at a football match at the National Sta-
dium. She said that he purchased the most expensive drinks for her friends
and herself while he and his friends remained in a corner having a good
time. Kalea said that she was impressed by his actions and on leaving gave
him her mobile number. She said that he called about two weeks later and
they arranged to meet at the same location with her friends. Kalea admit-
ted to having "great sex" that night and the relationship began.

Kalea stated that on several occasions she travelled out of Trinidad and
Tobago with him, would receive expensive gifts, stay overnight at local
hotels and collect thousands of dollars to go shopping. Kalea stated re-
morsefully that it all came at a cost. After two years, Kalea lost her job at
the financial institution after she was caught on surveillance cameras hand-
ing the gang leader an envelope, was pregnant for him and he was arrest-
ed. Being naïve she said, she visited him in prison only to realize that she
was one of his many women. Heartbroken, hurt, and pregnant, Kalea said
that she made a conscious decision never to speak to him again or enter-
tain any thoughts of gang involvement. She related that one day, while
outside the prison, she overheard a discussion about killing the incarcer-
ated kidnapper's child's mother. This made her even more fearful about
the relationship she had. Kalea seemed very remorseful about her partici-
pation in criminal acts and indicated that she wished that she could undo
what she had previously done.

T(error)

T, who was of African descent and still retained her gang name, Ter-
ror, came from a poor, single-parent, female headed family in one of the
crime hotspots in north Trinidad. At the time of the interview she was 22
years old, and had gotten involved with gangs at the age of 16 because she
felt that there was no other alternative. When questioned about her reasons
for gang involvement, T stated: "*You doh know how it is to be hungry and*
hearing yuh belly growling and it have nothing in the house to eat. I got

involved with a community leader in my community because I was young, pretty, vulnerable and kinda different from most girls where I lived. He [the gang leader] began giving me money to go to school, buy food for me and my family and fixed up our old run down house. Soon, I was hiding him, his guns and selling weed".

T managed to complete her secondary schooling (the only one in her family to do so) in a school close to her community and had a total of six Ordinary Level passes after two attempts at the examinations. She said that she found great difficulty in getting even a low paying job, such as a sales clerk at a store, because her applications were turned down due to her address. T intimated that life in the `hood was tough but "*I got involved with him* [name withheld] *because of the glamour of being his girl. No one interfered with me on the streets and I always had money—his money—and I had access to guns—his guns*". T stated that after two years of being safe with her community leader/gangsters, they were shot at by some men in two cars after leaving a nightclub in Curepe. "*He pick up about six* [was hit by six bullets] *and I got grazed twice. I was in the hospital for two days. He was real lucky to be alive. One of the shooters even came to the hospital to "done" him* [kill him] *but it had a police guard, so the shooter leave*". T intimated that that was the turning point in her life as she separated herself from the intimate relationship with the gang leader and moved out of the community.

Two interesting themes which emanated from the interview with T were related to peer pressure and the need for affection. T spoke openly about the fact that peer pressure by other girls in her community influenced her to join the gang in her "hood because of the fact that some of her girlfriends were in the gang, as well as her two brothers and her brothers" friends. She also apologetically spoke of it being taboo to be intimately involved with a male from another community as another reason why she chose someone from within her community. She stated: "*At first I had liked a guy from Trincity. He was about 19 and one night he dropped me home after cinema and my brothers had to escort his car out of* [area named] *because them fellas wanted to kill him. Yuh know that was the last time he talk to me. I was "fraid, real "fraid; I thought they was going to kill him and take his car*."

T also stated that, before leaving gang life, she had operated with a "clip" of four other girls who partied hard, hung out with male gang members, wore expensive clothing and robbed men using innovative techniques. She stated that she stole clothes from several business places, was arrested and convicted, but never used drugs and considered her "clip" as a "*sort of female gang*".

Reds

Reds was of mixed descent and was only fifteen years old at the time of the interview. She did not know much about her father and had been placed in foster care with a family in rural Trinidad from an early age as her mother was a prostitute and deemed by the courts unfit to raise her. Reds was quite an intelligent and streetwise young girl who was then attending a prestigious secondary school in north Trinidad and was a Muslim. Reds stated that she joined a Diego Martin based criminal gang at the age of twelve as her husband was the leader of the gang. She also stated that she left the gang at the age of fifteen because her husband was murdered and some of the male members of the gang wanted to marry her, much to her chagrin. Reds also claimed that she distanced herself from the gang as individuals from other gangs were also threatening to kill her.

Interestingly, this young girl spoke openly about the occasions when she was part of, and privy to, the commission of several crimes while in company with male and female gang members. These incidents occurred when she was between the tender ages of twelve and fifteen years. Reds disclosed that while she was a member of the gang there were several instances when she was used as a decoy to distract local police officers in the conduct of their duties as they (police officers) generally feel sorry for juveniles and school students and are less apt to search them. The young lady also mentioned that she was used to transport drugs (marijuana) and guns while travelling in maxi-taxis dressed in her school uniform as police officers hardly ever search school students, more so female school students. She also spoke of selling illegal drugs, mainly marijuana, to other school students in the vicinity of her school as she was more inconspicuous than an adult seeking to constantly gain access to school compounds. Reds also spoke of using her Muslim garb to conceal weapons and drugs, also while travelling in vehicles as it tended to mask her guilt due to her appearance of religiosity.

Appearance

According to T, the girls in her clip were always well dressed, wore expensive brand-name sunglasses, large gold hoop earrings, short, sexy outfits, coloured wigs or hair pieces, lots of jewellery including nose and tongue rings, several earrings in each ear, numerous gold rings and their toenails and fingernails were always well done. T stated that they dressed like that in order to attract certain types of guys, and on many occasions simply swapped their clothing or mixed them when they could not get new

ones. At other times "*we simply stole them*", T said, with a wry smile. T stated that the girls only rode with the guys with the flashiest cars.

The appearance of these young women about whom T spoke so glowingly demonstrated their difference and individuality as young women (Sanders 1994). The appearance of these females contrasts markedly with the images and descriptions of male gang members, who dress as if they are about to go into battle, as the image of male gangs finds its apotheosis in their appearance (Sanders 1994). This flashy, expressive, outward appearance which T described should not be taken as the only dress code of female gang members in Trinidad. For example, Indian stated that her clique of girls dressed simply to avoid notice and to blend in with the crowd depending on the occasion. She stated that jeans and tops or female work outfits were used as they sought to trick people into believing that they were just other working girls. As such, detecting female gang members/affiliates in Trinidad can be very difficult for police officers as the former can go unnoticed because of their appearance, education or occupation. In the case of Kalea, she worked at a financial institution and dressed quite immaculately at all times. In contrast to this, Reds indicated that she was usually dressed in her Muslim religious clothing when carrying out criminal acts for her gang.

The stories of these young women are very illuminating, but they represent the views of only four female gang members/affiliates and the study identified meaningful themes of female gang membership which can be examined more extensively on a larger scale. The value of the data collected from these young women is that it gives context to female gang participation in Trinidad and challenges some commonly held perceptions about female gang involvement.

Criminal Behaviours/Activities

Female gang members/affiliates are now increasingly becoming involved in crimes which in the past were more typical of only male gang members in Trinidad. According to Reds, Indian and T, female gang members now participate in pick pocketing, armed robberies, abductions, harbouring criminals, car theft, and drug sales and distribution. When questioned about why this change was occurring, T replied: "*Simple; we had access to our boyfriend's and our brother's gun and we knew how to use it. Most times they give us they piece* [gun] *or they corn* [bullets] *to hide for them when the place hot* [police searches for the male gang members were being conducted] *and we would play with it and practise how to*

shoot. Sometimes we used to borrow the guns and put down a wuk [robberies, etc.] *without them* [boyfriend or brother] *knowing*."

Thus, the need for money as well as the ease of acquiring a gun brought about a seemingly radical evolution in female gang activity in Trinidad since no matter how big, masculine and muscular the opponent is, the gun levels the playing field. Another reason advanced by the females for the increase in female gang activity was that police officers are far more trusting of a group of five females in a vehicle than a group of five males in a vehicle.

Two of the female research subjects spoke openly of "*putting people in place*". This term referred to the practice of getting rival gang members or unsuspecting individuals in locations where they could be victimized by the girls' intimate gang boyfriends or even, in some instances, by groups of girls. The young women stated that some of their activities involved hiding and transporting guns, selling marijuana, recruiting other girls, hiding loot from robberies, conducting business such as banking money and pawning gold and selling/passing counterfeit US and Trinidad and Tobago currency. They also reported that they would give rehearsed alibis to the police on behalf of their boyfriends, provide shelter when the place was "hot" (referring to police manhunts, rival gang retaliation, etc.), call police stations to monitor police activity and vehicular movements, act as distractions to police officers and rival gang members and even act as agent provocateurs by seeking to befriend police officers. Indian discussed some of her activities in these words: "*I would carry food and messages to my man when he hiding, give him plenty sex and use meh body to hide handcuff keys and other things for him when he get lock up*". Kalea, the former employee of a reputable financial institution remorsefully and almost tearfully recounted how she provided sensitive and confidential personal information to her former gang boyfriend who was the leader of a notorious gang of kidnappers. This led to her eventual dismissal from the financial organization.

Discussion

Historically dismissed and trivialized by authorities, established gangs run by females (even for short periods as in the case of Beverly Nurse-Taitt and Lilly Layne in Trinidad) and female gang involvement are now recognized as an important issue. Attitudes are changing as the 21st century has brought a discernible increase in violence and serious crimes committed by females. Early research by Thrasher (1927), Campbell (1984, 1987) and others might have convinced experts that female gang member-

ship was purely for social and sexual activities, which at that time may very well have been the case. However, in contemporary Trinidad, the girl behind the male gang member may now well be the girl behind the trigger.

The death of two female bandits who were shot in Tunapuna in 2010 by a female police officer assigned to the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation Municipal Police should raise serious questions in the minds of local researchers. This may be indicative of a possible shift toward gang and criminal activities by young females, as daring daylight robberies had previously been the domain of male gang members in Trinidad. The police officer shot the women in a getaway car after responding to a report of robbery at the Tunapuna market and the victims were later identified as Latoya Mars, 26, and Susan Frederick, who was in her mid-30s. Reportedly, both victims were from the Factory Road, Diego Martin community where crime and gang activity are rife and it was suggested that both women were either part of a larger gang of deviant females or actual gang members based in their community.

Most academic studies suggest that two basic categories of variables, structural factors and psychological factors, are the causal factors behind female involvement in gangs. Data gathered from the four gang-affiliated females, as well as from other stakeholders suggest that both sets of factors are important in the Trinidadian context. The data suggest that the structural factors behind female gang formation and involvement are mainly poverty, high crime rates and social isolation. The psychological factors include the need for status, identity and belonging, as well as the psychological characteristics of the individuals who choose to become involved with gangs. Data from the interviews with T(error) and Indian suggest that female gang involvement in Trinidad is predominantly limited to young women who are permanently excluded from participation in mainstream occupations, as, according to these interviewees, most of the girls who are involved with gangs in Trinidad seem to be largely uneducated and have not been employed by the state or other legitimate agencies. Within this context, it can be seen that the expectations of some of the females in gangs, such as some of the girls in the GBGs (Good/Bad Girls) and those in T's community were lowered because there were few expectations for success in the communities in which these females lived. These women came primarily from dysfunctional communities in inner-city areas or in suburban "plannings" (government sponsored housing projects), and often from single-parent, female-headed homes.

To view these local female gang members/affiliates as victims may be justifiable. They were victims of poor economic conditions and the vicious cycle of poverty that so often afflicts many people. They were also the

products of extreme parenting; either very strict or extremely lax. However, to view these girls only as victims would be inaccurate, as in some instances a deliberate choice was made to join a gang (as in the case of Kalea who had not experienced difficult life challenges while growing up). Although the literature portrays female gang members as little more than subordinate sex objects for their male counterparts, cheering on "their men" from behind the scenes, the responses from the females who were interviewed seem to suggest that the role of female gang members is evolving into a more radical one. Females are now becoming the perpetrators of serious crimes in the same manner as their male gang counterparts.

Risk Factors and Motivators for Gang Involvement

Based on the conversations with the four females, the following appear to be plausible risk factors for gang involvement by females in Trinidad:

- Race, community and class factors;
- Rebellion against parent(s);
- Socialization and associational aspects with deviant peers;
- Fulfilling familial needs such as affection, loyalty, and a sense of belonging;
- Peer pressure;
- Protection;
- A sense of belonging and empowerment;
- Liberation and independence from family, cultural and class constraints;
- The need to survive in violent communities;
- Friendship and self-affirmation;
- Poor parenting;
- Residing in socially disorganized low income communities; and
- Absence of meaningful jobs.

The main motivators for female gang involvement in Trinidad, as gleaned from the interviews were:

- Financial gains/rewards;
- The need for protection;
- Peer involvement;
- Desire to escape poverty; and
- Desire for affection.

Conclusion

Despite its limitations, this study serves to improve our understanding of the role of females in gangs in Trinidad. On the face of it, some local girls are lured into gangs or gang involvement by expectations of excitement (to counteract their boredom), and power over their peers or unsuspecting victims. The harsh reality is that some of these girls also live in households where the family nucleus was never formed, mainly owing to the absence of a father figure. In a Trinidadian context, structural marginalization and geographic racism plague many young females in dysfunctional inner-city communities on a daily basis and force them into gangs and gang-related behaviours. The inner-city female interviewee (T) explained that whenever girls in her former inner-city community applied for jobs in the private sector using their inner-city addresses, they were not even given the courtesy of a reply, in most instances. This, she said, forced them to use the address of family members in other residential areas. Conversely, T claimed that though the girls would sometimes get favourable responses from government agencies and though some were eventually employed, they were often belittled, chastised and constantly supervised in a derogatory manner when their true residential addresses were known. It may be plausible to conclude, therefore, that female gang involvement in Trinidad is, in part, the result of this type of marginalization, which is the relegation of some females to the fringes of society, where isolated social and impoverished economic conditions result in powerlessness. This postulation is supported by Hayden (2004), Blanc (1995), Hazlehurst and Hazlehurst (1998), and Hagedorn (2007).

Findings from this study suggest that a range of factors are important in explaining female gang involvement. These include environmental and community factors, economic deprivation, social isolation, boredom, materialism, and an insensitive and misguided legalistic approach by local legislators to this societal issue. As Vigil (2008) noted:

> "…while there are still plenty of dysfunctional, volatile and violent aspects to the gang, in the absence of other conventional, government based influences, the gang, howsoever destructive, is the only game in town for some impoverished females who are street socialized." (p. 71)

The implications for policy are that a legalistic approach based solely on suppressive tactics will do little to change the social and economic conditions which are conducive to gang formation and persistence, and which recently, have influenced females to become involved with gangs. A more sensitive approach would include prevention as an equally important ele-

ment. Preventative measures should seek to eliminate those factors which create conditions whereby both males and females in some communities believe that they have no alternative but to join gangs.

