Responses to Gang Violence in Bermuda

Understanding Identity Through Crime Talk

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Abstract

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This thesis explores whether gang violence has disrupted Bermudian conceptions of identity, and questions whether public reflection on crime can transform social relations. Using interviews, social media discourse and anonymous comment threads, I examine 'crime talk' about Bermudian gang violence in order to understand how crime disrupts narratives of place and identity. The methodology accesses multiple arenas of talk to observe how audience and forum influence what people say about crime.

This study finds that gang violence has not triggered an evident conceptual shift in Bermudian identity or relationships. On the surface, conversations about gang violence are about what has changed in Bermuda. On closer inspection of this talk through the frames of community, gender and race, it becomes apparent that crime talk is stagnant, rather than transformative. The changes associated with gang violence are deemed to be of elsewhere, not Bermudian. Despite the presence of 'debate' in crime talk, it has not produced notable shifts in group behaviour or opinion. Crime talk focuses anxieties without resolving them.

The conclusion of the thesis expands the scope of the work, examining the subject of crime and how it operates in discourse. I identify a number of barriers to social change through crime talk, which I then use to create a potential framework for transformative talk about crime in Bermuda - by informing speakers to bridge gaps in knowledge and experience, establishing forums conducive to reflection, and reframing gang violence as a civil rights issue. This case study, informed by postcolonial theory and island criminology, has strengthened existing theories of public sensibilities to crime by examining their relevance outside of typical Western urban or suburban settings. The thesis has also presented a detailed account of the legacies of Bermudian history in modern Bermudian relationships, with lessons that can be utilised to initiate change.

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Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, gang violence and gang related murders have become increasingly commonplace on the small Atlantic island of Bermuda. Many of the island's residents are caught in discursive quicksand, grappling over decades with the apparent reality of a 'New Bermuda'. Some residents respond with disbelief at the possibility that Bermuda may not be the safe, secluded oasis it has always been for them. Others see this intensified violence as an inevitable development, the expected consequence of increasingly magnified social inequalities that have been entrenched along the lines of race and class since the first slaves were brought to the island.

This thesis interrogates the ways in which Bermudian citizens confront and challenge the nature of Bermudian society through 'crime talk' (Sasson 1995). It explores how the emergence of gang violence has triggered discourse amongst Bermudians about community, race and gender on the island. The responses to the rise in gang violence in Bermuda are specifically Bermudian, particular to the physically bounded experience of living on a small island and particular to the island's unresolved colonial history. The thesis asks what can be learned about a place and its people through crime talk, and what value crime talk has in reforming and restoring historically fractured community relationships.

Research Questions and Key Terms

The primary research question of this thesis is as follows:

To what extent has crime talk about gang violence in Bermuda triggered a reconception of Bermudian identity?

The term 'identity' in this thesis encompasses how individuals define being Bermudian, how Bermudians relate to each other and how they perceive Bermuda. This is explored through the themes of community, race and gender in talk about crime. Each of these terms mean different things to different speakers, and this diversity in individual definition is an important factor in answering the questions posed by this research. However, as a general definition - a 'community' is a group of people with a shared sense of identity, which could be linked to place or culture. Race and gender are both simultaneously biological and sociological. Race is not only defined by physical characteristics such as skin pigmentation, but also shared ancestry and culture. Similarly, gender is not confined to the binary of biological sex - the term encompasses a spectrum of gender identities as well as the social and cultural roles associated with femininity and masculinity.

The definition of the 'gang' has been widely contested in gang criminology (as will be discussed further in Chapter Two), but the basic definition this thesis will operate under is that a gang is group of individuals organised primarily through a shared neighbourhood and the commission of one or more criminal offences - mainly drug dealing and the illegal possession and importation of weapons. Gun and gang violence are used interchangeably in this thesis, as guns are a weapon exclusively used by gang members. Although gang murders have taken place using other weapons, all gun murders on the island since the year 2000 have been gang-related. As a result, this thesis will focus primarily on responses to murders with a firearm.

‘Crime talk’ is both written and verbal discourse on crime in a community by actors familiar and unfamiliar with the events described. It is a mechanism for understanding, a platform for lay theory and a system of storytelling. In attempting to make sense of crime, speakers must ask questions of their community and of each other. Crime talk can illustrate established community identities and reveal the extent to which violence threatens them. The way Bermudians talk about gang violence, whether it be shallow and polite or probing and confrontational, is a product of a much older story about Bermudian identity and our relationships with each other. Has gang violence changed how we perceive ourselves as Bermudians or has it illuminated the uncomfortable and enduring truths about Bermudian society that have remained unchanged? This leads to the secondary question of the thesis:

Can crime talk be transformative talk?

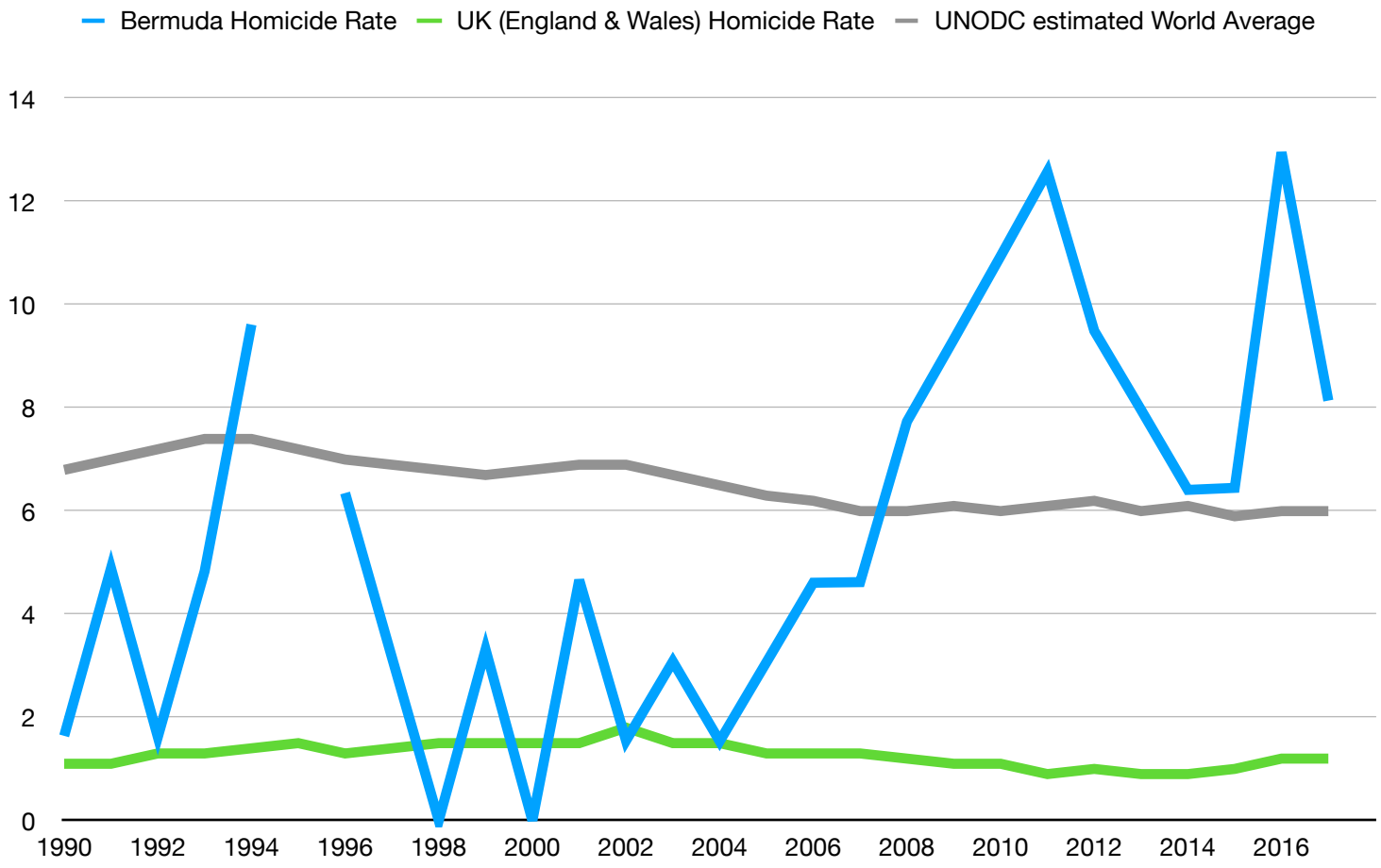
The term ‘transformative talk’ refers to discourse that can redefine identity, change opinions or alter social relationships. Upon answering the primary research question, there will be a secondary examination into the nature of crime talk itself and its capacity to be transformative.

Gang Violence in Bermuda

Although gangs and gang violence are not new to Bermuda, the intensity of the violence experienced has unquestionably escalated since the early 2000s. In 2003, a young man named Shaundae Jones was murdered, shot in a car pulling away from a Dockyard nightclub three months after he gave evidence in a murder trial for the

2001 stabbing of another young man, Tekle Mallory. The murder of Shaundae Jones is widely viewed as the catalyst for the gun violence that plagued the island in the late 2000s. He was not a known gang member - but as a witness to crime he had unknowingly been inducted into a similar mode of existence, where movement must be carefully restricted even on an island of only 20.6 square miles.

Figure 1: Intentional Homicide Rate (per 100,000)



Sources: UNODC 2021, World Bank 2021, BPS 2021

Figure 1 is a chart comparing Bermuda's homicide rate with the UK (England and Wales) and the UNODC estimated world average. Between May 2009 and May 2021, there have been 66 murders, 41 of which were with a firearm and 22 of which are unresolved (Daniels 2021). The number of gang related deaths peaked in 2011 with eight murders (five by firearm), making Bermuda's homicide rate nearly double the world average (Strangeways 2011).

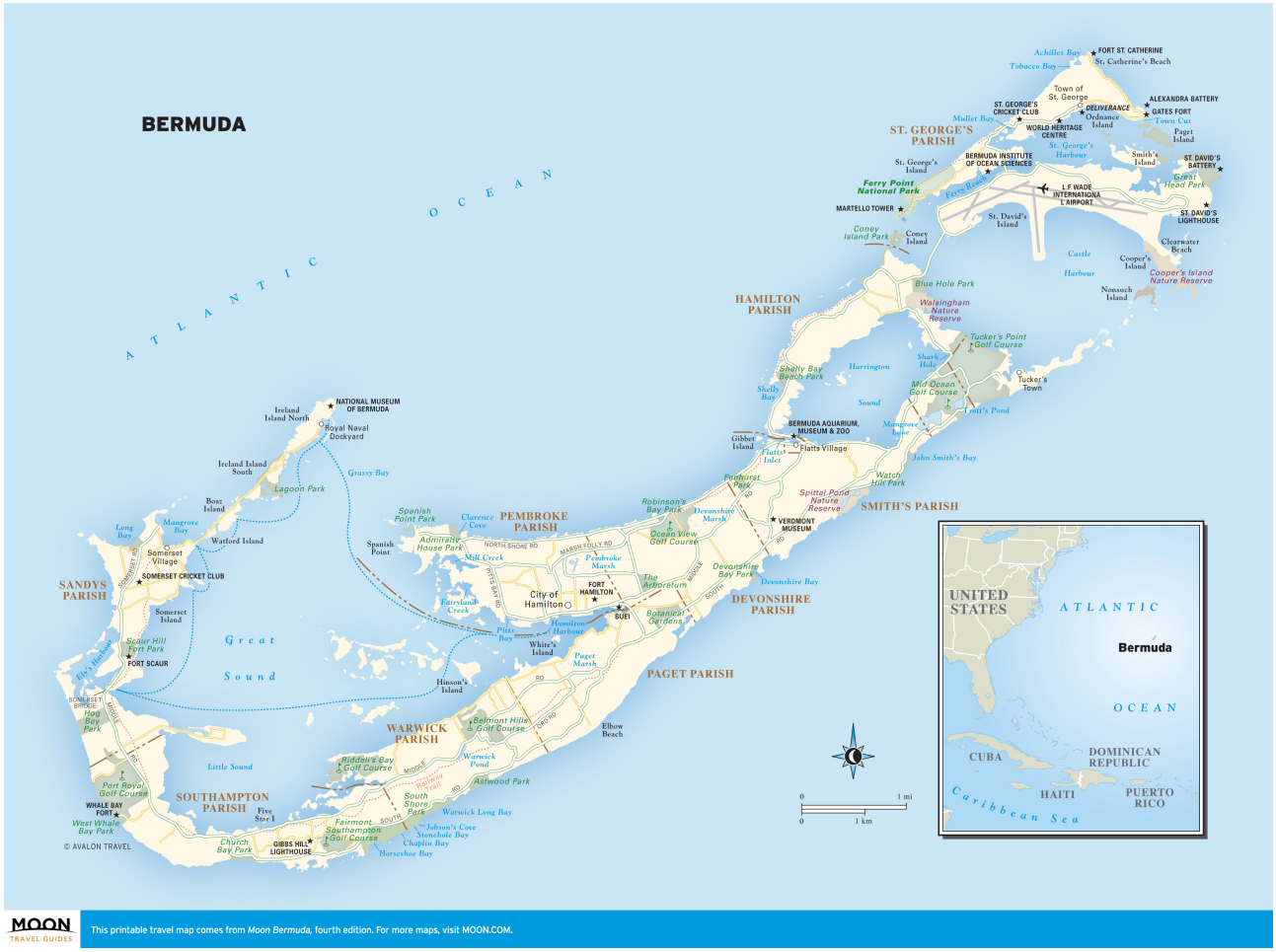
The eight killings in 2011 gave Bermuda a murder rate of 12.6 per 100,000 people (or 1 murder for every 10,833 people), contrasted with a murder rate of 1.1 per 100,000 people in 2003-04. The population has declined since then, so in 2016, seven murders (five by firearm) peaked the murder rate at 13 per 100,000 people. In 2009, this small mid-Atlantic island had a higher murder rate than New York City, and five times higher than London (Strangeways 2010). This figure is inflated by the fact that Bermuda's population is small (roughly 65,000 people) but the impact of this increased violence on such a close-knit community cannot be overstated. In the first ten days of July 2010, there was a shooting every 80 hours (Bernews 2010). These murders were concentrated in particular neighbourhoods - poor, black and often gang territory. Race and class divisions in Bermuda can be revealed by a simple review of these shootings - where they are happening, who is being targeted. A Royal Gazette headline in 2016 screamed: 'DO WE CARE ENOUGH?' (Johnston-Barnes 2016). For some Bermudians, that answer has and always will be 'no'.