In spite of this exploratory research on female gangs and female involvement in gangs in Trinidad, many aspects of female gang functioning and the lives of female gang members in Trinidad remain to be discovered. Local researchers face serious obstacles in the study of female involvement in gangs and gangs generally, such that when such studies do occur, the samples are small and unrepresentative. Another issue in Trinidad and Tobago is that there is only fragmentary official data on gangs. Where such data exist, the focus is on males and not on females. As a consequence, researchers must rely on law enforcement officers and agencies to provide information. Such information, at times, can be biased. A further problem faced by researchers when investigating the issue of females in gangs is the dual roles they sometimes play. In some instances, females in gangs operate as accessories to their male counterparts, or they may operate as quasi-gangs and at other times as a loose association of females committing crimes. This is further compounded by the fact that in some instances there are all girl gangs, commonly referred to as "clips" or "cliques". The problem of accessing data on females in gangs is further exacerbated by the fact that gangs are highly suspicious of researchers and cooperate with researchers only under exceptional circumstances. In the current study, for example, one potential interviewee wanted the researcher to meet her at a dangerous location in Laventille, was inflexible about meeting elsewhere, and was steadfast in her demand to be paid for the information which she possessed.

Despite these hindrances, the researcher was able to conduct research with women involved in gangs in Trinidad and was able to obtain trustworthy data. However, many local researchers avoid what they perceive to be the dangers involved in field studies which focus on gangs. Indeed, the problems which have been mentioned above did affect this research. There is, however, much scope for further research to be conducted on female gangs and female involvement in gangs in Trinidad. The present study was exploratory in nature and while some academics may critique the study's validity because of the small sample which was used, it is important to note the difficulty involved in gaining access to female gang members/affiliates, as well as their male counterparts, since it is perceived by such persons that researchers cannot be trusted. The results of this study indicated a slowly changing role for females in gangs in Trinidad. It was found that females were adopting greater frontline roles in gangs, both as accessories and acting in concert with other girls as quasi gangs.

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SECTION TWO:

INTERVENTIONS AND POLICY

CHAPTER NINE

GANGS IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
AN ESSAY ON EVOLUTION
AND CHANGING DYNAMICS

ANTHONY T. BRYAN

Abstract

The Northern Triangle (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) has become in the last decade one of the most violent regions in the world outside of global active war zones. Homicide rates have gone up dramatically in every country in the region. Honduras has the highest per-capita murder rate in Central America followed by El Salvador and Guatemala. Gang-related violence and crime have suffocated economic growth, fostered widespread fear, and made life unbearable for much of the population. Street gangs such as the *Mara Salvatrucha* (*Calle 18* and *MS-13*), and of violent Mexican-based paramilitary groups like *Los Zetas* have carved out geographic areas where national governments are essentially powerless to intervene. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs)—many of which are Mexican and Colombian drug cartels— that have penetrated Central American countries, have the finances, organizational structures, geo-strategic influence and illegally obtained firepower to potentially destabilize many Central American communities. The gang structures in the Northern Triangle have different relationships with the TCOs, making generalizations difficult. But traditionally, street gangs in the service of the TCOs are the ground troops and the reserve armies in much more elaborate corporate structures. They contribute to high levels of citizen insecurity and pose a threat to democratic governance by funding political parties, interfering with justice systems, and providing alternative governance within existing national territories. Zero tolerance national security laws and strong-arm tactics have not curtailed the activities of gangs. Central American gangs are not static. They grow more sophisticated on a daily basis, and have progressed from being cheap labour for drug traffickers

and the TCOs, or just simply organizers of protection rackets and regional prostitution. They are becoming involved in cross-border human and arms trafficking, as well as in the transnational drug trade. Increasingly, they are becoming aware of their potential political power, based on territorial control and their ability to deliver large numbers of votes to preferred candidates. In some cases they are evolving to resemble organized crime syndicates more than street gangs. The evolution of Central American gangs, major differences in their *modus operandi*, their changing dynamics, and the responses of the individual governments trying to manage the security crisis posed by the gangs, are the subject of this chapter. Some relevance for the Caribbean may be discernible.

Introduction

After decades of civil war and political repression, peace agreements were signed in Central America in the 1990s. These agreements hastened the democratization processes in the region. While political violence has decreased since the mid-1990s, criminal and social violence has risen. Street gangs known as *maras* have terrorized the populations of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala (collectively known as the Northern Triangle of Central America) placing them among the most violent countries in the world (Bruneau, Dammert and Skinner 2011). Local gangs that emerged from deprived neighbourhoods have joined one of the two transnational gangs that originated in the US: the *Mara Salvatrucha* (MS-13) and *Barrio 18* (the Eighteen Street Gang). Street gangs attract the most media attention and are often seen as the principal cause of insecurity in the region. While the media and some analysts have attributed a significant proportion of violent crime to *maras*, many of which have ties in the United States, recent research on the *maras* draws attention to the many facets of their evolution and current dynamics.

Taking a panoramic view of the region, it is clear that across Central America, international drug traffickers, violent youth gangs, and organized crime syndicates have largely replaced the Marxist rebels and the military of the 1970s and 1980s as the chief instruments of disorder. They are the major players in drug smuggling, human trafficking, arms dealing, kidnapping, robbery, extortion, and money laundering. Central American countries today face a common crisis of violence, insecurity, and powerful criminal organizations that are able to compromise the ability of the state to perform its legitimate national security and public service functions. The crisis is severe in Central America because the societies and institu-

tions are weak, and the response capacity of the governments is limited (Bryan 2012; Farah 2013).

But all is not what it appears to be at first glance. In almost every circumstance the devil is in the details. The *maras* are not static. They grow more sophisticated on a daily basis. Moreover they are constantly reinventing themselves and keeping ahead of state authorities and security forces. In some cases they have also transformed themselves into powerful cross border and transnational crime networks—even as they control large portions of national territory. Some insight into their varied origins and evolution, modus operandi, changing dynamics, and the responses of national and regional governments to manage the security crises posed by the *maras*, is the focus of this chapter.

The Origins of Central American Gangs (Maras)

Maras have a long history in the region but began operating in great numbers in Central America in the early 1990s. The reasons for their growth are many, complex, and debatable. Emigration and deportation are important factors in the rise of gangs in Central America. During the civil wars and political repression of the 1980s, Nicaraguans migrated to Costa Rica which had no problems with street gangs. Migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador went to the US. Large numbers settled in the poor neighbourhoods of Los Angeles where there was a large Latino community and a long-established street gang tradition. The *Barrio 18* gang welcomed young immigrants from Central America who were struggling to fit in with their US peers. For many of these young people membership in the gang offered both an identity and safety. It combined the promise of friendship, solidarity, and respect with protection against harassment and intimidation by other gangs. However, the price of membership was that members had to defend to the death the name and honour of the gang.

In the early 1990s, the US authorities began deporting large numbers of arrested or convicted youngsters, particularly those suspected of being gang members, to their countries of origin. Subsequently, Central America's gang problem increased dramatically. The style and attitude of the big-city gangs from the US made a huge impression on young people from deprived neighbourhoods in Central America. The distinctive dress, hand gestures, and body language associated with the new gang culture won many converts. Those who were deported from the United States (it continues today) maintained their connections in the US and throughout Central America. The more entrepreneurial among them established connec-

tions with the more sophisticated drug trafficking cartels headquartered in Mexico (Dudley 2011a; Savenije and van der Borgh 2009).

There are different ways to assess the causes of street gang formation. A common approach in Central America is the "epidemiological model", which was developed by the Pan-American Health Organization. This model looks at the factors that can lead to violence and membership of street gangs, and the factors that can prevent it (PAHO 1997).José Miguel Cruz (2005) a researcher at the Central American University in San Salvador, classified 27 risk factors including social exclusion, rapid urbanization, migration, disorganization at neighbourhood level, drugs, family problems, repatriation of experienced gang members from the US, a culture of long-term violence including one in which guns were prevalent, the active role in criminal networks of ex-combatants from the long-standing civil wars, and post-conflict cycles of revenge. For many youngsters the street represents a temporary escape from everyday problems and abuses within the family, social exclusion and poverty. They are pressured by peers to learn to display courage and show no fear, to establish their individual reputation, to defend it, and above all to appreciate the effectiveness of violence and threats to achieve their aims. These values – "the code of the street" – are learned and practised on the streets (Anderson 1999).

In sum, the underlying causes for gang formation in Central America can be explained by taking into account demographic, social and economic vulnerabilities, displacement and deportation, a history of conflict and authoritarianism, limited state capacity for social justice and the vulnerability created by geography—of being situated between the existing corridors of drug supply and drug demand (Bruneau, Dammert and Skinner 2011).

Defining the Gangs

There are dozens of gangs in the region, but the *Mara Salvatrucha,* or *MS-13*, and the *Barrio 18,* are the largest. Both originated in Los Angeles. The *Barrio 18* has Mexican roots; the *MS-13* has Salvadoran roots. They emerged as a response of these immigrant groups to protect themselves. They have evolved into sophisticated international operations that have spread throughout the United States, Mexico and Central America. Academics and other experts on gangs continue to debate the formal definition of the term "gang" and the types of individuals that should be included in definitions of the term. There is general agreement that most gangs have a name and some sense of identity that can sometimes be indicated by symbols such as clothing, graffiti, and hand signs that are unique to the gang.

Gangs are thought to be composed of members ranging in age from 12 to 24, but some gang members are adults over the age of 24. Typically, gangs have some degree of permanence and organization and are generally involved in delinquent or criminal activity (Ribando Seelke 2013).

More precise definitions are possible. **Maras** is a term that refers more specifically to the *MS-13* and *Barrio 18* and their affiliates throughout the Americas. **Pandillas** are street gangs defined as groups or associations of three or more persons with a common identifying sign, symbol, or name, the members of which individually or collectively engage in criminal activity. When referring to gangs in Central America, some studies use the term *pandillas* and *maras* interchangeably, while others distinguish between the two. Studies that make a distinction between the two types of Central American gangs generally define *pandillas* as localized groups that have long been present in the region, and *maras* as a more recent phenomenon that has transnational origins. **Prison gangs** are highly structured criminal networks that operate within prison systems in the region. They pose a serious national and regional threat, particularly those that affiliate with and maintain substantial influence over street gangs in the communities in which they operate. Released members typically return to their home communities and resume their former street gang affiliations and perform criminal acts on behalf of the prison gang. Both street gangs and prison gangs share the same modus operandi and are often made up of the same members. To members, these gangs offer acceptance and a sense of both street security, a surrogate family, power and control over themselves, others, and life situations, easier access to money, and intimidation.

Gang Membership

The greatest research limitation is obtaining accurate statistics on gang membership. The methodology by which governments arrive at "official estimates" of the number of gang members in their countries is quite arbitrary. There is no standardized matrix for estimating gang membership or the total number of small cell *clicas*. For example, in El Salvador the estimate of gang members nationwide is usually based on those who have been imprisoned at one time or another. Surprisingly, the Salvadoran Ministry of National Security which has been mapping gang membership across the country since mid-2012 reported that, as of May 2013, estimates were that 470,000 people in El Salvador had links to gangs. To calculate the number of people associated with gangs, analysts used a formula that incorporated gang members' social circles and family to come up with a total of 470,264 people—representing 7.5 percent of El Salvador's popula-

tion. Although the Ministry said that the formula it used to calculate the number of gang associates was based on a study of gang structures, the calculations made were somewhat arbitrary and the figures should be approached with caution. The figures, even as inflated as they seem to be, nevertheless help to highlight the scale and reach of gang culture in El Salvador. The figures represent a substantial increase on a 2008 study carried out by the Ministry of Security working with the World Bank, which reported that in 2008 there were 12,500 gang members in the country (Bargent 2013). In Honduras the estimate is based curiously on a reading of gang graffiti multiplied by some indeterminate factor. In light of these inconsistencies, researchers now go directly to the gangs to do self-report surveys of their members.[1] Obviously, these survey methods involve serious risks for the researcher. The results may still be inaccurate, if one assumes that many respondents are lying to make themselves look good, make the gang look good, and/or to intentionally mislead authorities.[2]

Although numbers vary widely, the best estimates are that there are 85,000 *MS-13* and *Barrio-18* street gang members in the countries of the Northern Triangle.[3] Estimates from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime are more modest and place the numbers at 54,000 in the three countries (UNODC 2012). According to studies done by the US Congressional Research Service, Nicaragua has a significant number of gang members, but has very few *MS-13* or *Barrio18* members, perhaps due to the fact that Nicaragua has had a much lower rate of deportation from the United States than the "northern triangle" countries. Costa Rica, Panama, and Belize mostly have local gangs. There are some *MS-13* members present in the Costa Rican border regions, as well as a small number of *MS-13* members in Belize (Ribando Seelke 2013).In Guatemala, these two *maras—MS-13*

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[1] Several of these surveys are carried out on a regular basis by prestigious organizations such as the *Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales de Guatemala* (Guatemalan Institute for Comparative Studies in Penal Sciences), Vanderbilt University, the *Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales* (Association for Research and Social Studies), and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Several authors deal with the issues of reliable statistics (Bruneau, Dammert and Skinner 2011). Nevertheless, scholarly literature in English on the *Maras* is still scarce; literature in Spanish is more available.

[2] The author was a lead researcher and author for a study that in part tried to explain the various methodologies and surveys employed to estimate gang membership. See FUNDESA (2011); also Bruneau, Dammert and Skinner (2011).

[3] These numbers were provided in October 2012 by William Brownfield, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Narcotics and Law Enforcement. https://www .iamericas .org//en/latest-news/1921-law-enforcement-rule-of-law-and-education-key-to-combating-regional-gang-problem-as-brownfield-says.

and *Barrio18*—operate in *clicas* which have between 10 and 50 local gang members who obey the codes and rules of larger gangs. Today these street gangs, born and raised in violence, wield ever-increasing power and, as the regional expression goes—"*de rodillas ante las pandillas*"—they are literally bringing the countries of the Northern Triangle to their knees.

Modus Operandi: TCOs, DTOs and the Central American Maras

The genesis of the current growth of gangs and gang violence in Central America can be traced back to Mexico and the growing power of the drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs)—principally DTOs—are highly sophisticated organizations composed of multiple cells with specific assignments. Drug cartel command-control structures in Central America and elsewhere in Latin America produce, transport, and distribute illicit drugs in the region and in the United States with the assistance of DTOs that are either a part of, or in an alliance with, the cartel (Mazzitelli 2011).At the upper levels of TCOs in Mexico the structure is similar to any multinational Fortune 500 company. TCOs, their DTO allies and paramilitary groups like *Los Zetas* have hundreds or thousands of members organized into numerous cells and overseen by a centralized hierarchy. They employ individuals ranging from hitmen to accountants and lawyers, who occupy key nodes in illicit networks. Some analysts refer to groups like *Los Zetas* as "third-generation gangs," because they represent the highest evolution of gang structures in Latin America.