Bermuda is a small and highly familiar community, and understanding of Bermudian crime talk requires some foundational knowledge of Bermudian relations, space and history. Crime talk is inseparable from implicit understandings of cultural and physical space. Place performs a more significant role in identity construction than simply contextual backdrop - geographies of culture, even on an island like Bermuda where physical space is limited, form a complex landscape of identity, fear and belonging. The interaction between crime, crime talk and Bermudian identity cannot be investigated without establishing and emphasising precisely how small Bermuda is.

Although in English it is most commonly referred to as the singular ‘Bermuda’, the Spanish plural term ‘Las Bermudas’ more accurately describes this archipelagic nation, comprised of 181 different islands (and roughly 179 additional uninhabitable islets), some connected by bridges to the large main island to form the emblematic fish hook shape. You could run from tip to tip and you still would not have completed a marathon - the island is only 22 miles long and just over a mile wide at its widest point. Despite the limited space, just over 64,000 people reside on the island. Poorer neighbourhoods are more densely populated, yet can be located adjacent to sprawling wealthier neighbourhoods, sometimes only a street away.

Bermuda is divided into nine parishes, all named after powerful white men at the time of Bermuda’s colonisation (see Figure 2):

Figure 2: Map of Bermuda, including parish boundaries (Avalon Travel 2017)



- Sandys, pronounced ‘Sands’ and named after Sir Edwin Sandys, one of the founders of the Virginia Company of London;
- Southampton, named after Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton; shareholder of the Somers Isle Company and treasure of the Virginia Company from 1620 to 1624;
- Warwick, named after Robert Rich, 2nd Earl of Warwick and shareholder of the Somers Isle Company (created by the shareholders of the Virginia Company, the Somers Isle Company was formed in 1615 to oversee administration of Bermuda as a commercial English colony);
- Paget, named after William Paget, 4th Baron Paget de Beaudesert, a shareholder of the Virginia and Somers Isle Companies;
- Pembroke, named after William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke and founder of Pembroke College, Oxford;
- Devonshire, named after William Cavendish, 1st Earl of Devonshire and Somers Isle shareholder;
- Smith’s, named after Sir Thomas Smith, a merchant and politician who was treasurer of the Virginia Company from 1609 to 1620;
- Hamilton, named after James Hamilton, 2nd Marquess of Hamilton, Scotland (not to be confused with the capital, Hamilton, which is located in Pembroke);
- and St. George’s, named for the English Patron Saint of St. George and Sir. George Somers, privateer and founder of the English colony of Bermuda.

(Augustinovic 2015, Bernews 2017)

I have created a map of Bermuda murders with a firearm, 2003-2021 (Figures 3-9) using the GPS coordinates of the murder locations and Google Earth Pro software. Flag colours denote the year of the murder. There is a key to the murders featured on the map in the appendix of this thesis, featuring the name of the victim, geographic coordinates and the year of the murder. It is apparent from a cursory glance at the map that the vast majority of murders with firearms have taken place in Pembroke, between North Hamilton city and the North Shore.

Figure 3: Map of Bermuda Murders with a Firearm, 2003-2021



At the time of writing this thesis, there are several gangs and smaller 'crews' with territory along the length of the island. Not all of these gangs are involved in violent confrontations, and many have declined in size and influence since the early 2010s. The most westerly gang is MOB, known for their organisation and exertion of control over smaller neighbourhood sub groups emerging in Somerset. MOB territory covers Dockyard to Somerset Bridge, then White Hill covers Somerset Bridge to

Rockaway Ferry. The Rangers Crew cover the area around Southampton Rangers Football Club, the neighbourhood between Horseshoe Bay and Middle Road. Jones Village Crew and Ord Road Crew are much less active today, but are based in Warwick into Paget parish (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Western Parish Murders with a Firearm, 2003-2021



The gangs most associated with violent confrontations in the 2010s are Parkside and 42. The Parkside gang is named after a now-closed Jamaican restaurant on Parson's Road in Pembroke parish. Parkside territory extends from Spanish Point to Hamilton city (particularly North Hamilton, known as 'bakatawn' or back of town), into the Middle Town, Happy Valley and Deepdale neighbourhoods south of Parson's Road and the National Stadium. These neighbourhoods sharply contrast with the more affluent Camden neighbourhood, just streets away on Middle

Road, where there are secluded homes with gardens so large and lush you can't hear the traffic anymore. 42 covers north of Parson's Road up to the North Shore Village, though the numbers in 42 are much diminished today. The gang, pronounced 'Four Two', is named after St. Monica's Road, also known as '42nd Street' (location of Kenwandae Robinson's murder, Figure 5).

Figure 5: Central Parish Murders with a Firearm, 2003-2021



Michael, a black Bermudian former prosecutor and member of Parliament, told me a little about the evolution of crime and gangs in Bermuda. He spoke of Front Line, a group in the 1990s which 'ran Court Street, ran all back of town', separated by faction to create White Wall, a group of younger men who split from the 'age old gangsters' of Front Line to sell drugs on Curving Avenue going down St. Augustine's Hill (area surrounding the location of Paul Johnson's murder, Figure 5). The White Wall Crew were connected to a number of robberies and gun activity in the mid to

late ‘90s (Royal Gazette 1995; Parker Trott 1998), seen as the first group to break the established set of rules in Bermuda drug circles. Michael told me of the Caribbean roots of the Parkside gang:

‘Parkside originally are the sons of the Jamaican men that came to Bermuda. The Parkside guys are too young to be involved with White Wall and so they start doing their own minor little drug deals. Remember, they’re 14, 15 years old. They created a neighbourhood in Dellwood. These are young men who are finding themselves on the social outskirts of Bermuda, they have Jamaican dads who are not around, they’re watching their moms struggle. So from there, they go to the drug cartels. The drug cartels are not giving them solace - so what do they do? They create their own microcosm of survival in Bermuda. What does it centre around? It centres around the sale of narcotics and the enforcement of territory. And you start to see a proliferation of violence in Bermuda that is predicated on the sale of narcotics and fighting for territory.’

Figure 6: Eastern Parish Murders with a Firearm, 2003-2021



Eventually, White Wall and Front Line disintegrated and Parkside took control of the area. The group became notorious, often clashing with 42 north of town and MOB out west. There is much less gang activity on the East End of the island (Figure 6). Jacob, a white Bermudian police officer and former member of the Bermuda Police Service's Gang Targeting Unit, told me about the landscape of gang violence on the island:

'Once you start heading East…there's really nobody East. You got the guys at Crawl Hill but they're not doing anything. They're a bunch of babies. Then you move into St. George you've got the East Side Crew. But you don't really hear anything from them anymore, a bunch of them got locked up.'

One of my interviewees, Atara, is the sister of a victim of gang violence. Her brother Idris took control of the Parkside gang in his mid 20s. She was incredulous that he could ever be involved 'in the street life', telling me how she would drive down Court Street, see her brother and not recognise who he'd become. She told me about her feelings about how certain segments of Bermudian society could be so physically near to gang violence yet have next to no knowledge of the lives, circumstances or events taking place around the corner:

'*It's funny because you know, in Bermuda, and I don't want to be racial at all, but you find that some demographics in Bermuda are actually not affected by this gang thing at all. They hear about a shooting and are like 'Uhhhh, is the sun up? Gonna make me a shake and go for a run!' and I think it's beautiful but I also think it's astounding because I walk somewhere and people will know who I am and you're on the same soil, the same Bermudian soil and they have no affiliation with this life, they have no idea. But they're living just around the corner from it.'*

Atara, a black Bermudian woman, knew that I wasn't from 'that lifestyle' as she put it, which was a polite way of acknowledging that I have no personal experience with gangs and violence in Bermuda because I am white. Race is an uncomfortable subject in Bermuda, but it is an ever-present factor in how Bermudians relate to one another. Nearly every victim of gun violence has been a black man - even those who have stubbornly avoided engaging with the subject of race in Bermuda must confront it if they are to participate in conversation about gang violence. Narratives of violence shape not only the politics of an area, but its inhabitants' lives and their sense of self and place. Knowledge of the nuances of Bermudian localities varies widely amongst Bermudians depending on factors such as race and their own parish of origin. For example, I have lived in Somerset Village in Sandys Parish all my life. I was aware that the gang 'MOB' was based in Somerset Village, but it was only in the research

Figure 7: Somerset Murders with a Firearm, 2003-2021



for this thesis that I understood that the 'Gun Alley' that was referred to in news reports and discussions about the violence was a nickname for Cambridge Road, only around the corner from where I live in Somerset (see Figure 7). Gun Alley is known as MOB territory and a hotspot for gang confrontation. I live on the East Shore, a stones throw from this road, with no awareness of the completely different world or even the reputation of it. I walk my dog down 'Gun Alley' every day. Neighbourhoods of deprivation are next to neighbourhoods of affluence. Gary Cann's murder in 2009 took place only a stone's throw away from the prime coastal real estate of West Side Road (see Figure 7).

Figure 8: Pembroke Parish Murders with a Firearm (North Shore detail), 2003-2021



This experiential chasm is not exclusive to me, but is drawn along the lines of class, race and gender in Bermudian society. Take for example, Government House, the residence of the Governor, the Queen's representative on the island. Despite the limited political power of the Governor on the island, they live in an enormous home with sprawling grounds right in the middle of 42 territory and adjacent to the site of several murders (see Figure 8). Likewise, the affluent neighbourhoods of Fairylands and Point Shares are only a few hundred metres away from the sites of the murders of Garrina Cann and Deshaun Berkeley (see Figure 9). When people talk about crime, particularly on social media, they may be coming from vastly different backgrounds and personal connection to the violence.

Figure 9: Pembroke Parish Murders with a Firearm (Point Shares, Fairylands and Spanish Point), 2003-2021



The thesis will interrogate how these gulfs of experience are revealed through crime talk, where they come from and how this influences contrasting definitions among speakers of what it means to be Bermudian. Additionally, there will be a consideration of how this inequality in experience and understanding limits the capacity for crime talk to produce meaningful change.

Understanding Bermudian Identity Through Crime Talk

The thesis will be arranged as follows:

Chapter One will outline **Part One of the Theoretical Framework** of this study of public sensibilities to violent crime. This chapter will explain why the Bermudian response to gang violence does not qualify as a moral panic, and will review the existing literature on fear of crime, public sensibilities to crime and crime talk ethnographies to situate this Bermudian case study.

Chapter Two establishes **Part Two of the Theoretical Framework** of the thesis. This chapter will first examine existing academic debate around defining gangs and the true extent of 'the gang problem', and explain the need for a postcolonial, island-centric criminological approach when considering public responses to crime outside of the urban Global North.

Chapter Three will map the **Methodology** of this case study - an interpretative phenomenological analysis of first-hand interviews, social media commentary and comment threads on online news articles. The methodology is designed in order to access different arenas of crime talk, to observe whether thematic trends in responses to violent crime persist despite audience and forum.

Chapter Four will examine key moments in **Bermudian History** from discovery to the present through the lenses of community, race and gender to establish the historical context for how Bermudians navigate space and interact with one another today. Bermuda's history and present status as a dependent territory of the UK will influence a subsequent discussion of the ambiguity of 'Bermudian identity'. An understanding of history and the specificity of place is key to decoding crime talk. There will be an additional discussion of defining **Bermudian Identity** and the debates and questions that arise when attempting to do this.

Chapter Five is the first of the empirical chapters, examining the theme of **Community** in Bermudian crime talk. This chapter will examine how community-focused crime talk, despite being superficially focused on the ways in which Bermuda has changed, reveals instead what has remained *unchanged* for centuries in Bermudian society. Additionally, this chapter will interrogate the phenomenon of 'de-Bermudianising' gang members.

Chapter Six will investigate the theme of **Race** in discussions of Bermudian gang violence. This chapter will examine social inequality and the 'Two Bermudas' lay criminological theory which often features in discussions of gang violence, and how this frame interacts with contrasting narratives of individual responsibility. Narrative allegiance, although on the surface appearing to be drawn along racial lines, often shifts depending on audience and forum. When race intersects with crime talk, it illustrates the ways in which longstanding inequalities in Bermudian society shape modern relationships and discourse.

Chapter Seven explores the theme of **Gender** in Bermudian Crime Talk. Crime talk reveals the power of historical narratives of gender in Bermuda, and how conversations about gender shift when they intersect with conversations about race. When crime talk focuses on community and race, norms are frequently questioned and challenged, but when the subject of gender appears in crime talk there is a near deification of hegemonic gender roles, with very little space for transformation of identity and ideas.

In the **Conclusions,** I summarise the empirical findings and consider the extent to which gang violence has disrupted speakers' conceptions of Bermudian identity and society. I will discuss some barriers to transformative crime talk, and propose potential solutions to these barriers in order to break the repetitive and static cycle of Bermudian crime talk and mobilise the wider community to prevent further instances of gang violence.

Chapter One

Investigating Bermudian Crime Talk: Moral Panics and Beyond

When examining community responses to crime, there is often a knee-jerk instinct to investigate the phenomenon through the lens of 'moral panic' - the sociological term first coined by Jock Young in 1971 and more systematically developed by Stan Cohen in 1972. This has been an invaluable concept in developing the study of audiences to crime and has become the default frame for understanding social reactions to crime. However, I argue that community responses to gang violence in Bermuda do not constitute a moral panic and should not be examined as such. There is indeed *concern* around the violence and even a level of panic about 'the state of the youth', as we shall see, but the discursive response to gang violence is generally themed around more opaque topics such as the legacies of slavery and experiential disconnection in a small community. If one considers the inherent productivity of a moral panic - the power of the panic to catalyse policy change and influence social behaviour - then the moral panic around gang violence in Bermuda has certainly failed despite the best efforts of interest groups and the media. This is but one of the key hallmarks of a moral panic that is not observed in the Bermudian case study. In fact, there are very few markers of moral panic in the Bermudian response to gang violence, leading me to conclude that this is not the appropriate frame through which to understand this phenomenon.

This is not to say that moral panics do not exist in Bermuda. Nor is it to say that the literature provides nothing of value to this study. After an examination of what constitutes a moral panic and why I conclude that the phenomenon investigated in

this study is not one, I will unpack what can be gleaned from the wider literature on moral panics that can be applied to this analysis. I will then outline the theories regarding public sensibilities to crime that more closely align with and can inform the analysis of public responses to gang violence in Bermuda. This will include literature exploring crime and social constructionism, fear of crime and 'crime talk' ethnographies. The importance attributed to place within these theories provides the ideal foundation for analysis of the peculiarities of crime talk in Bermuda. In conclusion, I outline the value of a Bermudian case study to the theoretical landscape of public responses to violent crime.

What is a Moral Panic?

When *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* was first published in 1972, it's unlikely that Stan Cohen expected this adaptation of his PhD thesis to become such a seminal piece of work. The concept of moral panics as popularised by Cohen's account of the public and media response to clashes between the Mods and the Rockers in Britain in the late 1960s remains hugely influential in criminological studies on responses to crime, but also had a lasting impact outside of the academic world. 'Moral panic' is a phrase now commonly used by lay people as a (frequently dismissive) diagnosis of a public response to crime, a term now ingrained in 'the language of cultural debate' (Garland 2008: 9). The undeniable salience of this term and the accompanying theories in the academic and public vocabularies make it an immediate and obvious point of reference when speaking of public responses to crime. However, this is but one conceptual frame through which to examine crime from the perspective of the society it takes place in. Moral panic is a specific term with specific theoretical applications.

Not all public responses to crime are moral panics, nor do they inevitably become them.

A moral panic is a disproportionate public response of fear or outrage, often sustained and intensified by the media and political actors, to a threat posed by cartoonish 'folk devils' to the collective morality of the community. The life cycle of the moral panic starts from the identification of a deviant group as a threat to communal morality, the depiction of this threat in the media fuelling a rise of public attention, and ends with dissipation of the panic through either social control of the deviance or a loss of public interest.

The term was first introduced by Jock Young in 1971 when discussing public responses to reported increases in drug abuse. He described how the public imagination can be harnessed in order to engineer a 'moral panic about a certain type of deviancy' (1971: 182). This concept of *engineering* is key here - a moral panic does not occur organically. Public concern must be actively directed towards deviancy, which is then identified as a threat to societal values. The concern is thereby encouraged and inflated, snowballing into a panic. In 1972, Stan Cohen fully mapped out the construction of a moral panic with *Folk Devils and Moral Panics.* The life cycle of the moral panics starts from the identification of a deviant group as a threat to communal morality, the depiction of this threat in the media fuelling a rise of public attention and a response from elite figures, and ends with either social control of the deviance and dissipation of the panic - or a loss of interest.

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009) have a neat distillation of the key elements of a moral panic that can help with identifying whether or not one is taking place. These are:

1. **Concern:** a generalised anxiety about a potential social threat
2. **Hostility:** condemnation of the deviant subjects of the panics, described as 'folk devils' by Cohen (2011) and subsequently the agencies or institutions enabling the deviance
3. **Consensus:** widespread agreement that the threat is real, serious and caused by the folk devils in question, shared particularly by the media and elite interests
4. **Disproportionality:** an exaggeration of figures, language and presentation of the subject of the panic in order to engender a sense of urgency in response
5. **Volatility:** the panic is defined as being inherently short lived, erupting and dissipating suddenly

In order to locate the Bermudian response to gang violence within the field of moral panic studies, I will unpack these key features of a moral panic and situate their relevance to the Bermudian context. There will be an additional discussions of two other key features of moral panics as identified by Garland (2008): the morality stories intertwined within social reactions to moral panics coupled with the sense that the subjects of the panic are symptomatically threatening a 'way of life', and the remarkable *productivity* of moral panics in that they effect change and uphold lasting legacies. Ultimately, I will conclude that the Bermudian response to gang violence does not constitute a moral panic within these parameters and is instead a story of

continuity rather than discontinuity, a story which requires deeper scrutiny of the discursively eruptive moments in Bermudian history that both mirror and diverge from the current social reaction to gang violence.

Concern

Within a moral panic, *concern* is oriented around the behaviour of the deviant group and the imagined consequences of that behaviour. Goode and Ben-Yehuda make the distinction that concern *can* manifest as fear, but does not always. Concern is something more existential, a widespread anxiety. There are more hypothetical questions inherent to concern, questions of what could possibly be a threat rather than what objectively is. Fear, although by no means universally rational or proportionate, is a direct emotion. Fear comes from a belief that there is an individual threat to the person who is afraid. Although there is an intangibility to the concept of public concern, Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009: 37) propose that this is measurable in a number of ways, 'through public opinion polls, public commentary in the form of media attention, proposed legislation, number of arrests and imprisonments and social movement activity.'

The findings of this thesis certainly reflect an element of public concern over gang violence in Bermuda. There is the overriding sense that this violence is threatening a way of life, a sense of communal self, of what it means to be Bermudian and what life in Bermuda should be. However, these theories were written with urban landscapes in mind, where 'patternless, purposeless chaos' (Best 1999:9) feeds the fear of the stranger and fear of random violence (see Best 1999, Tuan 2013). This is quite clearly not revealed in the Bermudian population. Firstly, despite a pace of life and global economic standing comparable to western urban centres,

there is a level of extreme interpersonal familiarity that undermines potential concern or fear of violence. There is no fear of violence by strangers, and there is also no concern about the threat of society disintegrating at the hands of violent gangs as those who are not directly involved or related to the men involved are unaffected. There is condemnation of violent confrontation between gangs in Bermuda, but there is also an understanding that the individual and collective risk of harm is low.

In the introduction to the third edition of his book, Cohen considers the debate that moral panics are being eroded by Risk Society (as formulated by Beck 1992), the generalised anxieties that accompany modernity and the ways in which society organises in response to them. Cohen (2011: xxxi) writes of how '(r)eflections on risk are now absorbed into a wider culture of insecurity, victimisation and fear' which extends into the fields of social control and deviance. Interestingly, the actuarial science around the risk of natural disasters not only forms a significant part of risk studies but also is a key player on the stage of elite Bermudian life, where the economy is primarily upheld by the headquartered presence of global insurance and reinsurance companies. Devastating events are de-personalised, divorced from human consequence and reduced to numerical risk and financial consequence.

When first writing *Folk Devils and Moral Panics,* Cohen drew inspiration from the work of disaster researchers and the parallels between the sequential models of a disaster from warning to recovery and those he observed in social responses to the conflict between the Mods and the Rockers. Although Cohen himself cautions that it's difficult to draw exact parallels, it is an interesting concept and prompts me to consider the differences between Bermudian conversations about hurricanes and gang violence. With the rise in global temperatures, hurricanes in Bermuda have

become an annual occurrence. The storms are stronger, and more frequent, with many striking the island in quick succession, such as Fay and Gonzalo in 2014. As with gang violence, specific Facebook groups are created to share news and conversation about hurricanes in Bermuda, as well as discussion that takes place in traditional news media and comment threads. Similarly, much of the talk around impending and occurring storms circulates around an idea of Bermudian identity as is outlined in the fieldwork chapters of this thesis.

That is where the similarities end. Identity talk takes a different form when people discuss hurricanes compared to gang violence, emphasising in the former case unity over division and resilience over vulnerability. Phrases such as 'Stay safe, everyone!', 'We will get through this like we did before' and '#BermudaStrong' are commonplace in these discussions. There is a sense of collective preparation and solidarity when a hurricane hits Bermuda. For as long as people have power, they report back on what the storm looks like outside and on weather radar websites, they post about how their house is holding up, they reach out to friends and family, they hold 'hurricane parties.' Bermuda comes from a place of immense privilege, where there are laws that stipulate buildings must be made from thick and study stone to withstand the storms. I am reminded of the first line of Seamus Heaney's 1966 poem, *Storm on the Island* - 'we are prepared, we build our houses squat.' Although there is anxiety over the increasing strength and frequency of storms, there is not a pervasive fear that you may find in countries without the infrastructure to withstand them. Though the connection with disaster response was not intended to be an exact parallel to the development of a moral panic, this additionally reveals that the Bermudian context and response is unique and needs to be approached accordingly.

Identifying the nature of the concern around gang violence is at the heart of this thesis. It is an existential concern about the future of the island, but it is neither widespread nor internalised enough to match the moral panics described by Cohen and future commentators. This comes as a surprise, for gang violence on a quiet island would seem the perfect backdrop for the eruption of a moral panic. Drawing on Jock Young's levels of typicality, Cohen writes that moral panics 'depend on the generation of diffuse normative concerns, while the successful creation of folk devils rests on their stereotypical portrayal as atypical actors against a background that is overtypical' (2011: 61). And perhaps it is exactly this that partially obstructs the development of a moral panic, for although there is a degree of normative concern, the familiarity of Bermudian society stands in the way of creating a successful caricature of gang member as folk devil. And indeed, the atypicality of gang violence within Bermudian discourse is called into question when we situated it in the historical landscape of discourse around Bermudian identity and racial inequality. This introduces a question to be answered over the course of the thesis: is gang violence representative of discontinuity within the normative framework of Bermuda or is it a continuity of past discursively disruptive events disguised?

Hostility

Concern alone cannot create a moral panic. Moral panics can emerge once concern can be directed towards a 'folk devil' - when concern meets hostility. The 'folk devil' as described by Cohen is a reductive, cartoonish depiction of the deviant subjects of the moral panic. Folk devils embody the threat to social norms, a screen on which to project a society's insecurities and guilt (see Hall et al. 1978, Garland 2008). They are found in 'the gallery of types that society erects to show its members which roles

should be avoided and which should be emulated…visible reminders of what we should not be' (Cohen 2011: 2).

Folk devils and the accompanying moral panics often emerge at sites of social change, where there is a resistance and fear of what the future brings and a nostalgia for an idealised past. 'When things threaten to disintegrate', write Hall et al. in *Policing the Crisis*, 'the Folk Devil not only becomes the bearer of all our social anxieties, but we turn against him the full wrath of our indignation' (1978: 161). The folk devil becomes a convenient dialectic alternative to self-reflection.

According to moral panic theorists, the mass media both exaggerates and identifies the folk devils in society. Symbolism and imagery are integral to the dissemination of stereotypes, and these are best displayed through the mass media (and contemporarily, social media). The creation of a dichotomy is key. Cohen writes that '(t)he way the societal reaction, and the mass media particularly, segregate the deviant and bipolarise folk devils from the rest of the community, is a strong basis for attitude formation' (2011: 74). The histrionic stereotyping of the British press is rarely found in formal Bermudian media. A quick search for the word 'thug' in the Royal Gazette online archives, the Bermudian newspaper that leans most heavily towards a white conservative worldview, brought up only 39 headlines featuring the word thug, thugs or thuggery among 627 articles featuring the word, many of which were overseas Associated Press articles. Most of the headlines were quoting a claims-maker and notably referring to fights at football matches and were published under the oversight of a particular editor in the early 2000s, prior to the rise of social media. The choice of language in Royal Gazette headlines in particular is under intense public scrutiny, and the size of the Bermudian community means there are

repercussions for the paper, writers and editor should the paper be accused of sensationalism. If the Royal Gazette were to publish a headline with ‘thug’ in it today, there would undoubtedly be a social media firestorm around whether the paper is revealing its systemic racism with the use of the term. As journalists I interviewed shared with me, it is in the Royal Gazette’s best interest to stay away from inflammatory language and for the most part the paper, along with other Bermudian news sources, tends to do so.