In Mexico, the major DTO cartels include the Juárez, Gulf, Sinaloa, and Tijuana, which operate in the north. In addition, the *Beltrán Leyva* cartel, and *maras* such as *La Familia Michoacana* and the *Zetas* are important players in the DTO-gang phenomenon in other parts of the country. There is a growing involvement of Mexican DTOs in the Northern Triangle. The Sinaloa cartel is well established on the Pacific side of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, with agents operational also in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. *Los Zetas*, on the other hand, appear to be focusing their expansion on the Caribbean coast, with their main stronghold in Guatemala and an increased presence in Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Nicaragua (Mazzitelli 2011). The threat is not limited to just Mexico and Central America as the transnational gangs continue to extend their regional and global reach into the United States and Europe. Mexican drug cartels now operate freely in parts of Central America. US-supported crackdowns in Mexico and Colombia have simply pushed traffickers (the

so-called "cockroach effect") into a sub-region where corruption is rampant, borders lack even minimal immigration control, and local gangs provide a ready-made infrastructure for organized crime.[4]Gang size and dynamics in each of these countries are different, and so too are their connections to DTOs.

How strong is the *mara* connection? Opinions vary but, in a series of interviews in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras in February 2010, Steven Dudley was able to establish the following: aside from being one of many local distributors of illegal drugs, there was no evidence that the Guatemala-based *maras* had any organic connection with the DTOs in that country. In Guatemala, the large DTOs had their strongest presence in precisely the areas where there was little *mara* activity. This pattern was repeated in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. In Honduras, there appeared to be a stronger connection between the *maras* and the DTOs, particularly as it related to the use of the gangs as hired assassins. However, according to Dudley even there the evidence was almost purely anecdotal and largely unsubstantiated (Dudley 2011a).The lower levels of *maras* and *pandillas* controlled the small percentage of drugs received from the cartels and sold locally. Neighbourhood cocaine sales drove local violence as rival gangs fought to control territory in order to convert cocaine into profit. But those scenarios may be changing.

Changing Dynamics: Expansion

The expansion of the drug trade and the influence of the violent Mexican *maras* such as *Los Zetas* have made the *maras* and *pandillas* in Central America into reserve armies for organized crime. DTOs in Central America can be broken down into two main categories: the managers and the transporters (*transportistas*). In the division of labour, characteristic of the corporate nature of the cartels, the truck, freight and ground transportation personnel and routes that move good and services through the regions have been the preserve of *transportistas*—traditionally associated with contraband and more recently with the smuggling of narcotics. Local and foreign agents interviewed by Steven S. Dudley in three different countries indicate that the managers are mainly Mexican groups who obtain the supplies from Colombian, Bolivian and Peruvian groups in the source coun-

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[4] Bruce Bagley (2011) argues that the cockroach effect refers specifically to the displacement of criminal networks from one city/state/region to another within a given country or from one country to another in search of safer havens and more accommodative state authorities.

tries. These Mexican groups play an increasingly active role in all parts of a supply chain that has gone through a massive transformation in recent years (Dudley 2011a). The upper echelons of transnational gangs such as the *Mara Salvatrucha* (*MS-13*) provide security, or muscle, for the Mexican cartels and frequently for *transportista* organizations like *Los Perrones Orientales*. These upper levels are often made up of former combatants.

Mexican DTOs are now being considered to be a major threat to regional stability. Recent changes in their *modus operandi*, their infiltration into local and central institutions, and the violence which is accompanying this dynamic have increased the threat they pose to Central American governments and societies. One of the most dramatic stories concerns the rapid expansion of *Los Zetas*.[5] They are the only Mexican military style criminal organization that operates in more than 400 Mexican municipalities as well as in numerous others in Guatemala and other Central American countries. The record of expansion by the Gulf and Sinaloa cartels fades by comparison. *Los Zetas* were among the first to openly challenge the traditional cartel powers and to attempt to wrest control of their rivals' strongholds; they observed no boundaries!

Violence was part of the strategy utilized by *Los Zetas* in accomplishing their expansion. As an organization of former Mexican military they showed no quarter to their enemies. They quickly became notorious for torture and beheadings, and bloody scenes in public spaces. As one analyst put it, they did not seek allies; they sought domination. They did not defeat their enemies; they destroyed them. At times their violence had no limits. They were blamed for a mass killing in Mexico—183 bodies found in mass graves in early May 2011. Mexican federal officials said most of the victims were Mexicans looking to migrate to the United States but who were instead kidnapped off passenger buses and killed.

In trying to explain *Los Zetas*' expansion some analysts note that the group has never defined themselves as a drug trafficking operation. Unlike the Sinaloa cartel which derives all its revenues from drug production and trafficking, *Los Zetas* have always been a military group whose primary goal is to control territory and to provide protection for activities run by criminal and licit economic operators in territories under their control. They do not seem to specialize in any particular criminal enterprise, but rather in the use of intimidation and violence to impose dominance. In their strategy for expansion, *Los Zetas* understood something the other

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[5] The bulk of the following analysis on the expansion of Los Zetas is gleaned from Brands (2010), Dudley and Rios (2013), FUNDESA (2011), Logan and Grayson (2012), Mazzitelli (2011), and Pachico and Dudley (2012).

groups did not. They did not have to run criminal activities in order to be profitable; they simply needed to control the territory in which these criminal activities were taking place.

This strategy explains how *Los Zetas* came to control substantial portions of national territory in the Petén department of Guatemala—the largest in size at 12,960 square miles, accounting for about one third of Guatemala's national territory. *Los Zetas* serve as a de facto government in what is described as an "alternatively governed space" (AGS) since they collect "taxes" through dues and extortion, demand the loyalty, or at least the acquiescence, of the people under their control, and punish those who interfere with their illicit activities. *Los Zetas* sought new markets, areas that had traditionally a role in drug trafficking or major criminal activity. They had a singularly focused model: take over the territory and extract rent from the other criminal actors. They did not have to establish the infrastructure; they simply had to stick to their goal, and extort petty drug dealers, human traffickers, human smugglers, thieves and contraband traders (Brands 2919; Clunan and Trinknas 2010). International drug trafficking is part of their modus operandi—but it is a component of the overall strategy of controlling territory.

Guatemala is the perfect choke point for cocaine shipments moving north, an area the group can control militarily and thus gain control of these shipments. *Los Zetas*' overall expansion obeys a logic that is less about what drug markets are the most profitable and more about capitalizing on the illegal markets that are in play. These illegal markets have lower barriers of entry than has international drug trafficking, giving *Los Zetas* a final, decisive advantage since they can use their easily obtained local proceeds to fund their continued expansion. Unlike the group's rival, the Gulf Cartel, which earns most of its profits from the international export of drugs and concentrates their finances, know-how, and contacts at the top levels of leadership, *Los Zetas* follow a different financial model. According to a recent book on *Los Zetas*, only 50 percent of *Los Zetas*'s revenue is from cocaine trafficking. The rest of the revenue stream comes from *Los Zetas*' low-level local criminal activities—extortion, kidnapping, theft, piracy and other licit and illicit activities—rather than from top-level or international sources (Dudley 2011b; Logan and Grayson 2012).

Originally in its recruitment *Los Zetas* favoured former military and law enforcement personnel because of their familiarity with weapons and violence, and their access to potential local criminal underworld and corruption networks. These features probably continue to characterize the senior level structure of *Los Zetas*. Lower level recruitment depends more on criminal operators already present on the territory and to whom the

mother cell offers a kind of franchise on the use of the *Los Zetas* criminal mark. More recently recruitment has been widely opened as indicated by the very young age and little criminal experience of *Zeta* members arrested in Mexico. This is also seen in the more recent tactical alliances of *Zeta* cells with juvenile gangs/*maras* and *pandillas* in both Mexico and Central America. There are also allegations of forced recruitment among kidnapped migrants transiting Mexico.

The elements described above make *Los Zetas* a model of organized crime—different from, and more menacing than the older, traditional cartels. Cartels which earn most of their revenue through international drug exports essentially cannot run their businesses without the international contacts to facilitate them. But in the case of *Los Zetas*, because their revenue comes from local criminal activities that can be practised anywhere and by virtually anyone, they have created a "democratic" model of organized crime. It is a model that can be easily replicated across Mexico, but one that is inherently vulnerable to internal splits and spin-offs from local *clica* operators. *Los Zetas*' expansion is less about their terror techniques and military prowess, and more about their singular focus, easily replicable model, and multiple and local revenue streams Mazzitelli (2011). Perhaps *Los Zetas* are on the cusp of becoming even more transnational. The strongest evidence is that the organization is attempting to recruit upperlevel gang leaders because of their contacts, markets and security arrangements‖ in the United States that *Los Zetas* would otherwise not be able to access FUNDESA (2011).On the basis of the above, it can be said that the Zetas' model of expansion is its strength in the short run, but also a weakness that can breed dissident elements within in the longer term Pachico and Dudley (2012c).

The changing relationships, between the Central American gangs and the TCOs, are analyzed in a study by Farah and Phillips Lum (2013). They point out that, while the *MS-13* and *Barrio18* gangs have few direct ties to Mexican TCOs trafficking cocaine through Central America, they play an important role as facilitators and protectors for *transportista* networks. The *MS-13* is one of the most powerful *maras* in Central America. Its more violent and better organized sub-groups can take over transportation networks and develop more direct links with Mexican TCOs. However, in many instances the gangs are regarded by the Mexicans as being too undisciplined, too unpredictable and too independent to be reliable partners. However, the *maras* and TCOs (in particular the *MS-13* and *Los Zetas*) are engaged in training and other activities that indicate growing relationships in both cocaine trafficking and paramilitary cooperation. This has potentially serious implications for regional drug trafficking patterns.

Changing Dynamics: Truces in El Salvador and Honduras

The country where the relationship between the major DTOs and the gangs has advanced the most is El Salvador which is the heart of the *maras* in the region and where much of its leadership is based. These gang leaders have the space and ability to shift from small neighbourhood operations to international narcotics traffickers. The United States recognized the increasing sophistication of *MS-13*s in 2012 when the Treasury Department officially blacklisted the group as a transnational criminal organization—the first time that this label had been applied to a street gang—a *mara*! Even as public figures, including El Salvador's president, criticized the US action, there were reports that the *MS-13* was becoming increasingly organized and collaborating with trafficking groups.

El Salvador is also the country where a bold experiment in trying to reduce gang violence is being implemented. Starting in November 2011, with the support of Salvadoran Minister of Justice and Public Security, retired general David Munguía Payés, a congressman (who was previously his aide in the defence ministry) and a Catholic bishop began brokering a truce between the *Mara Salvatrucha* (*MS-13*) and *Barrio 18* gangs (Dudley 2013a). In March 2012 Minister Munguía Payés agreed to transfer high-ranking gang leaders then serving time in prison to less secure prisons in order to facilitate negotiations for a truce between the gangs. Until very recently, Minister Munguía Payés had denied his role in facilitating the truce and questions remain surrounding what exactly was negotiated with the gangs, when, and under what circumstances. However, from the time the prison transfers took place, homicides in El Salvador dramatically declined (from an average of roughly 14 per day to 5 per day in 2012). Government figures show that the country had 2,576 homicides in 2012 compared to 4,371 in 2011 implying a 41.1 per cent year-on-year decrease. It was projected that El Salvador's homicide rate would have fallen from approximately 69.2 out of every 100,000 in 2011 to 40 in 2012 (Brodzinsky 2013; Ribando Seelke 2013).

As part of the truce, gang leaders pledged not to forcibly recruit children into their ranks or perpetrate violence against women, turned in small amounts of weapons, and offered to engage in broader negotiations that could potentially result in a permanent truce. They did **not** agree to give up control over their territories. Gang negotiators and government officials maintained that improving prison conditions and providing more rehabilitation and reintegration programs for gang members would be crucial to maintaining the truce. They hoped to obtain donor support for those efforts. The Organization of American States (OAS) began monitoring the

implementation of the truce and trying to build support for the nascent peace process from civil society, the private sector, and politicians, among others. In November 2012, gang negotiators proposed the establishment of "peace zones" in municipalities across the country where gangs would stop all crimes in exchange for being able to participate in reinsertion programs. By January 2013 the first four municipalities participating in the "peace zone" plan had been announced. The government of El Salvador reportedly offered municipalities (to a total number of 18) that participated in the program investments from a fund of USD 72 million. A charitable foundation was established to coordinate international efforts to support the truce and the "peace zone" program.

The truce provoked much debate nationally and internationally. Some praised the effort but others expressed doubts about the supposed commitment of the gangs to ending all crimes (including extortion), as well as the government's ability to ensure that the "peace zones" did not become havens for lawlessness. Others asserted that recognizing the gangs as legitimate political actors and continuing to accede to their demands carried enormous risks for the Salvadoran government. For example, should the truce collapse, the gangs could emerge even more powerful and organized after taking advantage of months of less restrictive prison conditions. There was speculation that they could use these sanctuaries to begin exercising political control and provide safe havens for gang members who committed crimes in other countries. Still others pointed out that while gang-on-gang homicides declined, the level of extortion and other violent crimes remained high (Flores 2012; Latin American Weekly Report, January 24 2013; Wells 2013).

A recent study by the International Assessment and Strategy Center (IASC) noted that the drop in El Salvador's murder rate could be misleading, as some gang members say they "disappear" their dead rather than leave them to be discovered. "If we want something, we threaten to put bodies on the street. Then we get what we want," one gang member told the study's authors. The "disappeared" include gang members who refused to follow the truce, the report noted, though precise numbers were not available. The study also raised serious doubts about the establishment of the "peace zones" where the security forces committed to halting nighttime raids (Farah and Phillips Lum 2013). In addition, if tensions between the leaders inside and outside prison were to increase, this could pose a real threat to El Salvador's shaky peace.

On Tuesday May 28, 2013, Honduras became the second Central American country to negotiate a gang truce. The truce appeared to be a unilateral offer by the gangs in exchange for jobs and security—which the

government may not be able to provide. The agreement between *MS-13* and *Barrio-18* in Honduras was modelled after the Salvadoran truce, but some analysts judged it unlikely to be as successful. Honduras' criminal landscape is far more diversified than El Salvador's with other actors such as Mexican and Colombian criminal organizations responsible for a large share of the violence and murders. The broader picture of violence in Honduras is one of internationally sponsored criminality. Because Honduran gangs are responsible for a smaller share of homicides than Salvadoran gangs the impact of the truce was likely to be more limited. There was also evidence that *MS-13* and *Barrio-18* leadership in Honduras was not as centralized as in El Salvador. As a result orders to halt the killings issued at the top were likely not be respected by local *clicas* that operated with greater autonomy. Analysts also pointed to the fact that the Honduran police were part of the problem, noting their involvement with the gangs in activities including extortion and drug trafficking. Unlike the Honduran police, the Salvadoran police went through training after the country's civil war. They were more accountable and prepared and less engaged in organized crime (Arce 2013; Cheny 2013).