Additionally, the familiarity of Bermudian society stands in the way of creating a successful caricature of gang member as folk devil, as there is a good chance that many commentators are personally connected to the men in the news in some shape or form. This level of interpersonal connection prevents the complete cartoonisation of the gang member into an inhuman folk devil. Interestingly, much of the language that creates the ‘us and them’ delineation away from gang members is a declaration of unBermudianness - for example, that the men involved were raised by a Jamaican parent and are thus imitating something that is *Jamaican*, not Bermudian at all. Although the terminology of folk devils does not quite fit into the Bermudian puzzle, there is clearly a tendency for speakers to discursively distance themselves from the deviants in question. The resolution of this contradiction - that Bermuda is too close-knit to create folk devils, yet there are many examples of how Bermudians ‘other’ gang members - is found in the lack of consensus around the ‘character’ of the gang member and the issue of gang violence in general.

Consensus

Consensus implies an agreement between the media, authorities, elites and a significant sector of the public that the threat posed by the folk devils is real and

serious. Hall et al. incorporate consensus as an important part of their Marxist interpretation of moral panics, investigating the ways in which consensus can be presented, harnessed and utilised by those in power to enact social control. The construction of social problems *'both assumes and helps to construct society as a 'consensus'*…we share a common stock of cultural knowledge with our fellow men: we have access to the same maps of meanings' (1978: 55: emphasis in original). These maps of meaning are employed by the media to translate the significance of events to their audiences and present blueprint interpretations which contain 'orientations towards the events and the people or groups involved in them' (ibid.: 57). This consensual paradigm can be seen to erase ideological differences that may exist across class, race, gender and different groups, Hall et al. assure us that debate operates within a 'broader basic framework of agreement' (ibid. 56).

Hall et al. write of the ways in which the media can inhabit 'the voice of the public' through editorials and promote lay voices through publishing letters to the editor. The power of moral consensus runs strong here. When liberal contributors enter the conversation to provide a counter narrative, there is an acute awareness that they are presenting an opinion contrary to traditionalist individualist moral consensus and therefore must first state their agreement with the main moral tenets of the dominant position before continuing. Additionally, in presenting balanced perspectives, whether or not they truly represent a statistical reality, the media can support their self-definition of being a democratic voice of the public (see ibid.: 121). In ticking the box of 'balance' while still upholding the assumed consensus of morality, the media sets the agenda of a moral panic. The media is able to structure social issues around the dominant moral ideologies, thus reinforcing them. It is both inspired by and can shape public knowledge. Hall et al. write:

"Public opinion' about crime does not simply form up at random. It exhibits a shape and structure. It followed a sequence. It is a social process, not a mystery. Even at the lowest threshold of visibility - in talk, in rumour, in the exchange of quick views and common-sense judgements - crime talk is not socially innocent; already it is informed and penetrated by the lay opinions and ideologies about crime as a public topic'.

(ibid.: 136)

Hall et al. note how the editorials and letters to the editor tend to draw from concrete experience and appeals to common sense. Writers share their experience of being the victims of muggings and use this to argue against 'soft on crime' liberal ideologies. There is a different ideological map when it comes to Bermudian responses to gang violence, and the way people utilise their own personal experiences when discussing the issue. As the fieldwork chapters will show, personal experience in Bermuda is generally used to invite conversations around systemic inequality and liberal reform, and often used to discredit hard on crime, folk devil-centred talk. This being said, Hall et al. are writing about the moral panic around mugging in the UK - the relationship between the perpetrator and victim is very different from the Bermudian context of inter-gang violence.

It is difficult to argue that there is not a general consensus among the Bermudian public that gang violence is bad. This being said, there are three things that suggest that more is at play here: (i) the different relationship between the Bermuda press and public compared to the UK and US; (ii) the lack of consensus amongst elites, activists or claims-makers around the best ways to tackle gang violence and (iii) the way in which Bermudians talk about gang violence reveals more about divisions and disconnect than consensus in Bermudian society.

Disproportionality

The disproportional aspect of a moral panic is simultaneously controversial and visible - it's the aspect employed by lay and academic commentators to dismiss a societal reaction and it's also the aspect most easily quantified. Disproportionality can come from the press or claims-makers by exaggerating statistics, employing histrionic language or presenting assumption as truth 'on the basis of flimsy or contradictory evidence' (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009: 49). It can also be found in public reaction, jumping to conclusions about the consequences of the subject of the moral panic incommensurate with the scale of the objective harm.

Moral panic commentators frequently note the power of media imagery and the ways in which this symbolism and imagery give meaning to the activity. Although there are no images of gang violence in the Bermuda media as there were of clashes between the mods and the rockers, the images used still have meaning. Most of the media imagery employed by the Bermuda press connects to a sense of place. When news of a shooting is reported, it is often accompanied by a press photo of the location where the shooting happened, with police tape and police officers. This connects with the audience in a specific way - here is a place you know, here is a place that you drive through or walk in frequently, and here is the new reality of this place. Other images associated with stories of gang violence include pictures of the victims smiling with their families or images of men on trial leaving court in prison garb. What is important to note here is the lack of anonymity. Men are given names and faces, they are not 'anonymous thugs' but victims and perpetrators.

Panics, whether harnessed by elite actors or engendered by grassroots campaigners, are populist outrage thriving on exaggeration and disproportion. The Bermuda press are not able to play fast and loose with the truth like mass media organisations in the UK and US. There is too much direct accountability within a small population. The fact checkers aren't just in the comments - they're next door and they'll call your mother if you don't fix the error. There is still no widespread sense of public outrage and urgency with regard to tackling gang violence, despite the pleas from politicians, international business figures, police, victims' families and grassroots activists. In fact, there have been several press pieces commenting on the remarkable absence of outrage (Johnston-Barnes 2016, Bell 2021). Gun crime and gang motivated murder are events that have all the ingredients ideal for the fomentation of a moral panic in Bermuda, yet somewhere along the discursive channel there is resistance to this construction.

Volatility

The final element of a moral panic described by Good and Ben-Yehuda is volatility: they suddenly erupt and dissipate. Cohen writes that moral panics by nature cannot be persistent, for a 'panic, by definition, is self-limiting, temporary and spasmodic, a splutter of rage which burns itself out' (2011: xxxvii). There has been some debate as to whether moral panics can be seen as sudden and erratic or, despite being finite, are predictable patterns of the state and the media reinforcing dominative normative ideologies. In their attempt to bring moral panic theory up to date with the changing landscape of media (which is now in itself out of date since the arrival of social media), McRobbie and Thornton argue that moral panics are now an accepted mode of representation, constructed and utilised on a near daily basis to engender and diffuse public alarm (1995: 560). Cohen warns against the 'domestication' of moral

panics (2011: xxxviii). Moral panics do not come just from standard fears and concerns, moral panics represent something wider around the transgression of accepted boundaries within a framework of power and control. Goode and Ben-Yehuda remind us that there is simultaneous volatility and consistency in moral panics (2009: 42). The moral panic itself may be short-lived, but their roots are in longstanding structural concerns and moral codes.

Why do panics end? Cohen offers several explanations - that moral panics have a natural history and eventually there is public boredom with the cycle, the old panics are replaced by a new one, the danger has been reduced due to social control measures and community recovery or the claims-makers have since been discredited (2011: xxxvii). A former Royal Gazette editor, white British writer Robert, told me that a 2016 murder was not 'really dramatic or attention grabbing' enough to warrant a social media post from the newspaper. I asked him why a violent murder wasn't considered dramatic or attention grabbing.

'After five years or whatever it was, people were numb to it. I was at Bernews at the height of the gang warfare period in the late 2000s. There was one point, when if there was a shooting we would see 20,000 people coming online. The site would crash, there was so much traffic. And honestly Em, after two or three years of this on an ongoing basis…people were numb to it. I mean, people still came, don't get me wrong. But there weren't these huge spikes in readership because it had become part of the background noise in Bermuda. '*Oh, another one.*' *You know? And we could see it in real time. So yeah, the law of diminishing returns, unfortunately.'*

There is an abiding sense of concern regarding gang violence, but perhaps it is *too* constant, *too* abiding, lacking the volatility to qualify as a moral panic because the event itself does not disrupt the consistency of Bermudian life. The fact that the

Bermudian collective response to gang violence does not neatly correspond with each of the five elements of a moral panic suggests that there is sometime else at work here, something that needs to be investigated with an understanding of historical structures of power and resistance on the island.

On the Morality and Productivity of Moral Panics

There are two further key elements of moral panics identified by Garland: the moral dimension of the social reaction to deviant conduct and the idea that this deviance is symptomatic of a flaw in the moral fabric of society (2008: 11). The moral dimension and symptomatic quality of moral panics are interesting elements to consider in relation to this study, for although the public reaction to gang violence does not align with the five elements outlined by Goode and Ben-Yehuda, the events of violence can certainly be seen to trigger a degree of 'introspective soul-searching' amongst certain commentators, though when this soul searching threatens to unpick the legacies of racism and inequality in Bermudian society there is a notable absence in participation from white discussants. As we shall see, soul-searching has a limit when the conversation evolves into any meaningful attempt to critique economic and racial inequality in Bermuda. Those conversations take place, but they rarely have active participation between social groups beyond declaration and dismissal. The moral response to gang violence accompanies an acknowledgement that this violence must be symptomatic of something wrong with Bermudian society, but it is when participants attempt to diagnose the cause of these symptoms that the communication breaks down.

Another worthy addition to the periodic table of moral panics raised by Garland is the productivity of moral panics. In Garland's view, moral panics 'make things

happen. They create effects and leave a legacy' (ibid.: 15). Hall et al. (1978: 165) note that we are observing moral panics in action not only at the merge of traditionalist anxiety and media highlighted crime, but when this connection is '*mobilised.'* Studies of moral panics show that the response to a moral panic can cement social divisions and produce new methods of social control (see Hall et al. 1978, Young 1971, Cohen 2011, Garland 2000). What begins as an 'informal social reaction' is then 'extended and formalised, the ultimate formalisation being achieved when new laws are actually created' (Cohen 2011: 122). The legacies of moral panic are not exclusive to the formation of new structures of regulation and control, but also the intensification of societal divisions and the redefinition of moral boundaries - society's uncrossable lines and indefensible acts. Hall et al. conclude of the ways in which the moral panic around mugging further cemented the marginalisation of the black working class:

'(N)ow we can see how black crime functions as one of the vehicles of this division. It provides the separation of the class into black and white with a material basis, since, in much black crime (as in much white working-class crime), one part of the class materially 'rips off' another. It provides this separation with its ideological figure, for it transforms the deprivation of the class, out of which crime arises, into the all too intelligible syntax of race, and fixes a false enemy: the black mugger. Thus it sustains the political separation. For the moment black organisations and the black community defend black youth against the harassment to which they are subject, they appear on the political stage as the 'defenders of street criminals'. Yet not to defend that sector of the class which is being systematically driven into crime is to abandon it to the ranks of those who have been permanently criminalised.'

(Hall et al. 1978: 395-6)

The rise in gang violence in Bermuda triggered new legislation, the creation of a Gang Targeting Unit (now disbanded) in the police, the appointment of a Gang

Violence Reduction Coordinator and Team, the creation of the 'Redemption Farm' for at-risk young men, school outreach programmes from police and social workers - to name just a few. It has been difficult for interest groups to secure sufficient community engagement and uptake in working to reintegrate men into society and divert at risk boys and men. Campaigners often use the term 'it takes a village' but bemoan the reluctance of the village to get involved. They speak of a lack of education about the realities of inequality in Bermuda and the reasons why young men may get involved in gangs, despite devoting their energy to educating the public about these very issues. This is not a question of the message being publicly available, but whether the public access it and absorb it into their wider cultural understanding. Likewise, it's debatable as to whether the response to gang violence intensifies race and class divisions in Bermuda or simply re-illuminates historical fractions.

Beyond Moral Panics

This review of moral panic theory has centred around the two founding texts in the field, Cohen's *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* and Hall et al.'s *Policing the Crisis.* This is not to limit moral panic theory to these two texts, but to acknowledge the core tenets of this theory lie within them. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* is now over 50 years old. The literature has moved forward in an attempt to adapt the theory to modern channels of communication and the 24 hour news cycle. Some studies have concluded that the concept loses power in modernity. McRobbie and Thornton (1995: 566) ask if it is possible to have a moral panic in an age where the folk devils can respond to the accusations hurled at them, something closer to the 'culture wars' described by Gusfield (1986) and Garland (2007). Although the gang members are not folk devils, men who have been associated with gangs in Bermuda rarely publicly

participate in public conversations around gang violence, and if they do it is not a debate with commentators but generally supporting their perspectives.

Ungar (2001) argues that the moral panic loses power amongst the pervasive underlying anxieties that underline a risk society, while Hier (2003) responds that modernity has not changed but produces converged sites of collective anxiety. Hier (2015) develops this by introducing the idea, drawing from a study by Fitzgerald and Smoczynski (2015) on a modern British moral panic around anti-polish migration, that in the current multi-mediated age modern moral panics are more routine, less volatile than previously conceived. These concepts can form part of the explanation for the muted Bermudian response to gang violence and the relative mundanity of crime reporting and reactions in Bermuda.

The moral panic literature invites us to make visible the ways in which social problems are constructed within the framework of wider social norms, allowing us to disentangle individual stances and messages from the external world they inhabit. Cohen's description of moral panics as simultaneously representing new and old anxieties resonates in relation to this study. The panic itself may be about a new event in the social landscape, but it is itself a camouflaged version 'of traditional well-known evils' (Cohen 2011: viii). It is this familiarity that is so resonant in Bermudian crime talk, the sense of déjà vu, that we have had this conversation before. Over the course of a decade, the shape of conversations around gang violence has barely changed. This may prevent it from being classified as a moral panic, but in doing so it reveals a continuous pattern in Bermudian discourse to be further explored.

Hall et al.'s (1978) examination of the social construction of news, the establishment of a value consensus and the formation and communication of 'public

opinion' also has much relevance to this study, a great deal of which revolves around public opinion shared in comment threads on social media and news websites. The attention paid by Hall et al. to 'the interplay of knowledge, rumours, folk-lore and opinions' and the ways in which this forms the basis of public opinion prior to mass media influence will partly inspire my methodology for deconstructing the public and private opinions shared in this study (ibid: 135). Additionally, their dissection of the explanations and ideologies about crime as it relates to conceptions of 'Englishness' particularly fascinate me. To what extent do ideologies and explanations of crime in Bermuda relate to the multi-varied conceptions of Bermudianness? What is the cultural and historical framework from which Bermudians construct explanations for crime? What conceptions of Bermudianness are given privilege over others and why? This thesis examines gang violence from the perspective of the society in which it occurs, and the moral panic literature provides several options for ways in which one can deconstruct the nature of that society.

Before moving on from moral panic literature, let us reflect on whether my rejection of the terminology in the Bermudian context is partly emanating from ethical concerns around the use of the term. The term moral panic is often used rhetorically to dismiss concerns as disproportionate and irrational, and as such can be interpreted as controversially dismissive of concerns that feel very real to the actors involved. It could be argued that it is impossible to measure what is a proportionate response within the unquantifiable field of morality. Garland also addresses this, writing that 'there may be situations in which the empirical conditions seem to invite 'moral panic' analysis but where ethical considerations make the attribution seem tactless, morally insensitive, or otherwise inappropriate' (2008: 24).

Cohen spends time in the introduction to his third edition addressing this point, stressing that '(c)alling something a 'moral panic' does not imply that this something does not exist or happened at all and that reaction is based on fantasy, hysteria, delusion and illusion or being duped by the powerful' but is a term diagnosed when the reaction is situated within a wider map of meaning (2011: vii). Cohen argues that the 'idea that social problems are socially constructed does not question their existence nor dismiss issues of causation, prevention and control. It draws attention to a meta debate about what sort of acknowledgement the problem receives and merits' (2011: xliii).

Applying a moral panic analysis to a disaster where there has been loss of life could be seen as insensitive, however objective the researcher may be, however they might couch their conclusion with warnings against generalisation. Using the example of the fear of terror attacks after September 11th, Garland writes of how events that may cause large loss of life but also cause a moral panic can be delayed being studied within the framework due to ethical concerns - there was something distasteful about couching responses to 9/11 in these terms (2008: 24, see also Walker 2002). Interestingly, this debate also situates the researcher within the construction that they are observing. As with this study, the researcher is just as much a part of the social construction of meaning as the actors being observed.

I do not think that the concept of moral panic is the appropriate frame through which to understand what is at stake in Bermudian responses to gang violence. Such violence triggers discussion around community identity but does not effectively galvanise the community into tackling the identified threat to society. To exclusively apply the lens of moral panic analysis to Bermudian commentary on violent crime

would obscure the lessons to be gleaned from the nature of these conversations. With the increasing frequency of gang violence, it seems perplexing that it has not triggered a moral panic. In fact, Detective Superintendent Nicholas Pedro gave an interview to the Royal Gazette in April 2021 asking 'where the outrage is' over gang related murders in Bermuda (Bell 2021). Speaking of a recent shooting suspected to be a case of mistaken identity, Pedro told of how the police 'constantly have to try and generate support and interest from the public to help us get justice…there's a sense among the public…that when you live by the sword, you die by the sword. But when an innocent man can lose this life, what does that say about us as a community?'

If the public response to gang violence in Bermuda is not a moral panic, then what is it? There is something more to be explored, and this is perhaps better conceptualised as a story of continuity rather than discontinuity, a story about cultural understandings and prejudice around violent black death that is so normalised that it fails to stir the public consciousness into outraged action. Although there are elements of moral panic theory that are useful when analysing the data gathered over the course of this study, the framework of analysis will need to transcend moral panic theory to better understand the cultural backdrop of Bermudian crime talk.

Examining Crime Talk

Although the term 'crime talk' was used by Hall et al. in *Policing the Crisis* (1978: 136), it was formalised by Theodore Sasson in his 1995 book *Crime Talk: How Citizens Construct a Social Problem* and has generally been attributed to Sasson in the relevant literature. This thesis operates under the definition of crime talk as both

written and verbal discourse about crime between members of a community. The 'crime' in crime talk can be understood in the literal sense of an action that breaks a law but could also extend to the nebulous realm of behaviour that crosses socially established moral boundaries. The 'talk' that this thesis focuses on revolves only around the topics of Bermudian gangs, gang violence, shootings and gang-related murders. The use of the term 'talk' is deliberate, reflecting the analytical inclusion of both formal and informal conversation.

What is the value of the study of conversation when examining public opinion around crime? Emmanuel Schegloff, the originator of 'conversation analysis', considered 'ordinary conversation to be the fundamental form of talk-in-interaction….and the primordial site of human sociality and social life' (1987: 101). Formal and informal conversation or 'talk' offers an insight not only into the relationship between the discussant and the topic of conversation, but also their relationships with fellow discussants, identity (individual and communal) and history. Sasson (1995: 9) wrote that 'people should be regarded as active assemblers of meaning' and the study of talk outlines the origin and methods of assembly of frames through which discussants view a particular topic. The way that frames of meaning gain dominance or compete with one another in 'symbolic contests' can reveal stories of a wider social history, not just those shared between individuals (Sasson 1995: 10). 'Crime is a topic that never quite stays still', write Sparks, Girling and Loader, a trio of collaborators with extensive work on the vast range of meanings that can be gleaned from immersive studies of crime talk (2001: 887). It is the 'dense and digressive' nature of crime talk that makes it the ideal frame through which to draw wider conclusions about the nature of a society, its history and community identity (ibid.: 887).

In his study of crime talk in Boston, Massachusetts, Sasson applied the technique of frame analysis as developed by scholars such as Gamson et al. (1992) and Gamson and Modigliani (1989). Frame analysis extracts thematic interpretive frameworks from raw data in order to coherently organise the accounts within it. This technique is operated within the paradigm of social constructionism. This framework was praised by Cohen in a recent forward to *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, explaining that contested claims across society are attributed to the construction of 'new social problem categories' (2011: xxvii). Gamson et al. (1992: 384) remind us that there is no need to choose between structure and agency when applying interpretive frameworks, as '(o)n the one hand, events and experiences are framed; on the other hand, we frame events and experiences.' Both statements are true and simultaneous. Both agency and structure influence the construction of social problems and interact with one other.

Cohen's original theoretical framework for *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* involved a 'sixties fusion of labelling theory, cultural politics and critical sociology', a fusion that has now evolved into social constructionism. Now, writes Cohen, students can bypass the 'theoretical mix-up and…go straight into the literature on social constructionism and claims-making' (Cohen 2011: xxvii). For this reason, this chapter will not review all the vast and influential literature that has paved the way for the constructionist paradigm, though it would be remiss not to acknowledge the classical philosophical foundations around moral boundaries and codes.

The way we have come to define 'right and wrong', 'criminal and lawful' has long been a question in the realms of philosophy, sociology and criminology, from

Marx, Engels and Durkheim to the social constructionist theorists of today. Durkheim paved the way for a sociology of deviance in concluding that the delineation of moral boundaries both reflects the nature of a society and strengthens its own borders, as the establishment of moral codes and systems must be founded on the premise of consensual majority. In this interpretation, crime is of normative use for a society's survival and indeed, its health (Durkheim 1960, originally 1893; Durkheim 1982, originally 1895). Sparks et al. (2001: 885) summarise it neatly: '(w)hom and what we fear, and how we express and act upon our fearing, is in some quite important sense, as Durkheim long ago realised, constitutive of who we are'. Fear is not merely biological. It is a social process. In another influential sociological work, *Wayward Puritans,* Kai Erikson writes of how deviance and the responses to it reveal deeper truths about the nature of a community:

'Deviance is not a property inherent *in any particular kind of behaviour, it is a property* conferred upon *that behaviour by the people who come into direct or indirect contact with it. The only way an observer can tell whether or not a given style of behaviour is deviant, then, is to learn something about the standards of the audience which responds to it.'*

(Erikson 1966: 6, emphasis in original)

Right and wrong are not objective truths but socially constructed and sustained. Moral boundaries are subject to change - they support, sustain and define a society. The establishment and maintenance of moral boundaries is an interactive process between a society's structure and its agents. Constructionists have argued that there is no need to disentangle structure from agents, as both continuously interact with one other (Gamson et al. 1992, Sasson 1995, Giddens 1984). Giddens

(1984: xxi) identifies a 'duality of structure', where agents or human actors are bound within a structural frame and their actions are informed by structural knowledge and constraints. He argues that the actions, meaning and subjectivity of agents cannot be ignored despite their existence within and against broader social structures. This highlights the importance in examining the subjective perspectives of actors while acknowledging the structural constraints upon them that may inform their perspectives. To negate the two-way relationship between agency and structure will ultimately weaken any theories of the nature of human societies. This thesis will therefore need to move beyond simply what people say to each other, and examine the question of how crime talk is conditioned by social structures. Additionally, structure alone cannot be determinative of how a person participates in crime talk - their individual agency must also be taken into consideration.

Beyond 'Fear of Crime'

This study may at first glance appear to be an interrogation of fear of crime. There is a huge volume of criminological work around the fear of crime, which certainly has some foundational relevance to this particular study. There was a particular spike in interest in fear of crime around the turn of the millennium, with greater academic attention paid to the influence of globalisation and 'risk society' on fear of crime (Bauman 1991, Ferraro 1995, Hollway and Jefferson 1997, Ericson and Haggerty 1997, Farrall and Lee 2008). Much fear of crime literature relates to risk measurement and proportionality (see Farrall et al. 1997). However, this study is moving beyond fear to examine the diversity of public reactions to crime and what we can learn about a society, its history and relationships through examining these public

reactions, what Girling et al. (2000: 12) describe as a ‘sociology of public sensibilities’ around crime.

Although fear of crime is an element of the Bermudian public response to gang violence, it is the absence of fear that draws in our interest and inquiry. The inequality of landscapes of fear has been previously mapped out in existing fear of crime literature, particularly feminist work such as Hanmer and Saunders 1984 and Stanko 1990, as has the diversity of reactions to crime (Kinsey and Anderson 1992). Fear is also something that changes across the life course, it is not a fixed state but ‘transitory and situational’ (Fattah and Sacco 1989: 211). Fear has notoriously been difficult to define (Hollway and Jefferson 1997, Ferraro 1995), as it inherently has a multidimensional nature (Ferraro and LaGrange 1987, Garofalo and Laub 1978, Skogan and Maxfield 1981). There is not just the fear of becoming a victim of crime (Young 1988, Pain 1991, Stanko 1987) but the fears that are more abstract in a rapidly globalising world (Bauman 1998, Garland 1996). Hollway and Jefferson (1997: 265) call for the debate around fear of crime to be made more ‘social’, with more careful attention paid to the actors and the temporal and geographical contexts in which they are situated. Fear of crime discourse, they argue, is rarely just about ‘crime’, it instead becomes ‘a satisfying location for anxieties generated more widely’ (ibid.: 265). This presents an intriguing premise, where the ‘folk devils’ at the heart of crime talk are a mask for broader anxieties. Sparks et al. (2001: 886) write of how ‘we need to discover a vocabulary and a way of inquiry capable of tracing the connections between situated experiences of fear (or uncertainty or precariousness) and the larger transformations of culture and economy that surround and penetrate the locale and render it more or less safe or dubious for us as a habitat’. This is not an exclusively local approach to examining public responses to crime; rather it is an

understanding that the broad, globalised risk culture is felt differently in different places, and this is a phenomenon worth exploring. Girling et al. remind us that crime 'resonates in *both* terms of the local/global dialectic' (2000: 9, emphasis in original). Public responses to crime are a way to investigate the effect of a globalising world on everyday life in different places and how this contributes to citizens' construction of meaning, their senses of safety and danger.