In sum, it is difficult to predict the longevity of the truces between the respective *maras* in El Salvador and Honduras. At one level they could be part of a strategy by TCOs to raise the profitability and lower the risk of their activities while providing the *maras* with significant new revenue streams. At another level they might represent a genuine first step effort by the gangs and the governments to reduce violence and reduce fears about public insecurity. The experiment piqued the interest of gangs in Mexico and other Central American countries. Only time will tell if the truces have a long shelf life.

Conclusion

While one must be aware of the differences in strategies and modus operandi of the Central American gangs, a few specific concerns can be raised. The *mara* phenomenon in Central America has created more than a law enforcement problem or a security issue. When gangs and TCOs become de facto government, it is more than a national security problem. It is also a development issue! As they become more and more deeply involved in politics, real estate, and religious and community organizations, gangs and their allies become social actors. While it appears that monetary gain remains the primary motivation for the various gang activities, these gangs are becoming aware of their potential political power based on territorial control and the ability to deliver substantial votes for their preferred

candidates. The financing of political parties and/or candidates by drug money and organized crime is a direct threat to the survival of democracy in the region. Criminals have long used the formula of *plata o plomo* (money or lead) to corrupt government officials. Third-generation gangs have become masters of this strategy. The creation of alternatively governed spaces which give gangs de facto power to govern continues to enhance their political power and stature. What the gangs are doing, in essence, is seeking to intimidate the state and the citizenry into submission and to win a free hand in pursuing lucrative illicit business dealings. In this way they are able to clobber the state from without and weaken it from within.

The gangs come in many destabilizing forms and in a matrix of different kinds of challenges, varying in scope and scale. The solutions attempted so far—largely confined to *mano dura* (heavy hand) police and military operations[6]—have only aggravated the problem. Prisons have become gangland finishing schools, and the military have been pressed into domestic security operations that should be left to the police. Central American government officials have generally cited budgetary limitations as the major factor limiting their ability to implement more extensive prevention and rehabilitation programs. Some analysts and policy makers have asserted, however, that it is important for governments to offer educational and job opportunities to youth who are willing to leave gangs before they are tempted to join more sophisticated criminal organizations. It is also critical, they argue, for intervention efforts to focus on strengthening the families of at-risk youth (Castillo 2012).

Research has shown that successful anti-gang efforts involve governments working in close collaboration with civil society, the private sector, churches, mayors, and international donors in order to leverage limited public resources. In fact, many successful anti-gang programs have developed as a result of community-driven efforts to respond to particular problems which are then supported by capacity-building programs for leaders from those communities. Although these types of programs may benefit from financial contributions from local and/or national governments, they will also need non-financial support including training, information sharing, leadership, and dedicated physical space for programming and implementation. Country and regional youth violence prevention programs have received significant support from a variety of international donors and the US is committed to helping Central American countries tackle their citizen security challenges through the Central American Regional

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[6] See the comments of Guatemalan President Pérez Molina (2012).

Security Initiative (CARSI) which is an integrative program designed to work with regional partners to disrupt and dismantle the gangs and TCOs where possible. On the justice issue the CICIG (International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala), a UN sponsored program, has had a positive record in prosecuting and convicting high-level criminals, and in supporting the attorney-general and the public prosecutor's office in Guatemala Schünemann (2010).

While drug trafficking is not the only occupation of the Central American gangs, it is one that produces much of the revenue flow for the TCOs as well as much of the violence connected with the illegal drug trade. The strategy against drug trafficking and production must go beyond the pursuit of the bosses and target the middle levels of command and groups of youths and children in working-class sectors who today are becoming involved or are at risk of becoming involved in and used by organized crime. In this regard, a strategy must be designed. The first element should involve strengthening intelligence operations and criminal investigation in the different countries, where police, public prosecutors and judges must work together as a team focused on the identification, pursuit and detention of those at the middle levels of command in the criminal organizations so that the process of replacing the management of these groups once the leaders fall becomes difficult, or so that such groups are truly dismantled. The second thrust should be aimed at facilitating the exit and social reinsertion of members of criminal groups who wish to do so and are willing to assist the authorities.[7]

Finally, do gang activities in Central America have any relevance for the Caribbean? It does not appear that Caribbean gangs are as sophisticated or as well organized as those of Central America. Even at a basic level they do not have as prominent symbols or markings that identify them to the public, nor do they have as broad an agenda of activities, or regional or transnational profiles.[8] But the Central American experience is relevant to the Caribbean for other reasons.

First, in the case of Belize (a member country of CARICOM) the Central American regional gang problem is becoming more significant. While neither the *MS-13* nor the *Barrio18* is dominant in Belize, the potential exists for Belize to become a significant area for expansion. Belizean au-

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[7] These were among the recommendations gathered by this author during his research on feasible strategies (see FUNDESA 2011).

[8] Many of the characteristics of Caribbean gangs were discussed at a symposium on Gangs in the Caribbean at American University in February 2012. Several of the presentations are valuable for an understanding of the modus operandi of the gangs; see http://www.american.edu/spa/djls/caribbeangangs.cfm.

thorities are overwhelmed by the domestic gang presence and do not have the structural capacity to face the growing threat. Unpatrolled borders with both Mexico and Guatemala, a strategic position in the Caribbean region, and its dual Caribbean and Central American cultures make Belize a natural target for the transhipment of cocaine and chemical precursors, and a safe haven for hiding and laundering crime proceeds López (2012).

Second, given the possibility of the "balloon effect"—where pressure on the Central American gangs and their criminal enterprises grow stronger and force a retreat—the Caribbean could once again become a serious transit point for drug trafficking as it was in the 1980s. More sophisticated transnational gangs aligned to those in Mexico and Central America, will probably try to occupy the space. In such a case, closer collaboration between Central American intelligence bodies and those of CARICOM such as the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and its sub agencies, the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre (RIFC) and Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC) would bring added value to both regions. So also would available assistance under the US-sponsored Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). Third, in no country in the circum-Caribbean are gangs simply a domestic issue.

At a minimum, effectively addressing the problem of transnational gangs and their impact on the security of the region requires a multi-track, balanced and integrated strategy and one that is regional in scope but with strong bi-lateral components. Success in one jurisdiction simply transfers the problem to neighbouring areas as gang members move freely between countries by legal or illegal means. The gang threat has to be understood as a threat to national, regional and international security. Regional cooperation is vital to tackling the evolving transnational dimensions of criminal gang threats in Central America. The Caribbean is not immune.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE USEFULNESS AND EFFECTIVENESS
OF PEACEBUILDING IN REDUCING
GROUP-LED VIOLENCE

TARIK WEEKES

Abstract

This article examines how peacebuilding activities to stop conflict and violence must go beyond initial dialogue and mediation activities in troubled Jamaican communities onto a conflict reduction path. This is based on the view that certain Jamaican communities have deep-seated conflict and there must be an institutionalization of peacebuilding to effectively achieve a conflict reversal. It speaks to group violence, peacebuilding characteristics, potentials, the presence of defensive gangs and the conflict they present. The article concludes by asking for the scaling up of some key resource areas to facilitate greater peacebuilding and a greater degree of policy coordination and partnership between state and non-state actors.

Introduction

While it may seem erroneous to utilize a framework most widely applicable in post-conflict situations, specifically post-civil war, it is a main contention of this study that the peacebuilding framework and its components can present options for communities in Jamaica that need to transition, and are transitioning, into safer, less violent and peaceful communities. This paper will not delve into a discussion about Jamaica being at civil war or any argument of that nature. This article and the ongoing research are about finding solutions. The purpose of this article is to advocate for a wider appreciation of the components unique to the peacebuilding approach and to argue for more coordination and collaboration in the management of post-conflict situations at the community level. There is

also need for institutionalization of the peacebuilding approach alongside community and state building for legislative changes that will facilitate the communities transitioning from their experiences of violence to becoming safer, violence-free communities.[1]

Background

Jamaica has long had a history of conflict. This conflict which had been deep rooted has been an element of the country's socio-cultural and political landscape. It dates back to the country's pre- independence era where the foundations for political freedom had weavings of political conflict, represented by the opposing ideologies of two parties, and by a cleavage structure trickling down to a grassroots level (Gray 2004). The conflict experienced goes beyond the definition and scope of a Marxist understanding of class struggle because of the many different cultures associated with Jamaica's people and the motivations, values and subcultural value phenomena that even today make up the society.

Leading up to the nineties several efforts were made to lessen conflict and violence in Jamaica. Arguably, these efforts met with limited success. Harriott (2003) noted that, since 1962, the murder rate had increased in a geometric-like progression from 3.8 murders per 100,000 persons to 41 per 100,000 in 1997. According to the Jamaican government's National Security Policy, between 1970 and 2005, there were 22,300 murders recorded. The document went on to note that:

> "This high incidence of homicide and violence is attributable primarily to political violence, domestic violence, drug/gang related conflicts and mob killings and breakdowns in social order." (Khan et al. 2007, 19)

The data presented in figure 10-1 show that violence levels remain high in Jamaica despite efforts to reduce them.

More recently, the Ministry of National Security in Jamaica began placing emphasis on data collection and management in an effort to better understand the crime situation. The Kingston West Crime Observatory worked in the Kingston West Police Division to map armed violence in

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[1] This issue of state building is really about the implementation of governance structures that are necessary to prevent a relapse of broken systems of government resulting from violence and conflict. State building is important for the institutionalization of peacebuilding.

approximately 15 communities and sub communities.[2] The Kingston West
Police Division is one of the worst in terms of the annual number of homi-
cides recorded across police divisions. For the period 2000 to 2006 the
Division recorded the fifth highest number of homicides with 2001, 2004
and 2005 being the worst years. Understanding the motives for and causes
of the homicides in the Division has led to a wider appreciation of the fact
that the motives for the murders committed vary and include group and
gang-related activity, as well as domestic violence and other causes.
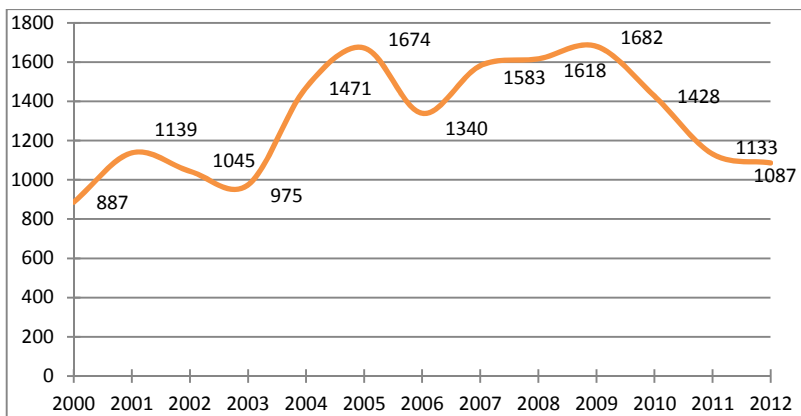
Source: Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Statistics Unit

Fig. 10-1 Total number of persons murdered in Jamaica 2000-2012

    In the present study many of the examples and insights drawn upon to
discuss why Jamaica needs peacebuilding to be fully implemented comes
from cases identified by the Observatory in one community which will be
called Community A. Community A, like the other main community,
Community B, located in the St. Andrew Central Police Division outside
of the Observatory, have both experienced significant reductions in mur-
ders since 2007. These reductions can be attributed to a number of factors
including the implementation of a peacebuilding approach to violence re-
duction. One of the key factors resulting in a sustained reduction of vio-
lence in Community B is the existence of the first three dimensions of the
peacebuilding framework; these include dialogue and mediation, therapeu-

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[2] Sub-communities are smaller communities in established communities. In Jamai-
ca these communities usually have names. Examples of sub-communities in Ja-
maica include Russia, Texas, Brooklyn, and Africa.

tic workshops and activities such as grief counselling. These dimensions emerged in the first attempt to understand the reduction of conflict in Community B.

The issues identified and concerns expressed in this paper are just part of a wider effort of ongoing research to try to identify and examine solutions for safe community realization. As already alluded to, two communities, Community A and B have been examined; one in the Observatory area and the other in a non-Observatory area. These communities have been tracked since 2008 and have become benchmarks for other communities. Much of the research has been qualitative thus far with findings emanating from interviews with police personnel, community development specialists, community members, and key informants, as well as from meetings and forums organized by the Observatory. Secondary data have also been provided by the Jamaica Constabulary Force and has allowed for an assessment of the prevalence of serious crimes as well as peace and stability in the two communities.

Some Key Issues

From the outset of this research it was necessary to have a participatory feel to exploring peacebuilding in select communities with the understanding that 1) there was no officially initiated peacebuilding strategy existent in many communities. As the research into the communities found, components of peacebuilding are existent, but coordination and a framework for its implementation have to be designed and implemented. 2) There was a need to expose the presence of conflict which is not measured only by the number of homicides but also by other indicators like a breakdown in social cohesiveness. It was important to have this understanding since one of the key findings of the research was that, even the reduction in homicides experienced by both communities did not necessarily indicate that social cohesiveness was present. There were a number of reasons for arriving at this conclusion. One reason was that, despite the reduction of homicides in examined communities, there continued to be medium to high levels of violence-related injuries.

In one of the researched communities the main cause of the violence was actually a dominant gang which tried to assert its dominance over other areas of the community. This forced individuals from the other parts of the community to take up their own arms in defence. The gang eventually turned on itself and the rate of violence declined. But the rift in the community had already been formed, particularly because of factors like political motivations. In some communities you may have some factions

which do not associate with others mainly because of gang affiliation and membership or because of political differences. Turf wars are sometimes the result of these differences. The violence related to such disputes tends to intensify as the factions become more divergent. In other communities, clear factions may not emerge. As an example of this, one may look at figure 10-2 where, in a particular police division, groups in some of the areas controlled by gangs are rivals but live alongside each other. The clashes that exist between these small groups were documented by Levy (1996). In his work Levy states:

> "In a class by itself, however and stirring the greatest fear, though obviously connected with every other type is gang violence often simply referred to as the war. Those fighting the war are sometimes called warriors, sometimes soldiers. The war is between gangs representing different areas, defending each its own territory, attacking those from other areas who cross the lines of demarcation, or who clash with their members in some way, as well as preying to an increasing extent on the residents in their own section." (p. 17)

Another consideration for the motivation of peace-building implementation, even with a reduction in homicides, is the naming of sub-communities. This may present a challenge as these sub communities carry with them perceptual baggage associated with their direct and indirect involvement in the violence that takes place in the community. As such, trust and other factors come into play and this has important implications for the implementation of modes of community governance and affects the extent to which residents participate in the community and in peace-building initiatives.