This line of enquiry requires more detail than questionnaires measuring public concern (Farrall et al. 1997, Pain 2000), something closer to the 'ethnography of anxiety' employed by Girling et al. (1998a: 488) that expands beyond the traditional criminological habitat of the Western urban landscape. There are wider conclusions about the nature of society that can be drawn from public opinion about crime outside of risk measurement, conclusions that can be extracted from lay crime talk and the fear, worry, passion and ambivalence that may contain. Garofalo and Laub (1978) remind us that fear of crime can be understood within the broader context of community. It is therefore important to situate fear of crime. There have been some comparative studies of fear of crime between urban and rural areas (see Hough 1995, Shapland and Vagg 1988, Povey et al. 1997, Krannich et al. 1989), and of particular note is work by Baumgartner (1988) examining the moral order of a suburb. Baumgartner describes a 'moral minimalism' in suburban environments, a tactic employed to maintain 'social tranquility' and 'encompasses a variety of responses to interpersonal problems, all of which manifest an aversion to confrontation and conflict and a preference for spare, even weak strategies of social control' (1988: 10). Baumgartner's account of the unique cultural space occupied by suburbia is also reminiscent of Bermuda, where it 'contains a distinctive pattern of social relationships. It resembles cities in some ways and smaller, more traditional

communities in others, but overall it is not quite like either' (ibid.: 9). Likewise, Girling et al.'s ethnographic study of responses to crime in Macclesfield is reminiscent of this state of in-betweenness, not quite urban, not quite rural that Bermuda also inhabits (2000). The difference between the Bermudian and the suburban, however, is that the crime at the heart of the talk is not easily dismissed or politely ignored - this is violent murder by a gun in a small community, murder arguably becoming normalised as a part of Bermudian life.

How can we effectively expand the scope of inquiry in fear of crime criminology into the 'theoretical hinterland' of the diversity of responses to crime and their connection to community identity? An expansion of scope requires a simultaneous contraction in methodological focus. Girling et al. remind us that understanding the situated nature of public responses to crime is 'best grasped in an ethnographically intensive way and with careful attention to the question of *place'* (1998b: 305, emphasis in original). Understanding community responses to crime must go hand in hand with an understanding of place.

The Place of Crime

There is a small contingent of criminologists arguing for the continued importance of place within a globalising world. Pain (2000: 380) directs us to the work of human geographers, who assert 'the continuing importance of the local in a changing global context in shaping people's everyday spatial and social lives'. This is not a linear retraction, Pain reminds us, crime studies of specific localities can subsequently be situated within the wider theoretical landscape and enrich that landscape as a result.

There is the counterargument that a globalised world has irreversibly changed the nature of localities to the point of erasure, prompting the question of whether it is even possible to define 'community identity' in a singular way. When I refer to 'community identity' or 'Bermudian identity' in this work, this is not to imply that there is a singular Bermudian identity. The terms are used rather as a *plurale tantum*, encompassing all converging and contrasting conceptions of what it means to be Bermudian. Bermuda has never been homogenous. As will be discussed further in Chapter Four, Bermuda was an uninhabited collection of islands until its settlement. Even between discovery and settlement, Bermuda was a place of transit between Europe and the Americas, an accidental port for wrecked ships. Tokens, signs, even animals were left behind by Portuguese and Spanish sailors long before settlement by the British and the importation of Afro-Caribbean slaves. As long as the land has been in contact with humans, the story of Bermuda has been a story of outside influence converging and becoming whole. Bermuda has always had multiple identities wrapped up within it, and so do its people. Loader et al. remind us that 'people can share the same locality but live in different worlds' (1998: 395). These different worlds are regularly revealed in everyday interaction between people within a locality, and can be brought into clearer focus through discursive analysis.

The way turn of the millennium academics describe changes in the world's 'geography of social relations' mirrors the way Bermuda has always been. This is why, for a Bermudian academic with an interest in place, it resonates so much to read Doreen Massey's plea that we reevaluate singular and bounded conceptions of place and identity and instead conceive them 'as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings…a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world' (1994: 154-155). Massey

clarifies that the dynamic nature of place and the multiple identities that can be found within them (and indeed, multiple identities of individual residents) neither denies the existence nor uniqueness of place and that the effects of globalisation intensify rather than erode this uniqueness. She explains it in three succinct points that would be diluted in paraphrasing:

'There is the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations. There is the fact that this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise. And finally, all these relations interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place, with that history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, both local and to the wider world.'

(ibid.: 156, emphasis in original)

Understanding of place must be accompanied with 'structures of feeling' (Williams 1977: 131), knowing that the social construction of meaning is both geographically expressed and spatially constituted (Jackson 1989, Gregory and Urry 1985, Soja 1989).

To what extent do the places we inhabit shape who we are? This is one of the questions grappled with by socio-cultural geographers. The geographer Sauer, in his discussion of the 'morphology of the cultural landscape', dismissed conception of 'environment as process, and of some of the qualities and activities of man as products…what man does in an area because of tabu or totemism or because of his own will involves use of environment rather than the active agency of the

environment' (1969: 349). Despite the potential for expanding the concept of 'morphology' into a dynamic interrogation of the intricacies of human society and how these relate to and affect the land, many cultural geographers limited their scope to 'assessing the technical potential of human communities using and modifying their habitats' (Wagner and Mikesell 1962: 5). In *Maps of Meaning,* Peter Jackson (1989: 19) criticises the 'disciplinary myopia' of cultural geographers who have 'adopted an unnecessarily truncated view of their subject, confined to mapping the distribution of culture traits in the landscape'. Jackson proposed a new conception of cultural geography, focusing 'on the way cultures are produced and reproduced through actual social practices that take place in historically contingent and geographically specific contexts' asserting that the geographical contribution to cultural studies can come from the 'specification of context in its fullest sense' (ibid.: 23).

Jackson invites us to 'view culture as the medium or idiom through which meanings are expressed. If one accepts the [existence of] a plurality of cultures, then 'culture' is the domain in which these meanings are contested' (ibid.: 180). With this understanding of culture, the landscape is not simply the physical setting of human activity but 'a social construction or a 'way of seeing'' (ibid.: 182). For example, we can apply Bourdieusian concepts of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) to our examination of the dominant ideologies and institutionalised prejudices in Bermuda and the ways in which these affect not only interracial communication and relationships but have additionally shaped the spatial structuring of Bermudian society. With an understanding of Bermudian history and its ongoing legacies, we can employ a 'geography of resistance' (Jackson 1989: 153) pinpointing sites of social control and privilege and illuminating the contextual background for change and reform. Hayward (2012: 449) outlines the potential power of this reconception of

cultural geography, '(w)ith its emphasis on the spatial nature of political and economic influence, and how landscapes function as systems of social reproduction, the new cultural geography can greatly improve existing criminological enquiry into meaning, power and political economy.' We can apply Jackson's approach in asking about how crime talk reflects a redrawing of Bermudian 'maps of meaning', and in what ways it traces over pre-existing cultural cartographies.

How do these writings around cultural geography converge with criminological enquiry around audiences to crime? Girling et al. remind us that 'crime talk' and 'place talk' are inextricably linked, and 'both are likely to bear in some way on the experiences of change' (2000: 9). This is repeatedly asserted throughout work by Girling, Loader and Sparks on this subject. They outline several instances where place is found within crime talk, and invoked with reference to the past, present and future. Present conceptions of place are found where crime talk 'helps to constitute people's sense of the 'communities' they inhabit, whether that be their street, neighbourhood, town or nation' (Loader et al. 1998: 389). With increased global movement and the omnipresence of mass media, contemporary conceptions of place can appear in crime talk as 'relational and comparative' with other locales (Sparks et al. 2001: 888, Loader et al 2023: 570). Crime talk here not only triggers an assessment of a community's strength and inherent divisions and inequalities, but also its 'distinctiveness from others' (Sparks et al 2001.: 889). Additionally, historical conceptions of place are invoked in crime talk, where much "fear of crime' discourse is largely about the protection of certain places of territories (homes, streets, communities, nations) against incursion, usually seen as coming initially from elsewhere' (ibid.: 887). Nostalgia for past conceptions of a place and the assertion of the need to protect these are interwoven with anxieties about the future of a place,

about the risk of what that place could become. In this way, '(i)n their discussions of crime, and of other matters of concern to them, people develop their accounts of the past, present and possible futures of their place in the world' (ibid.: 889). Loader et al remind us that:

> *"'home' is also the site of emotion, aspiration, and investment. Everyday life concerns the things and places we most value and are motivated to care for and defend. That in turn should perhaps sharpen our attention to question about from whom or against what we may be most concerned to defend them.'*
>
> (2023: 574)

It is in this way that conversations about crime entangle themselves in talk of home and identity. Concern about safety and security can alter your conception of a place and what it means to be a person living in it. Felski (2000: 85) notes the connection between identity and space, 'as we experience space not according to the distanced gaze of the cartographer, but in circles of increasing proximity or distance from the experiencing self. Home lies at the center of these circles'.

Case studies such as this one, with their intense focus on the complex histories and identities within a specific locale, not only broaden the scope of fear of crime study within criminology, but also can illuminate previous questions raised by this field. What was once obscured and anomalous becomes intelligible within the context of place, revealed every day in the conversations held between ordinary people.

The Value(s) of Everyday Talk

The empirical work within this thesis primarily draws from the general public's responses to crime, with additional input from political figures, activists and claims makers helping to better map out patterns of communication and understanding. In writing of the neglect of agency in social theory, Giddens (1984: xxx) remarks upon how sociological theorists have 'treated agents as much less knowledgeable than they really are', echoed by Girling et al. in what they described as a 'theoretical deficit in criminology's estimation of 'lay' responses to crime' (2000:6). Giddens speaks of the disconnect between discursive phenomena that researchers 'as social actors themselves…would certainly pay close attention' to, but 'which in social research are often simply discounted' (1984: xxx). These conversations - their twists and turns, their temporal jumps between past, present and future, their emotion and humour - have real meaning and value. To ignore them is to ignore 'the experience, dispositions, passions, worries, and, indeed, outright fears that lay discourse on crime discloses' (Girling et al. 2000: 16). Lay discourse on crime reveals the everyday experience of it, the degree to which crime has become 'routinised' and the implicit social meanings that are developed by crime talk. As Giddens puts it, 'for their part, lay actors are social theorists, whose theories help to constitute the activities and institutions that are the object of study of specialised social observers or social scientists' (1984: xxxiii).

In analysing lay discourse, there must be an understanding of Giddens' notion of *practical consciousness*, one of his models of consciousness in human agency alongside *discursive consciousness* and *unconsciousness*. Giddens defines practical consciousness as 'all the things which actors know tacitly about how to 'go on' in the contexts of social life without being able to give them direct discursive expression' (1984: xxiii). This 'tacit knowledge' (Lippuner and Werlen 2009) is of the

unspoken moral boundaries within a society, the 'knowledge of social conventions, of oneself and of other human beings', integral to the 'persistent patterning of social life' (Giddens 1984: 26). Practical consciousness can rarely be vocalised or explained by the actors engaging in it, but that doesn't mean that it cannot be revealed by lay discourse, especially through ethnographic methodology. Taylor et al. (1996: 314) regard exhibitions of practical consciousness as 'of enormous affective importance, in carrying a set of more emotional scripts with their own significant temporal (historical) and spatial dimensions', such as memories or beliefs about a place that diverge and change depending on race, gender and class.

How can we locate the practical consciousness hidden between the lines of discourse? Cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas provides a way to access this through crime talk, where crime is 'something for which we seek explanation and accountability—and how we explain it and whom we blame may be highly symptomatic of who we are and how we organise our relations with others' (Douglas 1992a: 6-7). It is through an in-depth knowledge of history and place that we can begin to outline the 'patterning of social relations in time-space' (Giddens 1984: 17) and interpret the practical consciousness inherent in responses to crime.

This is reminiscent of what David Garland terms 'public sensibilities' (1990). Garland examines how 'feelings, sensibilities, behavioural properties, and cultural values' influence the organisation of punishment (ibid: 197). He defines public sensibilities as socially constructed 'structures of affect' (ibid.: 213). To examine these, we must question 'how modern sensibilities are influenced by some events and not by others, how our emotional responses are attuned to recoil from open, physical violence but to tolerate coercion taking a different form or to sympathise with

some individuals while feeling indifferent towards the fate of others' (ibid.: 197). The research by Girling et al. moves towards a sociology of public sensibilities, beyond fear of crime and into the 'wider domain of moral judgements, attachments and arguments about blaming, explaining and diagnosing diverse questions of order and insecurity as these arose for them in the particular settings of their daily life' (Girling et al. 2000: 17). Disregarding lay responses to crime erases the nuance and humanity inherent in daily interaction, and reduces the 'public' to a cartoonish, monolithic 'reactionary force for greater punitivism and repression' (ibid.: 163). With a detailed examination of localised discourse comes a greater understanding of the interaction between history, place and identity in the ways that human beings communicate with one another, and the peculiar ways that crime can trigger these kinds of conversations. Loader et al. (1998: 402) remind us of the detail and value in crime talk, for 'people respond in more modulated and complex ways to events and issues in which they are personally implicated than to those of which they are more abstractly aware'. It is this personal connection that triggers conception and re-conceptions of community identity, of what the speaker believes it is, what it has been and what it could be. It is also this personal connection which could provide a barrier to crime talk becoming transformative for social relationships. The vast gulfs in experience of and connection to gang violence in Bermuda may be so great that Bermudians may not even be talking about the same thing when they talk to each other about crime.

Conclusion

There is an inherently metaphorical quality to crime talk. When people talk about crime, they are always talking about something else - their moral boundaries, their

history, what it means to belong to a place. Gang violence in Bermuda has not triggered a moral panic due to the small, familiar and yet sharply divided nature of Bermudian society. Hyper-proximity uncomfortably coexists with vast experiential distance. Consensus is a vital component of a moral panic, yet Bermudians lack consensus on the fundamental question of what it means to be Bermudian, illuminated by the ways in which gang violence is interpreted through competing prisms of 'Bermudianness.' As I will go on to show, crime talk reveals the ways in which black and white Bermudians insert themselves into radically different histories with very little discursive space to interrogate competing historical narratives. A Bermudian case study of how citizens construct meaning through crime talk offers a valuable contribution to the fields of fear of crime and public sensibilities around crime. Here is an investigation of crime talk outside of western urban and suburban space, within the highly specific context of a dependent island nation. Not only does this study review professional and lay crime talk over the span of a decade, but it offers an insight into how colonial histories and the specificities of place influence the construction of frames, extraction of meanings and transformative potential of crime talk.

Chapter Two

Gangs and Gang Violence in Bermuda: Towards an Island Criminology

Although this thesis is an investigation of how the public respond to gangs, the literature regarding gangs and gang violence provides relevant background to the thesis as a whole - particularly when it comes to debates within gang criminology about how to define gangs and the actual extent of the 'gang problem'. In this chapter, the second part of this study's theoretical framework, I will briefly discuss these contested notions within gang criminology and draw out the ways in which existing literature does not fully resonate with the Bermudian experience of gangs and gang violence. This will be followed with an exploration of postcolonial, Caribbean and island criminology, an engagement that underlines the need for a criminology that takes into account how place, race and history intersect with questions about crime and identity.

Defining Gangs

It is clear when reviewing existing literature about gangs and the public response to them that there is a considerable lack of consensus among academics and frontline practitioners about how to define a gang. The label of 'gang' can be internal (by the group members) and/or external (from others). When does a group of friends become a gang? Is it when they commit a crime? Or is it a label assigned due to the group's imagined potential to commit a crime? In this sense, the audience to gang violence can, and frequently does, play a role in assigning a gang identity to a group.

The youth of the members is frequently a key component of a ‘gang’. Hallsworth and Young neatly summarise the challenges in conceptualising gangs:

‘When is a group of young men not a gang? Does it apply only when they are poor? If so, are the 'gang-like' qualities observed conferred or self ascribed? And just how many crimes do not involve group activity of some kind? Are the groups also gangs and if not why not? And if we want to firm matters up by arguing that, by gang, we mean an organised group pursuing a collectively agreed criminal goal, why apply the label to young people?

Why not talk about corporations such as Enron (a very successful criminal gang but never classified as such) or indeed the activities of government?’

(2004: 12)

Many scholars define gangs through a connection to crime and violence. Thornberry et al. conceptualise gangs as ‘social networks that embed their members in deviant routines and isolate them from prosocial arenas’ (2003: 7). Research has found that gangs can be a primary driving force in illicit drug markets (Klein 2001, Bjerregaard 2010), illegal gun and weapon possession (Melde et al. 2009, Watkins et al. 2008, Lizotte et al. 1997), and youth violence, victimisation and homicides (Papachristos 2009, Melde and Esbenson 2013, Densley 2013, Pyrooz and Decker 2013, Howell et al. 2011, Wu and Pyrooz 2015). The vast majority of murders in Bermuda are gang related. The relationship between gang membership and offending is well defined in the field of gang research, particularly in the United States, though less so outside of America (Pyrooz et al. 2016, Decker and Pyrooz 2010, Klein et al. 2006). However, the ambiguity of defining gangs means that, in practice, many non-violent social groups may be defined as gangs due to their perceived propensity and potential for violence and crime. This prompts the question

of whether gang membership is a causal or driving factor of violence, or whether it is but one of many 'risk factors' for violence in conjunction with other psychological or sociological causes of youth violence, or even whether gang membership is simply a value-laden label applied to youth behaviour.

The literature describes a fluidity in the life course of gangs. This can constitute the evolution of a street gang into a more sophisticated, institutionalised criminal organisation (see Maxson & Klein 1995, Hagedorn 2002, Ayling 2011, Densley and Harding 2018, Pitts 2019) - which some scholars (Spergel et al. 1994, Disley and Liddle 2016) note that this transition paradoxically appears to take place when the gang itself becomes less publicly visible. Gangs are additionally fluid in that their composition of members and their allegiances frequently undergo change (Aldridge and Medina 2008, Pitts 2008, Pyrooz et al. 2013, Harding 2014, Pitts 2019) which can lead to the splintering of gangs into smaller groups which may in turn dissolve and lose significance in gang networks (Aldridge and Medina 2008, Pyrooz et al. 2013). Desistance from gang membership and affiliations is rarely simple for gang members, as explored through Pyrooz et al.'s notion of the varying degrees of 'gang embeddedness' - which the authors describe as the 'adhesion of the gang members to the gang' (2013: 243). Gang embeddedness has an inverse relationship with prosocial networks and capital accumulation, as increased immersion into the gang 'reduces exposure to and involvement in other networks, reducing information flow [and] opportunities to fill structural holes' (ibid.). As a result, '[s]ome gang members, even those who express a desire to leave their gang and change their lives, remain enmeshed in a series of ties to their former network of gang members' (Pyrooz et al. 2014: 509). The research conducted over the course of this

thesis suggests that the challenges of gang embeddedness and desistance are amplified in the context of a small island nation.

Several authors have noted the stigmatising power of the 'gang' label, and the discrepancy between external, conferred diagnoses of 'gangness' and self-identification of gang members (Hallsworth and Young 2004, Sharp et al. 2006, Disley and Liddle 2016). Young men from ethnic minority backgrounds are disproportionately connected to gangs on weak evidence regardless of whether or not they have committed a crime (Hallsworth and Young 2008, Williams and Clarke 2016, Ward and Fouladvand 2021, Waller 2022). It is also impossible to discuss this phenomenon without an understanding of institutionalised racism. As Waller (2022) summarises, the application of the gang label is racially charged and has repercussions throughout the criminal justice system:

'*The reliability and validity of 'gang evidence' has been widely disputed, including by academics who have found that it is often misguided, underpinned by racially biased police 'intelligence', and rooted in longstanding stereotypical assumptions about black youth and criminality'.*

Social proximity to gang territory is reduced by criminal justice intelligence to gang membership and affiliation, disproportionately affecting young, working class black Bermudian men. Assigned affiliation can lead to increased surveillance by law enforcement, be weaponised by prosecutors and, if the individual is incarcerated, can affect prison security classification (moves to minimum security facilities may be denied if the individual is deemed to have links to gangs near the open prison) and parole opportunities (potential employment may be denied if it is deemed to place the individual near gang territory). Many Bermudian parole licences contain a condition

with the vague terminology ‘to refrain from activities and association with persons, places or things that may lead to illegal activities, including but not limited to maintaining and affiliation with any gangs or being in the company of gang members’. This condition is included on licences regardless of whether or not the parolee is a confirmed gang member.

Ambiguous notions of ‘the gang’ are not exclusive to Bermuda. Amnesty International have criticised the London Metropolitan Police Service’s ‘Gangs Violences Matrix’ - a database of suspected gang members dating back to 2012 as a response to the August 2011 London Riots - as based on an ‘ill-defined concept of ‘the gang’ that has little objective meaning and is applied inconsistently…with few, if any safeguards and little oversight’ (2018: 2). As a result, young people are broadly and arbitrarily identified as gang members and treated as such, with no ‘clear parameters, thresholds and criteria’ for adding or removing them from the matrix (ibid.: 3). This identification disproportionately affects ethnic minority groups, particularly young black men, as the vague conceptualisation of gangs and gang members hinges on ingrained tropes and social imagination of black communities as dangerous and prone to violence (Phillips and Bowling 2007, Angiolini 2017, Clarke and Williams 2020). Gangs are frequently conceptualised as being defined by the nationality or ethnicity of their membership, but this assertion lacks empirical support. As Disley and Liddle found through case interviews and surveys, although there are frequently commonalities in nationality and ethnicity amongst gang members, ‘these groups were not necessarily thought to be defined by these features. The ethnic composition of gangs may merely represent the ethnic composition of the community, rather than being a “*driving factor for a gang’s identity or membership criterion*” (Disley and Liddle 2016: 21, emphasis in original, quoting survey respondent). As

such, the racial composition of gangs has more of a connection to the community around the gang rather than its own identity.

The literature affirms that the majority of gang members are male, though research has pointed to the increasing association of women and girls with gangs, particularly in facilitating gang related crimes (Disley and Liddle 2016, Beckett et al. 2013, Pitts 2008). Despite increasing awareness of how women and girls may be involved with or exploited by gangs, gangs are still predominantly conceptualised as a male collective identity. Bloch and Niederhoffer (1958) describe gang membership as an avenue to the attainment of 'manhood' and connect membership to the psychological sense of power associated with this masculine status. This connection between gang masculinity and wider cultural definitions of what it is to be a man is not as widespread in gang literature as one would imagine, with much research focusing on the behaviour as subcultural and deviant from the norm (Yablonsky 1997, Baird 2012, Cohen 1955, Katz 1988, Miller 1958). Hagedorn (1998:153) examines variation in how gang men conceptualise "being a man" without fetishising gang masculinity but rather finding the commonalities with mainstream American cultural conceptions of manhood. Campbell (1993: 12) also asserts that violent male behaviour emanates not from 'a subculture of violence as one of masculinity, for it is painfully clear that the bulk of its members are male'.

The focal point of this thesis is not the gang itself, but the Bermudian public's imagination about and responses to gangs and gang violence. As a result, the lack of scholarly and practical consensus around what exactly constitutes a gang is not problematic for the undertaking of this research - in fact, the absence of a universally agreed definition of a gang is integral to the discussion at hand. Of central interest to

this work is public debate around what a gang actually is, the extent of the issue of gang violence on the island and what this means for Bermuda and Bermudians. The interest of the gang for the public lies in the mystery of the gang - the ambiguity of what it is, what they do and who they are.

Gang Talk: Obscuring the Truth?

In their critique of 'gang talk and gang talkers', Hallsworth and Young list five objections to what they call 'the thesis of gangland Britain' (2008: 176). These are as follows:

1. **The empirical case is not proven.**

   Hallsworth and Young argue that there is no 'compelling empirical evidence' that 'gangland Britain' actually exists (ibid.: 177), pointing to the difficulties in defining gangs which impact on the ability of researchers to accurately measure the issue at hand alongside existing research pointing to very low levels of gang membership. Additionally, the authors question the extent to which violent crimes can be considered 'gang related', arguing that blanket attribution of street violence to gangs obscures the complexity of the issue at hand.

2. **The attention the gang receives may reflect more the sensation and (often) inaccurate coverage produced by the mass media than it does the objective reality of the street.**

   Hallsworth and Young assert that 'the coverage the gang has received in the mass media does bear many of the hallmarks of a moral panic', claiming that,

as a result, ‘an interpretive grid has been erected around violent street worlds that permit only one interpretation: it is the gangs that are responsible. At the same time…other, more plausible narratives that might help challenge this interpretation get filtered out and silenced’ (ibid.: 182).

3. **The term ‘gang’ is not a neutral descriptive of the street world out there. Its use comes with a dangerous ideological baggage from which it cannot be disarticulated.**

   Drawing from their suggestion that talk about gangs in the UK constitutes a moral panic, Hallsworth and Young suggest that the term gang operates as a folk devil, signifying a ‘*Monstrous Other’* which is ‘bound up with the perennial fears the adult world has with its young’, a fear which has ‘an ethnic dimension…in so far as the gang is always seen to wear a black or brown face’ (ibid.: 185).

4. **Far from confronting the mystifying gaze of the mass media, academic gang talkers all too easily confirm it in their fixation and their elected method of research.**

   Hallsworth and Young critique gang research as being positivistic, and fails to ‘account for the differing UK context’ (ibid: 186). The authors reiterate their critique that attributing street violence to gangs is reductive, causing the ‘cultural richness of those, often difficult, lives’ to ‘become reproduced within this discourse as nothing other than walking clusters of de-contextualised variables’ (ibid.: 187).

5. **Far from helping practitioners derive good and sensible policies that may help ameliorate violent street worlds, those who begin with the gang invariably come to assert the need for gang suppression**

   As a result of what Hallsworth and Young consider to be a misattribution of blame to gangs for street crime, the proposed solutions for curbing street violence are equally reduced to 'gang suppression', feeding an American inspired 'gang suppression industry' that does not adequately address the nuances and true causes of street violence (ibid.: 190).