In reducing group-led violence, a sustained peacebuilding thrust must take place, and this must involve actors other than law enforcement officials. Despite billions of dollars in police outfitting and the inclusion of several programmes on the crime reduction agenda, Jamaica as a whole is still grappling with a murder and crime problem. According to Krause, Muggah and Gilgen (2011), the country was ranked third among 14 countries which had annual violent death rates above 30 per 100,000 persons for the period 2004-2009.
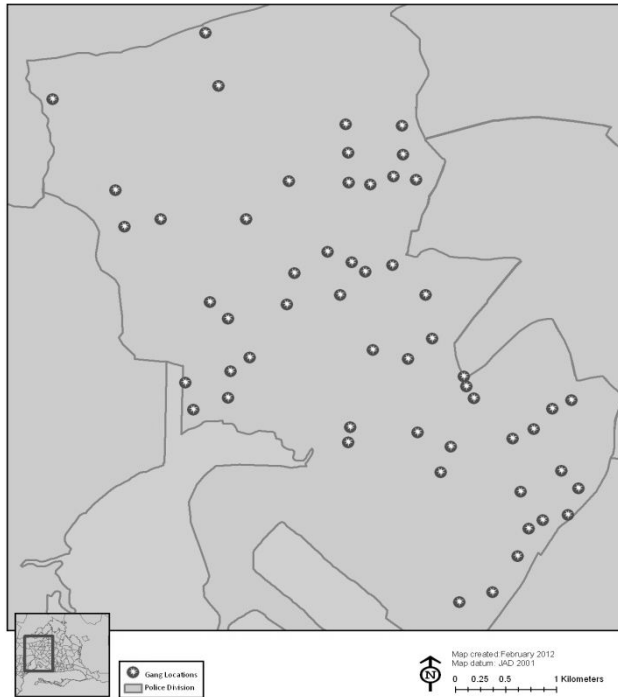
Fig. 10-2 Gang locations in a community

What is Group-Led Violence?

The recent CARICOM Commission on Youth Development report (CCYD 2010) cites the World Health Organization's definition of violence which describes violence as:

> "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a higher likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation." (p. 5)[3]

Based on an examination of current literature, a definition of group or collective violence should be one that speaks to terrorism, civil war and

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[3] Krug et al. (2002).

genocide.[4] One of the immediate tasks of this study was to discover what experiences in Jamaica's past and present might constitute acts of group violence. There were several instances found that predated the country's achievement of independence. These experiences were alleged to be largely political. Based on all of the findings, however, what this research was concerned with was one general classification of group violence that spoke to instances when a group may enter a community to carry out one or more acts with the intention of harming or intimidating individuals or groups within that community. The individual or group carrying out the acts might be from another community and might engage in these actions because of feeling that they might have been wronged.

This research is also concerned with a sub-classification of this overall group violence phenomenon in Jamaica which has been labelled gang violence. Gang violence can be addressed as one type of group-led violence. It is the belief of the present author that there is room for advocacy for those who may be involved in group violence but do not really fit suitably in what we may define as a gang and its various typologies. The current definition used by the Ministry of National Security is adopted in the present paper:

> "A gang is a formal or informal group, association or organization consisting of three or more persons who:
>   1. Have a primary objective or activity to individually or collectively commit criminal or delinquent acts which may create fear and or intimidation or secure financial gain by criminal means.
>   2. May have in common an identifying name leader, de facto claim of territory/division or colour.
>   3. May or may not be identified or linked by visible markings or mannerisms.
>   4. May share or enjoy the proceeds of crime as well as conceal such proceeds." (Glaister 2010, 14)

Whereas it is possible for a gang to engage as a group, violence can be inflicted by people who may not be in a gang. This is critical because part of the idea of developing a policy to reduce violence—gang or group-led—is to identify the problem that brought such groups into existence. One of the ways to achieve this is to bring conflicting parties together and talk. It is important to have this overall understanding as peacebuilding can

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[4] The World Health Organization recognizes three types of violence: self-inflicted, interpersonal and collective. Collective violence is to due war, civil insurrection, acts of terrorism, and gangs.

be a useful tool which works in tandem with law enforcement approaches to reduce overall group-led violence.

The Jamaican Ministry of National Security and the Jamaica Constabulary Force in 2010 estimated that there were between 169 and 268 gangs in Jamaica. Of these, not much was known about the function they served, which inherently put a limitation on how effective peacebuilding and law enforcement could be. What we do know, however, is that components of peacebuilding have been effective in suspending and gradually reducing group-led and more specifically gang violence that has manifested itself as turf war. People may become part of defensive crews and/or gangs, which form when there is the threat of another gang trying to enter or take over their community.[5] The difference between a defensive crew and a defensive gang can be examined through the lens of capacities. The defensive gang may have started as a crew, but has increased capacities and organizational structure once it becomes a defensive gang.

Research has shown that it is possible to benefit from the implementation of a sustained peacebuilding programme, where the end result is that gangs or groups may commit fewer criminal or delinquent acts (Baksh, Tanyss and Robb 2009). Law enforcement interventions may not be needed if the required structures are in place to afford an opportunity for affected parties to express themselves, such that they can come to an agreement on how peace may be maintained. Law enforcement interventions, however, may be needed when one of the groups is definitely criminally motivated.

Based on Jamaica's history of political tribalism, it was and still is not uncommon for communities to clash. These clashes are sometimes resistant to threats posed by members of other communities and typically occur at the street level. The clashes are also motivated by the desire for survival and because of a lack of dispute resolution skills. Some of the reasons for the clashes happening at the community level—which take the form of "matey" wars—are excuses to invade other communities. For example, women may have relationships with men in a rival community causing the men from their community to want to react towards the men in the other community. This is worse if the men involved have already established relationships in their community. Other occurrences of community violence include activities of criminal gangs which try to take over communities for the purpose of expanding extortion opportunities. In some communities this is strongly resisted through the formation of the defen-

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[5] I distinguish a defensive gang from a street gang or a gang where criminality is a way of life. Based on interviews with the police, the defensive gang is defined as one whose primary function is defending a community.

sive gang. The life expectancy of the defensive gang is largely based on the severity of the conflict between the invaded and invading communities, as well as how fast the police respond when defusing and or managing the conflict. In discussing the manifestation of group-led violence another important point to note is that such violence can be further supported by people who do not actively engage in the violence but encourage those who do. This level of participation increases the chances of reoccurrence of peace breakdowns. It is vital then, that programmes that encourage modification of behaviour are implemented after making peace.

Peacebuilding

This section establishes a platform for understanding what is meant by the term peace building. This is pivotal in going forward because there are theoretical and civil society approaches that have contributed significantly to the development of the concept.

> The term "Peacebuilding" first emerged in 1970s through the work of Johan Galtung who called for the creation of of peacebuilding structures to promote sustainable peace by addressing the "root causes" of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution. Since then, the term Peacebuilding has covered a multidimensional exercise and tasks ranging from the disarming of warring factions to the rebuilding of political, economic, judicial and civil society institutions.[6]

CPBN notes that peace-building is an umbrella term that recognizes a long-term and more comprehensive approach to peace and security which includes:

> "…early warning, conflict prevention, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, the establishment of peace zones, reconciliation, reconstruction, institutional building and political as well as socio economic transformation."[7]

Based on these descriptions, peacebuilding is multi-dimensional and can include many interrelated constructs and processes. Peacebuilding may be:

> "…limited to when a violent conflict subsides or stops altogether, occurring after peacemaking and peacekeeping. [Peacebuilding activities are]

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[6] http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbun.shtml.
[7] http://www.peacebuild.ca/en/about/what-is-peacebuilding.

associated with capacity building, reconciliation and societal transfor-mation."

While the organization, Peacebuild, recognizes this tool-based method of peacebuilding the Network seems to also identify peacebuilding as an institutionalized means of dealing with post-conflict situations. They iden-tify peacebuilding as the supporting of relationships and:

"…governance modes, systems and structures and the provision of capaci-ties and resources to strengthen and consolidate the prospects for internal peace in order to avoid a resort to, an intensification of or a relapse into de-structive conflict."

There is also mention of efforts to reduce tension that can increase or intensify armed violence. Based on Peacebuild's outlook on peacebuilding it can be ascertained that a straightforward definition of the term cannot stand alone but is stronger as a procedural definition:

"Peacebuilding involves a full range of approaches, processes and stages needed for transformation toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships and governance modes and structures. Peacebuilding includes building human and legal rights institutions as well as fair and effective governance and dispute resolution processes and systems." (Morris 2000)

Peacebuilding Initiative (2008) cited in *Learning to live Together, Us-ing Distance Education for Community Peacebuilding* notes that peace-building is about tangible and not so tangible dimensions that are visible and quantifiable such as the number of weapons that are destroyed post-conflict. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) defines peacebuilding as those initiatives that foster and support sustainable struc-tures, and processes which increase the likeliness of peaceful coexistence and decrease the possibility of outbreak or return and/or continuation of violent conflict. John Paul Lederach, an influential peace and conflict stud-ies scholar, described peacebuilding as a:

"…comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships." (Baksh, Robb and Munro 2009, 4)

Based on the definitions by Peacebuild and Ledarach, there seems to be a consensus and convergence between these two areas of thought de-spite one being largely theoretical. Both the theoretical and civil society

approaches maintain that peacebuilding is a process and that within this process there are very distinct components. Some of these components were alluded to by Morris (2000), but the key idea about the process is a movement that involves individual, community and state transformation. For the latter in particular the issue of increased institutional capacity to effectively manage and coordinate the components of peacebuilding is critical. Based on the ideas from civil society and theoretical approaches it can be argued that peacebuilding is a multifaceted approach that draws down heavily from the idea that there must be sustainability in conflict prevention.

While peacebuilding in Jamaica is in its initial stages, the existing components have been useful in the sense that in the main and observed communities considered in this study, peacebuilding has provided a space for dialogue between warring or conflicting groups, and has provided mediation and therapy for those affected. Peacebuilding has also allowed such groups to come to an understanding of the issues which impact their communities and has, to some extent, fostered forgiveness. Peacebuilding is important to the continuance of the state's role in advancing human development, and allows the state to re-enter communities to provide key services.

One of the interesting aspects of searching for the components of peacebuilding in community A and Community B as well as other observed communities was the reality that the foundational activities of peacebuilding were present in the communities but sometimes the leaders of such activities did not place their efforts into the peacebuilding framework, nor did they have the resources to continue a fully-fledged programme. In many cases such leaders did not know that they were actually following a largely recognized method of reducing conflict. In both communities, various stakeholders saw themselves engaging in the activities to help make and bring peace to the communities. Upon attaining peace, they would reach out to organizations and interested persons in the community to implement programmes geared at getting individuals trained, employed or working for the benefit of their communities.

One of the notions the present researcher had to be mindful of was that of an unconscious attempt to look for a linear developmental path for peacebuilding. Many times because some concepts may offer a stage approach to implementation, we may look for this linear route to implementation. This must be examined carefully, as this route may not necessarily be followed in all cases. Notwithstanding this, it is critical that the first two stages of the peacebuilding process be followed. Sustained dialogue and mediation and the implementation of therapeutic activities are some of

the initial critical components that should be implemented. These were found across the communities under study.

The Peace Management Initiative (PMI) established in 2002 is the best example presently in Jamaica of a grassroots, state-created organization that has been attempting to work with the peacebuilding model (see table 10-1). The Organization begins working with exercises geared at peace making and moves that process further by inviting other actors to come in and provide services to the community. With the beginning of the initial components of peacebuilding, it was observed that residents in communities could once again experience certain freedoms. These freedoms included simple taken-for-granted things such as the ability to commute on a particular road or pathway.

With their overall thrust geared towards the creation of safer communities in Jamaica, the PMI has applied stages of dialogue and transformational activities as well as the setup of community governance structures. In Community B the PMI has also established a peacebuilding network that serves as an early warning system for imminent threats or trouble that may affect sections of the community and spill over into other areas. While this Organization is vastly under-resourced, the attempts by the PMI to bring a focused developmental path for the community to transition out of experiencing bouts of group violence and gang violence have done well.

One of the more visible characteristics of the peacebuilding processes is the presence of several actors working together to develop community-development and community safety plans to help the communities transition out of the violence they are experiencing. This is a stage which comes to reality after the first two stages in the peacebuilding process. How quickly this stage becomes effective is dependent on how quickly the community stabilizes and is also dependent on shared beliefs at the community level. Other actors such as the state may also affect when this stage comes into effect.

For peacebuilding to be effective there must be a shared position with respect to what the community wants with regard to violence reduction. This view may be voiced by community leaders and other interested parties. This is vital for the proper coordination and management of resources, opportunities, and investments in the community. In Community A for example, while the rate of homicide fell drastically after 2005, it did not help that the agencies which were interested in working in the community did not have a shared vision about what would sustain this decrease. Such fragmentation negatively affects the processes which may be used to maintain peace and minimize the chance that violence will reoccur.

Table 10-1: Comparison of the PMI and the peacebuilding approach

The PMI 5 Phased Approach[1]	The Peacebuilding Framework[2]
• **Engaging the wider community** to ascertain the nature of the problem and identifying the key persons in the conflict.	• Dialogue and representation.
• Inviting persons in conflict to represent their community in a **closed door mediation** setting to hammer out differences and develop a platform on which community safety can be restored.	• Identification of problems. • Implementation of therapeutic workshops and activities. • Establishment of governance Structures
• **Healing and reconciliation**[3] a) programmes to restore community cohesiveness by encouraging integration between borders and b) providing counseling and therapy for victims of violence.	• Re-entry of state and other actors. Implementation of social development programmes (conflict sensitive).
• **Establishing peace councils** to sustain the gains made in developing a communication network between communities previously in conflict. Councils will have democratic representation across all the communities and will manage the process in the absence of the PMI.	• Evaluative peacebuilding exercises.
• **Facilitate a space for other partners and stakeholders** to enter and reenter the communities to focus on the overall development of the community.	

[1] Adapted from *Interrupting Community Violence, The Peace Management Initiative* (PMI 2008).

[2] The framework outlined here was developed after reviewing different approaches from across the globe that suit the definitions of CPBN and other organizations.

[3] This is actually two separate activities. Part of the healing can involve group therapy and grief counselling. In a review by an officer of the PMI it was said that these should be ideally two activities (correspondence April 4 2012).

In the absence of strong, reliable data it is difficult to state how predominant gun-related group violence is. In both communities A and B, gun-related group violence remained a characteristic of the conflict between groups in the community. The introduction of peacebuilding components helped to get people in charge of these groups to put down their weapons. However, while they do put down their guns, they do not give them up. In communities where there are defensive gangs, residents in communities cite reasons such as distrust of the police and fear created by

the presence of criminal gangs as reasons for not giving up their guns.[8] With respect to the former, prior research assessed the perception of Jamaican citizens of the police and of their handling of the gang situation. In chapter three of the 2012 Caribbean Human Development Report (UNDP 2012), it was noted that 23.4% of Jamaicans surveyed expressed confidence in the ability of the police to control gang violence. This level of confidence is much less in communities where gangs are located.

Critics of the peacebuilding framework suggest that its success is largely based on the shared beliefs of people who come together to work toward crime reduction. Peacebuilding, however, is more than this. Peacebuilding provides an alternative approach to reconciliation and building solidarity to effect conflict reversals. The bringing together of various peacebuilding components can be a useful device to keep down the phenomenon of group violence in communities. This is one of the main hypotheses of this ongoing research and a major finding where defensive gangs are present in communities. The conflict reversal that the peacebuilding framework is trying to affect does not only derive its effectiveness from shared beliefs but is also focused on affecting policy outcomes which relate to citizen security.

Conclusion

In the present identification and examination of group-led violence, what was discovered is that peacebuilding is a better solution for groups that engage in violence in the defence of their community. While peacebuilding may be more effective for so-called defensive gangs, this strategy may not be as effective for more criminal-type groups. Based on the initial examination of the peacebuilding work in Jamaica, there remain questions regarding cost against the timeline of activities that the framework presents. This is particularly an issue because there has to be some form of turnaround time for results after the components of peacebuilding are put in place. With further research it is possible to examine how the incremental change in conflict indicators changes with the implementation of each stage of peacebuilding. As seen in the communities examined in this chapter, the first three components identified in this article as part of the peacebuilding framework contributed to the reduction in murders in the short-run. Less is known at this point about the long-term effectiveness of the peacebuilding framework. For the most part peacebuilding involves going

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[8] Interview with community members in intervention and observed communities (June 2010).

further than just the three dimensions that have been implemented in the communities under study. These dimensions are really activities that may cause violence to stop but may not necessarily affect the root causes of conflict. If the root causes are still present, violence may return in the long term.

In the full scale of implementation, peacebuilding may lead to the repairing, redesign or set up of new governance structures in an attempt to galvanize greater solidarity in the community. This is critical because it is necessary to understand that the community's development and ownership of how it develops is at risk if the quelling of conflict is left to just the use of a stop-clear-and-stave-off-the-conflict policy. This is largely an approach that security forces may use but it can only do so much. Lastly, there is a greater need for coordination of the use of resources used, and investments made, to reduce conflict. These resources and investments can operate parallel to each other. To impact conflict reduction in the communities there must be greater working together by all stakeholders. This is a central theme in peacebuilding so that peace and the absence of conflict become sustainable.

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THE IMPACT OF MEDIATION ON TRUCE WITH RIVAL GANGS OF EAST PORT OF SPAIN

KATHY-ANN FELIX-JOHN AND DIANNE WILLIAMS

Abstract

Gang violence is a global problem. Once limited to a small number of cities in the United States, gangs can now be found on every continent and in every country. In Trinidad and Tobago, the presence of gangs is especially troubling because of the concomitant increase in violence and crime. Gangs reflect the culture and context of the communities in which they are active, and this is especially true of the East Port of Spain region of Trinidad and Tobago. Phenomena such as gang migration, gang growth, female involvement in gangs, gang-related homicides, drugs, and violence, require a different approach to diverting youth from gang membership. But, more importantly, there is a dire need to mitigate the growing incidence of inter-gang warfare in East Port of Spain through mediation. Facilitated gang truce is a fairly new area of study emerging from a desire for peace, not just within the communities affected by gang-related violence and inter-gang warfare, but by the entire criminal justice system and the government of Trinidad and Tobago. The discussion which follows examines mediation as a method of fostering truces amongst rival gangs in the East Port of Spain region of Trinidad and Tobago.

Definition of Gang

A generally acceptable definition of gangs comes from Dr. Herbert Gayle who states that the word gang refers to a group with three or more persons operating together with a degree of permanence and competing with other similar groups (Tsvetkova 2009). Max Manwaring further adds

that gangs are mainly interested in controlling territory or gaining commercial profit through illegal trade (Tsvetkova 2009). Usually, to mark their territory they draw specific graffiti, tattoo their bodies with a particular sign, or wear distinctive clothing. However, there is no universal definition of a gang in the criminology literature. Most scholars view gangs as a youth phenomenon. Gang members have often been compared to other youths as being more extensively involved in delinquency (Thornberry et al. 2003). This has led many policymakers in the US and Europe to focus on adolescent and juvenile intervention programmes. Traditional theories on the reasons for gang membership have a strong structural orientation; gang behaviour is regarded as an adolescent response to structural disadvantage, minority status, and exclusion from mainstream opportunities. These assumptions are supported by theories such as Strain theory and Social disorganization theory (Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Hagedorn 2008; Klein 1995).

According to the definition used by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the term gang defines a street gang, or organized crime group, or a criminal street gang. It can also be any combination, confederation, alliance, network, conspiracy, understanding or other similar conjoining, in law or in fact, of or involving three or more persons with an established hierarchy that, through its membership or through the agency of any member, engages in a course or pattern of criminal activity.[1] In Trinidad and Tobago gangs have been described as being comprised of mainly adults, with a mere five per cent of membership consisting of youths younger than seventeen years of age (CAPA 2010). It is important to note here that, if consideration were given only to international definitions of gangs, one would deny the uniqueness of each group in each country or territory. Townsend (2009), for example, noted that in Trinidad and Tobago, gangs differed from those found in other territories such as Latin America and the United States. Comparisons to these gangs revealed that gangs in Trinidad are transient, smaller, and do not possess high levels of organization as do the other gangs in these larger territories. Gangs in Trinidad are local in contrast to those in Latin America and the U.S, which are multinational in scale.

Klein (1995), and Bell, Curry and Decker (1996) acknowledged the efforts by agencies in the United States, particularly the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, to conduct research to aid in understand the gang phenomenon. They utilized data from agencies such as federal, state, and local government agencies—including the police, education

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[1] Trinidad and Tobago. *The Anti-Gang Act (No. 10) 2011.*

and welfare—to aid in understanding the phenomenon. They noted, however, the astounding proliferation of gangs, and were unable to identify any one effective strategy for prevention and or suppression. In the final analysis, what is certain is that there continues to be ongoing debate regarding gangs and how to control gang violence. These debates have led to greater conceptual awareness but have not resulted in any consensus on the phenomenon.

The Prevalence of Gangs in the Caribbean

According to the *Human Development Report for Central America 2009-2010* (Giraldo 2009), research on street gangs and organized crime has a long and extensive history in the United States and in Europe. While the topic has also received increasing attention within the Caribbean region, this phenomenon has not been the subject of sustained empirical scrutiny. Despite this, multiple data sources show that street gangs are active in much of the Caribbean region and result in a substantial amount of violent crime in a number of countries (see Chapter 2).

This may not be surprising since rates of criminal violence in the Caribbean are among the highest in the world (Geneva Declaration Secretariat 2008). Arthur and Marenin (1995) argued that there was a higher proportion of violent crime in developing nations than in developed nations. According to the UNDP (2012) there has been a rise in violence in the Caribbean which has been accompanied by an increase in gang-related activity. Latin America and the Caribbean are home to 8.5 per cent of the world's population, yet the region accounts for some 27 per cent of the world's homicides. According to the UNDP, every Caribbean country except two (Barbados and Suriname) had seen an increase in homicide rates and gang-linked killings over the past twelve years. There was increasing evidence that the rise in violence could be attributed to an increase in gang-related activity. According to Katz and Fox (2010) there is a strong relationship between the presence of gangs, and gang members, and the incidence of homicide in communities. These authors argued that within the Caribbean, for every gang member residing in a particular community, the number of homicides increased by 0.4 per cent and, for every additional gang located in a particular community, the number of homicides increased by about 10 per cent.

The Prevalence of Gangs in Trinidad and Tobago

The Caribbean has been identified as the region with the second highest homicide rate in the world, while Trinidad's murder rate in the city of Port of Spain was compared to that of Baghdad according to the UNDP (2012). This situation appears grim to many in Trinidad, and especially so to the international audience who are privy to the continuous reports of callous killings in the community of East Port of Spain and environs. Many of these incidents have been attributed to gang rivalry and reprisals. Additionally, since the emergence of gangs and gang-related crimes in these communities, the number of violent crimes involving the use of firearms has risen (see table 11-1).

**Table 11-1: Data on Murders and Firearm Offences 2001-2011**

Year	Total no. of murders	Port of Spain murders	Total gang-related	Port of Spain gang-related	Total firearm offences
2001	151	39	3	3	2281
2002	171	45	17	10	3054
2003	229	67	42	28	3655
2004	261	77	32	14	2205
2005	386	117	81	33	2733
2006	371	99	98	37	3452
2007	391	86	205	61	2140
2008	547	164	267	108	2635
2009	507	127	153	78	2560
2010	473	93	75	40	2181
2011	352	94	93	59	1620
Total	**3839**	**1008**	**1066**	**471**	**28516**

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

An analysis of the data, according to the draft UNDP report 2011, found that the majority of criminal gangs were concentrated in three police divisions, specifically, Port of Spain (which includes Belmont, Besson Street, St. Clair, Woodbrook and St. Barbs), the Western division (St. James, Maraval, Carenage, and Diego Martin) and the Northern division

(which includes Arima, Arouca, Tunapuna, Cumuto, Maracas/St Joseph, Piarco, Malabar, and Maloney). Some key findings of the report included:

- The spatial distribution of crime in Trinidad and Tobago bore a striking similarity to the spatial distribution of gangs.
- Twenty-six percent of local gangs placed their "date of origin" prior to 2000, while the remaining groups traced their date of origin to after 2000.
- A large proportion—eighty-eight per cent—claimed turfs while seventy-five per cent defended their turfs.
- An examination of gang-related murders for the period 2001 to 2010 showed that the largest proportion occurred in the Port of Spain division—42.6 per cent; followed by the North Eastern division—18.8 per cent; Western division—17.8 per cent; and the Northern division—15.9 per cent. These areas were also found to have a disproportionately large number of gangs (see figure 11-1).
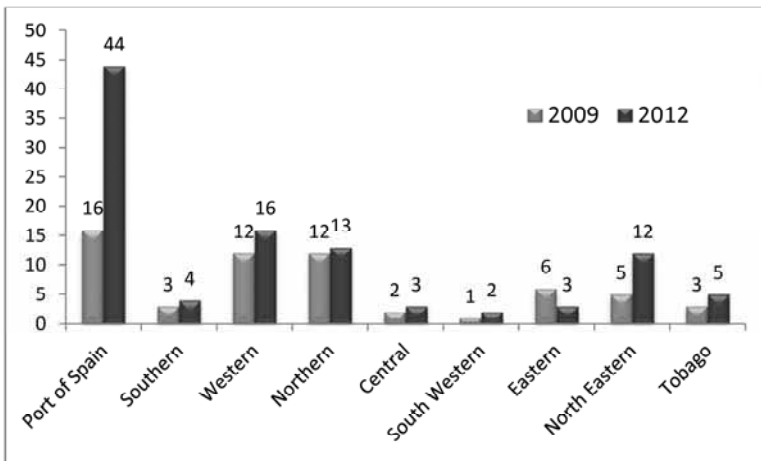
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

Fig. 11-1 Number of Gangs by Police Division in Trinidad and Tobago (2009 and 2012)

Research conducted by Maguire et al. (2008) identified the most dangerous communities in Trinidad and Tobago and linked them to gang activity. The most notorious of these communities was the suburb of Laventille which falls under the Besson Street police district. Maguire et al. (2008) noted that, although only about 3 per cent of the country's population lived within the borders of the Besson Street Police Station district,

the homicide rate was 249 per 100,000 people or about 20 per cent of the
killings in the entire country. Interestingly, the communities of Laventille,
Morvant, and Beetham cumulatively accounted for about 60 per cent of all
the nation's murders in 2008 (table 11-2).

**Table 11-2: Homicides in Seven Trinidad Police Station Districts in
2008**

Police sta-tion district	No. of homicides	National homicides (%)	Area of T&T (%)	National population (%)
Besson St	404	20.4	0.25	3.05
Morvant	175	8.9	0.29	2.24
Arima	107	5.5	3.29	3.05
West End	97	5.0	0.69	2.50
Belmont	91	4.6	0.33	1.79
St. Joseph	90	4.6	0.56	2.24
St. James	55	2.8	0.13	1.33

Source: Maguire et al. (2008)

It is a widely-held view that the emergence of the gang phenomenon
coincided with the emergence of the Jamaat al Muslimeen in Trinidad
(Deosaran 1993). The Jamaat al Muslimeen is a group that emerged in the
1980s during a severe social and economic crisis and tensions between
Afro and Indo-Trinidadians. The group was led by Yasin Abu Bakr, an
Afro-Trinidadian converted to Islam, who was the recognized Imam of his
followers. On July 27, 1990, this group attempted a coup d'état in Trinidad
which resulted in the deaths of twenty-four citizens. The militant group's
membership was comprised mainly of young dispossessed African males.
Though the coup failed in its objectives, the prosecution and subsequent
exoneration of Mr. Bakr and his one hundred and fourteen followers led
many to believe that this was emblematic of the power and influence Abu
Bakr wielded. He exerted power and influence among a narrow but never-
theless significant demographic within the Afro-Trinidadian community,
particularly in the impoverished areas of Port of Spain. It is the belief of
many citizens that the actions of this group led to the rise and organization
of many of the criminal gangs that exist today within the country (De-
osaran 1993).

The Jamaat al Muslimeen has earned their place among the top forces
behind the dramatic rise of gun-related crime in Trinidad and Tobago. A
number of articles have been written in the daily newspapers and there
have also been allegations made by opposing sides of government admin-

istration regarding the alleged symbiotic relationship between the State and known gang leaders. At the time of writing of this chapter, a commission of enquiry was investigating the events that led to the attempted coup, hoping to identify any conspirators in the plot. Testimonies heard by the Commission of Enquiry into the Coup indicated that there were links between the Jamaat al Muslimeen and known drug lords and community dons in Trinidad. The Commission of Inquiry also discovered that some people believe that the Muslimeen's influence in Laventille and surrounding areas had a direct influence on crime and criminal activity. The rise in gang-related activity was a result of disillusioned youths, who were emboldened by the proliferation of guns, and who felt they were not getting an equitable share of the spoils from criminal activities. They therefore broke out on their own, forming new gangs which were offshoots from the Muslimeen.

Several allegations of linkages between political parties and gangs have also been made. In 2009, an article claimed that a known community don who had once controlled a major drug block in Brooklyn, New York, and who was also believed to have been involved in several killings in Trinidad and Tobago, campaigned for the former People's National Movement (PNM) Prime Minister, Patrick Manning, in the marginal seats in the 2002 general election.[2] The newspaper printed photographs which showed the gang leader in the company of the former Prime Minister on the campaign trail. This gang leader was later one of the "community leaders" who met with Mr Manning at Crowne Plaza in 2002, to orchestrate peace talks among rival gangs of the East Port of Spain communities.

A study conducted in Trinidad, Jamaica, and neighbouring countries made particular reference to Trinidad, comparing its homicides to those that took place in the "Wild West" (Townsend 2009). This study noted that the poor urban areas of Trinidad in particular had become "magnets for lawlessness" as rival gangs strove for control of the territory and government grants for various projects. The author expressed the belief that many of the murders which occurred were committed by either street-level drug dealers or individuals associated with gangs, usually as a thrust to exert control over State infrastructural projects such as the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP), or turf. Other issues that led to murder were perceived disloyalty and entering areas considered to be "no fly zones" i.e., a member of a particular community or gang could not venture onto the turf of a rival gang; the consequence was often death.

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[2]   http://jyoticommunication.blogspot.com/2011/09/pnm-encouraged-criminals-failed-to-deal.html.

Townsend (2009) described Trinidad's gang-related violence as the single most pressing security issue for the country. Townsend posited that, since 2007, Trinidad and Tobago had surpassed Jamaica as the Caribbean nation with the most gun-related murders. Townsend's research led him to conclude that gang violence and victimization of citizens was as a direct result of unconstrained use of guns, which were used mostly by gangs.

Katz (2009) did a comparative examination of the scope and nature of the gang problems in Trinidad and the United States. In his study, Katz noted that significant differences existed between the gangs of both territories. Most notably, gang members in Trinidad reported substantially more violence than gang members in the United States. He pointed out that prior to his cross national study there existed relatively no data of this scope, except for comparisons made between developed countries. The absence of research on gangs in developing nations has resulted in a lack of understanding about gangs and gang development in the Caribbean.

Conflict: An Inevitable Phenomenon within Gangs

Thrasher (1927) wrote that conflict was an inevitable dynamic within all gangs. He viewed conflict as an element which solidified the group and facilitated the development of morale among its membership. One may even argue that it is the conflict which exists in the everyday lives of these individuals that leads them to join such groups. Colton Simpson, infamous member of the Crips, stated in his autobiography that the gang was able to relate to his life story of hurt and betrayal; they offered empathy in return (Simpson and Pearlman 2005). Most research has identified the same risk factors for gang membership. These include (1) conflict in parent-child relationships, (2) dysfunctional families, (3) socially disorganized communities, and (4) substandard education systems (Katz and Fox 2010).

Thus, by its very nature, a gang becomes a conflict group by virtue merely of its membership and the experiences of its members. The criminology literature indicates that gang membership is not associated with a single developmental domain but rather, members have multiple disadvantages in multiple domains of their development. As their risk increases, so does the likelihood of them joining a gang (Bowker and Klein 1983; Curry and Spergel 1992; Moore 1991; Short 1990; Thornberry et al. 2003). Many theoretical approaches on conflict stress the internal features of potential adversaries as the source of the conflict.

It is important to understand who gang members are, their personalities, motives and experiences. One cannot take for granted that experiences often shape our world view. Here again reference is made to Colton

Simpson, infamous member of the Crips. In his autobiography he provided descriptions of his life experiences and how they shaped his decisions as a gangster. What is worth mentioning is the perception of the gang by its members. Gang members see their gang as a "survival unit" where young men come together to be safe. Simpson compared the gang to that of a defensive unit as in the days of Troy, and, in more recent history, the American invasion of the Middle East. He admitted that a distinctive feature of gangs was retaliation, which he equated with justice. However, he was careful to point out that this characteristic did not originate with gang culture but rather, it was historical in all developed nations (Simpson and Pearlman 2005).

Partisans of conflicts easily offer justifications and explanations for their conduct and that of their enemies. It is important to recognize, however, that the explanations they use are important in mobilizing support, in deciding which means will be effective, and in ultimately agreeing to settle the conflict. Therefore, scholars see the value in uncovering what conditions generate gang members' belief that they are in conflict. This could be an important factor in predicting outbreaks and the course of a conflict as well as attaining a just resolution. Scholars in the field of conflict resolution agree that not enough can ever be known about any specific conflict to predict precisely when and how it will escalate or de-escalate.

Feminist analysts discuss conflict from a different perspective; they point out that most societies are patriarchal in values and structure. The men who dominate are socialized to value competitiveness, dominance, honour and toughness. The Spanish term "macho" is used widely to refer to this particular sense of masculinity, which stresses bravery and sensitivity to challenges of honour. In the criminological literature we often come across the term "macho" to describe the characteristics of the gangster. Ice-T, in introducing Colton Simpson's book, referred to the lives of people living in ghettos, and provided a description of the "gangster". The young gangster (male) is focused on his masculinity, i.e. toughness. His pride is based on violence and aggression; wealth is defined by strength (Simpson and Pearlman 2005).

The term "enemy" according to the unforgiving ethics of gang life is a label which follows youths to their graves. This statement is supported by accounts of reprisals provided by Colton Simpson and Ice-T (Simpson and Pearlman 2005). Gang members often find themselves caught in ongoing cycles of violent retaliation with rival groups and many youths who have left gangs have been later found dead, either at the hands of their former comrades or because they forfeited gang protection and were fair game for other gangs. Knowledge of what leads to conflicts within gangs could as-

sist in the design of an intervention that might impact positively on rivalry among gangs, thus transforming the conflict. Moreover, identifying the range of variables associated with rivalry may be helpful to policy makers especially if mediation is identified as the intervention of choice.

A Nation Responds to Conflict

Maguire (2012), in his explanation of conflict identified two types of causes; distal and proximate. He explained a distal cause to mean explanatory factors that are distant from a violent event; for example a history of violence among rivals that leads to hatred and a "war" among communities. Distal causes are often referred to as "root causes" or antecedents. Proximate causes are explanatory factors that are much closer in time and space to a violent event; for example retaliation for the murder of a fellow gang member by a rival gang. Maguire recognized that distal causes might influence levels of violence. As such, altering these factors might be desirable. He also argued that this might not be the only solution. Maguire acknowledged that changing distal causes required major investment and substantial time, and that results might only be seen in the long term, whereas, addressing proximate causes could generate substantial violence reduction benefits in the short term.

In the past, the government of Trinidad and Tobago made attempts to curtail criminal behaviours by utilizing unconventional methods in the wake of spiralling violence among rival gangs. Just after the PNM took office in 2001 the Prime Minister, Mr. Patrick Manning, met with known gang leader Mark Guerra to discuss ways of reducing gang murders in East Port of Spain and Laventille. Guerra was the head of the "Council of Community Leaders" and was well known for the influence he wielded over youths in the area. This meeting at the Ambassador Hotel in St. James, Port of Spain saw the first truce agreed to in 2002. Invited gang members were viewed as strategic players in achieving a truce within their communities. Mediated talks were held and agreements were made but some time later the peace ended with a scourge of violence and murders. As the rate of gang-related murders increased in the years that followed, the PNM in September 2006 decided that another attempt at peace talks and truce was necessary.

In September 2006 the PNM administration organized talks between leaders of rival gangs from communities within Port of Spain and environs. These gang leaders were officially dubbed "community leaders". The meeting was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and hosted by then Minister of National Security, Mr. Martin Joseph. The aim of the talks was to se-

cure a mediated agreement on a truce. The peace pact, which was called "It Must Work", was aimed at stopping gang warfare along the East-West Corridor among rival gang leaders of the Morvant/Laventille and Port of Spain areas.

The peace talks were organized with the assistance of "community leader" Sean "Bill" Francis, now deceased. The meeting was deemed a success by the then administration but received mixed evaluations from the public. After the truce was signed by the attendees, once again the murder toll decreased. However, as in the past, this truce was not sustained and, just as occurred in 2002, the peace was broken and violence subsequently increased. Rivalry resulted in the murders of several community leaders and their affiliates who had attended this meeting; they included G-Unit's Kerwin "Fresh" Phillip, Meryn "Cudjoe" Allamby of San Juan, Sean Sandy of St. Barb's, Ricardo Boboy of Bagatellle, Diego Martin, Verne Pierre, Herbert "Screw Up" John, and several others. By 2008 most of the leaders who had attended the controversial truce talks had been murdered, their organizations surviving with new leadership.

After such a "public disaster" one might have thought that peace talks would be unpopular, especially after the murder of so many high-ranking "generals" of these organizations. But in spite of previous failures, gang members within these communities continued to use truces as a way to curb gang rivalry and related murders. Although many citizens expressed pessimism regarding the longevity of these truces between rivals and the unfolding of violence at their demise, this did not discourage some communities from persisting with this initiative. A good example was the Tecia Henry Order in 2009.

The Tecia Henry Order was a community order initiated on June 29, 2009, as a direct result of the murder of ten-year-old Tecia Henry, whose body was found two houses away from her John John home. Her death appeared brutal and unfortunate to most, but to others it was seen as a blessing in disguise. According to one of the John John community elders, Carlton Gibbons, the Tecia Henry Community Order, which was posted on a large billboard within the community, was aimed at bringing order to a community ravaged by gang violence. The Order appeared to have some impact on the community since police and residents reported a decrease in violence after the brutal strangulation of Tecia Henry on June 17, 2009. The Order stated:

> "Peace among all John John and neighbouring gangs. There must be regular communication among leaders. Leaders, members and residents must be responsible and just. Gang leaders must discipline their own members for the order to live. No child is to be used to do anything illegal or wrong.

No child is to be kidnapped, hurt or murdered because of gang warfare. There must be absolutely no disrespecting of the elderly. Innocent residents must never become targets of gang rivalry. No violence against service providers, goods trucks and taxi drivers. There must be no housebreaking whatsoever. Raping is a violation of the Order, and must be dealt with seriously. Absolutely no violence during community activities. No brandishing of guns and injecting of fear into residents or visitors and if a misunderstanding occurs seek third-party help before war. We Live The Order."

If this Order was not kept, according to Gibbons, offenders would be punished by flogging. Following the institution of the truce, there were reports that gangs in the John John, Canada, Beverly Hills, and Block Eight areas were at peace and several activities were planned for the community. On March 21, 2010, there was a cricket match in John John involving participants and spectators from Beverly Hills, Canada and surrounding areas. This truce lasted for three hundred days before it was breached.

Following the violation of the truce, murders once again became commonplace in these communities. Reporters visited and held interviews with residents. The interviews revealed that gang members felt that they were not benefiting from their good behaviour. The newspapers reported that a source from the community stated: "Financially, they were not getting anything from it. You must understand that these fellas' lifestyle is about hustling." Residents who spoke with reporter, Malissa Lara, about the incidents pleaded for anonymity *(Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, April 18, 2010). One resident who was involved in the community order initiative, stated: "It's a war; it's gunshots. Yes. People are afraid. They should be." He said that the situation was already out of control, as people were dying. "We have done our part, and we continue to speak with the gang members, but the police officers have to do their job." He stressed that the responsibility lay with the police, the National Security Ministry and the MP. "We are mere residents. All we can do is speak and try to act as a third party and try to resolve existing conflict."

A statement was taken from the then Deputy Commissioner of Police, Gilbert Reyes, who was aware of the situation. He identified six murders between March 21 and April 08, 2010 in those areas. He reported that the police were trying their best and were working with other community leaders to revert to peace. He expressed concern and disappointment as he was preparing to meet with all stakeholders in the community to see if they could reinstate peace and return things to normal. What Reyes was attempting to do was to stage informal talks with the participants of the truce hoping to, once again, initiate a ceasefire between rival gangs.

Mediated Conflicts

Mediation is widely used in all sorts of disputes, ranging from divorces and civil lawsuits to very complex public policy problems and international conflicts. An effective mediator can listen to conflicting parties and help them communicate with each other in an effective and constructive manner. Even if the full range of grievances cannot be resolved, mediation is often useful for dealing with particular limited aspects of the larger problem. Mediation may not be effective if one of the parties is unwilling to cooperate or compromise. Mediation also may not be effective if one of the parties has a significant advantage of power over the other.

There are a variety of mediation frameworks that can be used by mediators when assisting parties to communicate in a conflict. The framework chosen may be dependent on the mediator's personality, culture, the history of the conflict, institutions represented, and the geopolitical standing of the parties involved. This chapter will only address a few of the many existing frameworks, though a number of others which exist (for example narrative, understanding-based, therapeutic, and evaluative mediation) are also important.

Firstly, there is the Analytical Mediation Framework where the mediator will draw on a variety of styles as the circumstances require, including facilitative and evaluative techniques where appropriate. This style of mediation may be best suited for international conflicts, as well as national strikes involving unions and employers. Analytical mediators are expected to understand the substance of the dispute, the legal process, and the risks and rewards each party will face if there is no settlement. They are frequently knowledgeable about specific areas of law, science and technology, or policy. Analytical mediators may use reflection, reframing, and open and closed-ended questions. They may attend to the feelings of participants, give multiple suggestions for a particular issue, generate options, provide information, engage in reality checking, share how others in similar situations have resolved similar issues, weigh the pros and cons of positions and offers and demands, discuss with participants the consequences of their choices, and may give their evaluation of the case, if asked, and if they feel it would be helpful.

Another type of framework is Facilitative Mediation. This is the classical approach to mediation and can be utilized in most forms of conflicts but is best suited to civil procedures. Facilitative mediators use a variety of strategies, including reflecting, reframing, asking open-ended questions, focusing on the future, acknowledging feelings, mutualizing, and focusing the participants on option building. Facilitative mediators do not give ad-

vice or opinions, or pressure the participants to reach agreement. Facilitative mediators would highlight common ground, and on occasion might offer possible options not already considered by the parties

Another popular framework is Inclusive Mediation. In the Inclusive framework, co-mediation is almost always used. It is suitable for conflict within communities and among groups. Mediators focus on strategically listening for values, feelings, and topics and reflecting these back to the participants using language that captures the intensity the participants express. Inclusive mediators follow a defined process that includes time for participants to talk about whatever they choose, builds clarity as to what is important, identifies topics participants want to resolve, and identifies the goals each participant has for each topic. Inclusive mediators also brainstorm options, consider each of the generated options in terms of which would meet all participants' goals, and determine areas of agreement, if any.

One framework that is popularly used by family mediators is Transformative Mediation. This can be utilized in most forms of conflict including family and interpersonal work conflicts. The goal of transformative mediation is to work with people in conflict to help them change the quality of their conflict interactions from negative and destructive to positive and constructive as they discuss and explore various topics and possibilities for resolution. Transformative mediators look for barriers to effective interaction and assist the participants in dealing with and removing them. Mediators reflect back, using as far as possible the same words and emotional expression used by the participants, highlighting differences as well as commonalities between the participants and asking open-ended questions to aid in broader understanding and quality decision making.

Mediation is of particular importance in long-running, deep-rooted conflicts such as generational gang rivalry, as this type of conflict is rarely resolved without outside assistance. Even when conflicts are seemingly intractable, they sometimes yield to mediation. "Intractability" is a controversial concept which is used to describe conflicts which appear impossible to resolve. In an article by mediate.com, a leading mediation website, intractable conflicts are described as protracted, destructive, deep-rooted, resolution resistant, intransigent, gridlocked, identity-based, needs-based, complex, difficult, malignant and enduring. Another component of intractable conflicts is that they often involve high-stakes distributional issues; that is, conflicts over "who gets what". For the group or individual the items in contention are very valuable; often impossible to do without. These groups or individuals are unlikely to abandon continuing struggles over land, water, employment opportunities, and wealth, in general. When

there is not enough to "go around," or when distribution is highly inequitable, these fights are likely to be especially bitter and destructive.

Peter Coleman (2000) states that the issues of intractable conflicts are varied, and that there tends to be multiple, inter-related issues relating to resources, values, power, and basic human needs. Another issue Coleman highlights is time. Intractable conflicts usually have "an extensive past, a turbulent present, and a murky future." He describes the hatred, the fear, and often the history of past atrocities as hard to let go of, which makes moving into a new relationship with the former "enemy" especially difficult.

This description is quite relevant to the gangs in East Port of Spain which participated in the Tecia Henry Order. An examination of the issues surrounding the disagreement between many of the rivals who agreed to the ceasefires at the mediated talks held in 2002 and 2006 reveals that the dispute was about resources. More specifically, the primary issue related to who would gain control over the government infrastructural programme—then the Unemployment Relief Programme. This programme was known for allegations of corruption, the existence of "ghost gangs" (fictitious workers), and allocation of millions of dollars to local communities often controlled by gang/community leaders.

The description of intractable conflicts is applicable to that of conflicts between such rival gangs. If one agrees, then the description and characteristics of intractable conflicts might be quite significant when considering mediated truce as an intervention with rivals and ought not to be discounted. Ice-T, when he spoke about rivalry among gangs, described it as unremitting. He stated that once the killings started they were hard to stop; the hate, pain, and suffering provoked the killings. He also reported that pride was the basis for conflict and described retaliation as crucial.

Deutsch (2002) identified social-psychological factors that characterize intractable conflicts. He acknowledged that intractable conflicts typically have roots within groups as well as between groups. Deutsch asserted that internal conflicts actually perpetuate external conflict, as leaders need to perpetuate external conflict to preserve their identity as leaders and to encourage group cohesiveness. Fear of losing face also keeps leaders involved in conflicts that are doing more harm than good. If they see no way out, and do not admit that all their previous sacrifices were wrong or in vain, they are likely to continue to call for more sacrifices, rather than admit that they made a mistake. Colton Simpson, in his account of life as a Crips member, revealed that reprisal was always explained and justified as necessary for survival; once you are a member of a gang there will always be a rival who is prepared to kill you unless you kill them first—"do or

die." Gang membership was described as a game of "Russian roulette". There is an expectation by most members that they are likely to die by a bullet or serve a prison term. Thus an opening argument like this by a gang leader might be hard to retract later as this statement forms a part of the members' state of consciousness and ultimately leads them to a defensive posture against a perceived and ongoing threat.

This gives the gang justification to defend its turf and forms a powerful way of bonding the group and often necessitates gang fights to defend territory. Much literature on gangs highlights the function of gaining acceptance and status in the gang through feats of bravery and daring. A reputation is built by showing that you are not afraid, displaying a warlike capacity, acquiring visible scars of bravery and boasting about one's deadly accuracy. Gang youths relish the belief that they invoke fear in rival gangs; the more wanted and feared they are by their rivals the greater status they acquire in the gang. This ultimately helps in building one's reputation and that of the group. This explanation gives credence to Thrasher's statement defining a gang as a group given cohesion by conflict with its environment. The consequences of intractable conflicts are many, most of them negative, because intractable conflicts tend to be pursued in damaging and destructive ways. The violence that is very common in inter-group and international conflicts causes widespread loss of life and damage to property.

The Impact of Mediation on Truce among Rivals

Maguire (2012) stated that the solutions to violence must match the causes. He cited Trinidad's use of mediation for more than fifty years. Policy makers attempted in the past to address immediate issues contributing to rivalry among gangs by the use of mediation. The assumption might have been that the basis for conflict among rival gangs was their inability to generate a truce among themselves whenever there was conflict. Maguire believed that, due to a lack of systematic research on the causes of gang violence in the Caribbean, policymakers adopted solutions based on untested assumptions about the causes of conflict among rival gangs. Such solutions invariably failed in the long term. What they might have succeeded in achieving was the temporary management of conflict. According to Bloomfield and Reilly (1998):

> "Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflict, [it] addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in

a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference." (p. 18)

Maguire (2012) suggested that research from the United States implied that mediated truces among rivals do not work to resolve conflicts; rather they might even contribute to escalated violence among these groups. He referred to the work done by many gang scholars who put forward the view that gang members use the medium to manipulate the government, businesses, the media, and the public. The typical pattern is a short-term decrease in violence followed by a long-term increase. He made reference to several ceasefire/truces orchestrated in communities negatively impacted by gang violence and rivalry:

- Chicago's ceasefire reduced violence in some districts but not in others;
- Newark's ceasefire had no effect on violence;
- Baltimore's ceasefire reduced violence in some districts and not others, but there were serious implementation problems;
- Pittsburgh's ceasefire increased violence.

The concept of intractability becomes relevant here. The sheer complexity of the issues and problems that are present in and between rival gangs contributes to the intractability of the conflict. There are so many issues, and gangs that are involved in these issues in different ways, that it is often not logistically possible to do all that is required to reconcile competing interests, even when such reconciliation is theoretically possible. Even when everyone knows "the way out," complexity can make it seemingly impossible to get there. This might be a factor that contributed to the failing of so many truces mediated with rivals in the Caribbean and the United States.

Although this statement seems relevant to the controversy regarding mediated truces with rival gangs, Maguire (2012) was also careful to mention that Chicago's ceasefire was the first and most well-known program and that it is actively being marketed around the world by its developers. The use of the Operation Ceasefire intervention in rival communities within the Los Angeles and Boston areas quelled incidents of reprisal killings among members of rival gangs. Within the Boston area this initiative was a collective effort involving the Boston Police and other criminal justice agencies, social service providers, and community-based partners. These partners recognized that, in order for the intervention to be a success, it was necessary to utilize facilitated truces between rival gangs where, as appropriate, particular gangs were offered the opportunity to negotiate peace with their adversaries. The addition of this strategy was primarily driven by a consensus that, if possible, it was more desirable to address

underlying conflict dynamics through mediation and conflict resolution techniques than through routine enforcement that paid little attention to the root causes of ongoing disputes.

Mediation: Is It an Appropriate Intervention for Addressing Conflict among Rival Gangs

In 2009, the London government commissioned an independent mediation service to facilitate peace talks among some of that city's violent young people. The objective was to bring feuding gang members to sit around a table and settle their differences. Scotland Yard had put youth violence at the top of its agenda as there was an increase in teenagers being murdered over the years. In 2011, the Belize government saw truce as the only means of preventing bloodshed on the streets and an all-out war between law enforcement and gangs. The Amandala Newspaper in Belize reported, in an article entitled "PM Barrow brokers truce with city gangs …but for how long?" that:

> "Following the controversial beat-down of George Street residents and reputed gang members by the Gang Suppression Unit (GSU) on Friday, August 26, 2011, Prime Minister Dean Barrow met with representatives of the city's major gangs in an attempt to facilitate a truce between them to prevent serious violence during the September celebrations" (September 08, 2011).

In the case of Belize, in order to hold mediated talks with the rival groups, a social anthropologist Dr. Herbert Gayle attended the talks. To ensure that there was representation by all key players so that the truce talks would be effective, police officers brought major members from one of the gangs who were at the time in police detention to participate in the meeting. The Prime Minister, Mr. Barrow, explained to the public that the gang leaders and their rivals were open to talks as they felt that too many of their "soldiers" and "lee bwoy dem" had died senselessly within the previous few months. Prime Minister Barrow was cautiously optimistic when he stated that the State was not foolishly hoping that all members would abide by the truce, but that he believed that because more of the gangs were represented at these meetings that the truce could work. He also explained that a testing period was identified and once the testing period had shown that the truce could hold, the ruling party and the committee would make jobs available to members of the gangs to restore infrastructure in the various neighbourhoods. This agreement, as so many others that were brokered in a similar way, gives question to the concept of

"win-win," a fundamental principle in mediation. In many instances we see the state adhering to the principle of doing what must be done to keep the public safe, while at the same time providing alternatives to gang members.

In the case of Belize, as with other areas where similar interventions were tried, all the gangs and their membership were known to officials in the criminal justice system. Before peace talks are held the mediator ought to be able to identify and target key players and active gang members. The identification of a safe location that provides the assurance of confidentiality for participants who wish to visit and identify issues or potential conflicts that may increase rivalry among disputing gangs must also be available. In addition to providing a safe location for peace talks and identifying participants for such talks, mediators must also be knowledgeable about the causal factors of gang violence between the specific parties for whom mediation is to be applied.

According to the 2009 National Youth Gang Survey, several factors were identified as influencing local gang violence; these included drugs, inter-gang conflict, returning inmates, gang member migration, and emergence of new gangs. Inter-gang conflict resulted in gang-related homicides. This conflict has been shown to be related to several circumstances, including maintenance of "set space" (i.e., gang "territory"), interpersonal conflicts, surprise assaults, and drug-turf disputes. They often are coupled with a variety of motives, such as defending one's gang identity, defence of the gang's honour and reputation, set space trespassing, and gang revenge or retaliation. Unfortunately in Trinidad and Tobago there is little empirical evidence to determine the causes or factors which influence inter-gang conflict. This can potentially create challenges for people who wish to provide mediation services with the aim of reducing inter-gang conflict.

Gang truce is a relatively new form of intervention for crime prevention in the Caribbean. It has been attempted in urban communities affected by gang rivalry in Port of Spain and environs as well as in several other Caribbean territories including Jamaica. The intervention became necessary as rivalry among gang members not only affected the members of this social grouping but also other community members and the provision of community services. Rivalry affects taxi services, the mobility of gang members, the reputation of the community, and the personal security of residents. In the past gang rivalry has resulted in property damage or loss, and the targeting of families and children.

Facilitated gang truce is an important area of study because it signifies that there is a desire for peace not just within the communities affected but

more importantly within the criminal justice system and the government. Conflict transformation theorists argue that contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes. The very structure of parties and relationships may be embedded in a pattern of conflictual relationships that extend beyond the particular site of conflict. Conflict transformation is therefore a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. Constructive conflict is seen as a vital agent or catalyst for change. People within the conflict parties, within the society or region affected, and outsiders with relevant human and material resources all have complementary roles to play in the long-term process of peace building. This suggests a comprehensive and wide-ranging approach, emphasizing support for groups within the society in conflict. It also recognizes that conflicts are transformed gradually, through a series of smaller or larger changes as well as specific steps by means of which a variety of actors may play important roles (Miall 2004).

"Truce" implies that an agreement is achievable and indicates that there is a common interest among groups. In the case of rivals an agreement between enemies or opponents to stop fighting is established. Mediated talks among rivals imply that it is necessary for a third party to assist in the achievement of the mutually-desired outcome. Based on the arguments provided above, it appears that truce, if negotiated appropriately and expertly, may result in peace/ceasefire but not indefinitely. One must also bear in mind that the conflicts that are being negotiated are intractable by nature and that there are many issues surrounding them, which by all descriptions are complex. Therefore, mediated talks alone cannot sustain peace among rivals; they can however provide the opportunity for more inclusive intervention.

Best Practices to Address the Current Gang Phenomenon

Maguire (2012), commenting on the prevention of gang violence in the Caribbean, indicated that Trinidad and Tobago, as well as other countries in the Caribbean, utilizes suppression as a primary tactic to the exclusion of preventative approaches. Ice-T, Colton Simpson and others have advocated for the rehabilitation of communities impacted by violence. They recognized that important components in the eradication of rivalry are education, the development of life goals, parenting programmes, family intervention, community organization, community policing, poverty reduction programmes, mentoring, and restorative justice. Maguire stated

that the solutions to violence must match their causes. According to Maguire, changing distal causes takes major investment and time. He identified five components of a comprehensive gang programme:

1. Community mobilization
2. The provision of pro-social opportunities
3. Social intervention
4. Suppression
5. Organizational change and development

Maguire (2012) in making recommendations to deal with the issue of gangs in the Caribbean recognized that, although comprehensive community programs are probably too complex to implement in a coordinated way in some Caribbean nations, a useful step would be for every nation to consider whether most of the elements of these programs were in place. He stated that coordination of the elements could follow later.

Townsend (2009) recognized the need from the onset for containment. Containment refers to identifying the most dangerous and influential gang members and removing them from the community. These members, while detained or imprisoned, can be introduced to the concept of peace building, truce, restorative justice, and mediation. When such people are released, they will be more aware of initiatives which can be employed to reduce violence, and hopefully, will be more open to the use of such measures within the communities from which they come. Townsend (2009) was also careful to mention that, when using community violence reduction programs such as Chicago's Operation Ceasefire in the Caribbean, that it might be useful to implement aspects of these programs, properly modified to fit local contexts. He cautioned that this could only work if such programmes were tightly regulated and carefully implemented as these programs run the risk of increasing violence if appropriate controls are not employed. He also stated that efforts to prevent and reduce gang violence require a careful consideration of a gang's heterogeneity and complex motivations since conflating gang types undermines the effectiveness of the state's response.

In the United States, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) developed their own comprehensive gang model; a product of a national gang research and development programme. A national assessment of gang problems and programmes provided the research foundation. Relevant components from within their model are briefly mentioned below. It is important to note that although Trinidad's gang phenomenon and communities differ, there are certain aspects of their best practices which could provide guidance for the local approach to, and design and implementation of, anti-gang programmes.

The OJJDP recognizes that the upholding of ceasefires between rival gangs in each community is only the first stage of intervention intended to disrupt violence. The next step involves the development of a profile of each at-risk community. Each community has varying needs based on community dynamics. In assessing these needs, information will be forthcoming that will assist in understanding the nature of the gang problem in each community. The assessment of the gang problem is central to planning and implementing strategies for a gang intervention model. Once this information is collected, short-term and long-term plans can be designed to fill the gaps and utilize existing resources to support effective gang reduction strategies.

Multi-agency collaboration is necessary and makes a complex intervention such as this one more feasible. Many of the social agencies have the same or similar clients and their visions are often well-matched. Rather than having to source funding from an international agency such as the United Nations Development Programme or other similar agencies, resources can be allocated by each stakeholder for this special project. This will ensure that no one agency is overburdened and it will eliminate the shortcomings of many programmes.

It is important to recognize that gang truces, like many other interventions are not perfect processes and cannot be used as universal remedies for gang violence. Not all gang youths are willing to resolve long-standing conflicts with their rivals and sudden disputes can escalate into homicides and nonfatal shootings before any mediation can take place. Nevertheless, gang truces can be an important element of a multi-layered effort to deal with complex gang violence problems.

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