Far from dissuading me from embarking on 'gang talk' research, I believe the critique of gang talkers further underlines the need for case studies such as this one, outside of the US and UK, to become a more prominent feature in gang violence literature. Although there are many aspects of Bermudian gangs and the talk about them that bear similarities to the UK and US, the nuances that are specific to the Bermudian context underline the value of place-specific analysis in this field. In a small country like Bermuda, it is not difficult for police intelligence to ascertain whether a violent crime is gang-related or not. As a result, an arguably more accurate picture can be painted of the existence of gangs in Bermuda and the extent to which they perpetrate violence against others. In the previous chapter, I outlined how the Bermudian response to gang violence is not best conceptualised as moral panic, and how the Bermudian media cannot sensationalise news about gang violence like the press overseas can. As we shall see, this research will reveal how the gang and gang members are othered in Bermudian crime talk, yet, depending on the speakers, this talk stops short of reducing gang members to folk devils due to the identifiability of gang members. The population of Bermuda is too small to effectively reduce gang members to cartoonish, evil Others. The way in which gang members are othered is

tied up in how the historic way that Bermudians have related to each other continues to play out in the present day. In the process of deconstructing crime talk, the cultural richness of the actors speaking and being spoken of is illuminated rather than erased. It is the hope that a greater understanding of this cultural richness will lead to more effective policy responses to gangs in Bermuda. As a result, I argue not only that case studies are imperative to gang criminology, but also that these case studies are enriched when examined with a postcolonial gaze.

Why does Criminology need to engage with Postcolonialism?

There are two reasons why some may argue that it is impossible to apply a postcolonial theoretical framework to an examination of Bermudian responses to crime. Firstly, because Bermuda is still a British territory, and arguably cannot be considered entirely 'post' colonial. Secondly, due to the uninhabited nature of the island, the absence of an indigenous community upon settlement by British colonists. To these objections I offer the following rebuttals. Firstly, I maintain that a postcolonial perspective is arguably *most* relevant when examining societies presently under colonial influence, as the pains of colonisation are most acutely felt when entangled in a colonial power structure whilst simultaneously being figuratively surrounded by independent former colonies and bearing witness to a growing postcolonial global consciousness. The degree to which colonial influence in Bermuda can be described as 'pain' varies depending on individual perspective, but invariably the division of opinion can be drawn along racial lines - and it is in examining the nature of this division, the stories and histories that inform it, where we can find the conflicts inherent in 'collective Bermudian identity'. Secondly, the presence of an indigenous community is not a necessity for a colonial power dynamic - Black and Native

American slaves were not brought to the island under some kind of perverse mutual agreement, no matter how benign some historians claim Bermudian slavery was. This is simply transplanted colonialism; the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade rendered the control, subjugation and systematic extermination of people of colour borderless. To claim that there was no colonial violence due to the absence of indigenous people is to erase significant historical injustices. The postcolonial perspective is applicable whether we are engaging in criminological analysis of colonising or colonised countries. As the study of criminology in a modern global context must move beyond borders, so too must our conceptualisation of colonialism - as a borderless, timeless entity not confined to history.

Blagg (2008: 2) argued for a decolonised criminology, to situate criminological phenomena within an 'historical framework formed by processes of colonial dispossession, genocide and assimilation, and forms of resistance to these processes.' In this thesis we will see how Bermudians respond to and cope with the modern phenomenon of gang violence, and how this varies within different social groups. I argue this variation is directly connected to Bermuda's history and the legacies of colonial violence against black Bermudians. Linking crime talk with identity construction particularly requires a postcolonial perspective, as Bermudian formulations of meaning and morality boundaries are inextricably linked to our history. Cunneen wrote that a 'postcolonial perspective broadens our understanding of state crime because it draws attention to the connections between the colonial development of the modern political state and the globalized nature of gross violations of human rights of indigenous and former colonized peoples' (2011: 253). Postcolonial criminology can broaden our understanding of Bermudian moral boundaries and responses to crime through an appreciation of the island's specific

historical context and how this interacts with identity construction, production and positioning.

Tauri and Webb (2012: 11) argue that greater attention from scholars must be focused on 'critical analysis of the role played by the academy in supporting the state's historical and contemporary marginalisation of First Nations through crime control policy.' Although this was written in the context of responses to Māori offending in New Zealand, this is an approach that is worth applying to criminological analysis worldwide - in neglecting colonial context in our analysis of criminological issues, we are committing another act of erasure of the history of people of colour. If our research is to impact policy these policies have no hope of success without proper postcolonial consideration. To ignore the importance of colonial history is to sustain it. Stephen Pfohl reiterates this point, for '(i)ndeed, there is something hauntingly unreal about a scholarly discipline dedicated to the study of crime, the criminal and the criminal law that focuses almost exclusively upon the actions of law-breaking individuals, while turning a blind eye to the mass terrorism imposed upon innocent people by slavery, colonialism and their continuing legacies' (2003: xii). Agozino likened this to 'a widening of the net of incarceration' (2003: 6).

Analysis of crime talk and identity in this thesis must be viewed through a postcolonial lens, lest the findings function as tools of repression, particularly as the victims of Bermudian gang violence are almost always black men. Race, repression and inequality are common frames applied by citizens when making sense of violence. In analysis that will follow, we will see how Bermuda's tradition of white supremacy plays out to this day - where the lives of Bermudian black men have been so devalued by segments of Bermudian society that their deaths illicit no moral

outrage or in some cases are even celebrated. During the height of gang warfare in the late 2000s it was not uncommon to hear someone quip in conversation 'at least they're taking care of each other and saving police resources.' The leaden and lacklustre response from the white elite to black violence is reminiscent of Bermuda's pre-emancipation banishment of slaves, or the racially targeted birth control policies of the mid-20th century - to be outlined in Chapter Four.

Decolonising the criminology of island nations is not a new concept. In 1976, Ken Pryce called for a 'Caribbean Criminology' which would take into account the diverse economic class structures, ethnic heterogeneity and colonial histories of the region. This idea was welcomed by a number of Caribbean academics. Jones (1981: 166) expressed frustration at the lack of regional considerations in policy and academic work, stating that too often '(i)deas are often exported as readily manufactured goods, and the result is often disastrous to third world countries.' Maureen Cain also supports Pryce's proposal to consider criminology of the Caribbean separately, pointing out that the assumption that 'former colonies must follow inexorably the same trajectory which "the west" followed during the industrial revolution' is both erroneous and lazy (1996:v). Bermuda is a fascinating case study because culturally it is caught in between the Caribbean and the West. Although there are undeniably many similarities between the Bermudian and Caribbean experience, Bermuda's geographical location, along with its very different colonial and social contexts, mean that experiences of crime are distinct from those in many of the Caribbean islands. Modern Bermuda is in limbo - caught between the colonial and postcolonial; between the Caribbean and the West; and now, as the increasing number of murders and gun incidences signifies the recent 'respite' from gang violence is coming to an end, between peace and war.

From Postmodernism to Postcolonialism

Postmodern philosophers of history and epistemology have greatly influenced sociological investigation into power and knowledge and how these are utilised as a form of social control by state institutions. When considering postmodernists' conceptions of power and society, it is not uncommon to make a first stop at the writings of Foucault. Michel Foucault's theory of power/knowledge is a key challenge to traditional ideas about power, control and individualism. Foucault theorises not that 'knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended' (1977: 27) but that knowledge can be produced by power, 'exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations' (1979: 94). Definition - such as the definition of a gang - holds power. Foucault claimed that professional discourse and diagnoses serve to 'define' people as their place in society, ignoring individual context and placing people into generalised categories of the social fabric. In *Madness and Civilisation,* he states that the opinions, decisions, voices and identities of professionals are given privilege over others (in this case, the mad), referred to as an 'act of scission' (1967: xii), silencing those who are not the expert, the professional, the keeper of the knowledge. He focuses on the effect that society's silenced and privileged have on our language and behaviour. Foucault has unquestionably informed much contemporary sociological thought, but his examination of history in relation to power/knowledge has been criticised by authors such as Gayatri Spivak for presenting 'a self-contained version of the West' which ignores 'its production by the imperialist project' (1994: 86). Edward Said points out that Foucault's vague concept of 'power' allows him 'to obliterate the role of classes, the role of economics, the role of insurgency and rebellion' (1983: 243). Spivak writes

that Said is emphasising that critics and researchers have an institutional responsibility, where 'the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of the Other as the Self's shadow' (1994: 75). As an example of this 'epistemic violence,' Spivak offers 'the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogenous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other' and 'the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subject-ivity' (ibid.: 76). She argues that 'the substantive concern for the politics of the oppressed which often accounts for Foucault's appeal can hide a privileging of the intellectual and of the 'concrete' subject of the oppression' (ibid.: 87). Additionally, Howe (1994: 2) identifies Foucault as part of a trend of postmodern theorists and criminologists as overtly masculinist: where 'the problem is not simply that the new theorisations of punishment ignore women or treat them as footnotes to the main event - the punishment of men; they also overlook the question of gender, or better still, the deeply sexed nature of punishment regimes and, by extension, their own analytical frameworks.' Agozino neatly summarises Foucauldian myopia, noting Foucault's 'notorious' neglect of colonial power within his analysis of power relations 'even though he chose to rent the former residence of the colonial governor in Tunisia while writing the book' (2003: 70).

Spivak argues that the work of Derrida bears more relevance to postcolonial theory. Though she acknowledges Eagleton's (1983: 205) assessment that Derrida's ahistorical, apolitical approach to critical epistemological theory renders him 'oblivious to language as 'discourse'', she draws attention to the 'aspects of Derrida's work that retain a long-term usefulness for people outside the first world' (1994: 87). In critiquing the relationship between text and meaning, Derrida invites us to engage in a process of 'deconstruction' where we dismantle our systems of privileging forms

of expression, narratives and perspectives and reconfigure them to recognise the value of the invisible other: a process of 'undoing, decomposing and de-sedimenting of structures' so that we may understand how an 'ensemble was constituted and to reconstruct it to this end' (1991: 272, originally 1983). That is, we must recognise how we have consistently privileged the Subject over the Other, and reconfigure our perspectives to assimilate the Other. Since the only tool we have to dismantle western metaphysics is language formed in and by western metaphysics, 'Derrida maintains that we can only use the language against itself' (Blagg 2008: 13, Chakrabarty 1992). Hall (1994: 397) points to Derrida's use of 'the anomalous 'a' in his way of writing 'difference' - *differance* - as a marker which sets up a disturbance in our settled understanding or translation of the world/concept. Hall (ibid.) refers to Christopher Norris' summary of *differance* as a suspension:

> *'between the two French verbs 'to differ' and 'to defer' (postpone), both of which contribute to its textual force but neither of which can fully capture its meaning…Where Derrida breaks new ground…is in the extent to which 'differ' shades into 'defer'…the idea that meaning is always deferred, perhaps to this point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification.'*
>
> (Norris 1982: 32)

This, argues Hall, provides a sense of difference that is not 'Otherness', a sense of difference which better aligns with postcolonial identities, for islands in the Caribbean, like Bermuda, are both different and the same, with identities deferred. *Differance* 'challenges the fixed binaries which stabilise meaning and representation and show how meaning is never finished or completed, but keeps on moving to encompass other, additional or supplementary meanings' (Hall 1994: 397.). We can see *differance* at work in lay crime talk, we can see how meanings are reevaluated and re-conferred. The data in this study covers over a decade of crime talk. We can

see not only the ways in which crime talk triggers a reassessment of meaning, identity and place, but also the ways in which these reassessments change as time passes.

Spivak (1994:89) writes of how Derrida makes implicit Nietzschean critiques of hierarchies of knowledge - particularly logocentrism and the privileging of Western logic, reason and language in conveying meaning, rather than considering other forms of expression such as music and art - which reinforce predominant Eurocentric conceptions of Subject and Other (see also Nietzsche 1997: 57, originally 1874). Spivak dismisses the need for Derrida to specifically lay out the path to a critique of colonial othering, iterating that it 'is more important to me that, as a European philosopher, he articulates the *European* Subject's tendency to constitute the Other as marginal to ethnocentrism and locates *that* as the problem with all logocentric and therefore all grammatological endeavours' (ibid.: 89). It is Derrida's blueprint for the '*mechanics* of the constitution of the Other' coupled with Foucault's 'mechanics of disciplinarisation and institutionalisation' that Spivak finds most useful for postcolonial theory (ibid.: 90, italics in original). Derrida, argues Spivak, 'is less dangerous when understood than the first world intellectual masquerading as the absent non representer who lets the oppressed speak for themselves' (ibid.: 87). Derrida identifies the marginalisation of the Other and the epistemic violence enacted by imperialism (perhaps drawing from his own experiences of marginalisation as an Algerian Jew) as fundamental issues within European philosophy and academic framing.

Frantz Fanon (2008: 19, originally 1952) writes in *Black Skin, White Masks* of his desire to 'help the black man to free himself of the arsenal of complexes that has

been developed by the colonial environment', arguing for a focus not solely on historical events but also on epistemic violence against colonial subjects. Colonialism enacts violence on minds as well as bodies through the evolution of derivative social psychologies (Fanon 2008, Nandy 1983). Fanon posits that:

> *'(t)he Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation…(t)he attitude of the black man toward the white, or toward his own race, often duplicates almost completely a constellation of delirium, frequently bordering on the region of the pathological.'*
>
> (2008: 42-3)

Fanon's argument is Derridaen, 'in favour of dissolving the epistemological binaries posited in setting up the colonizers' world as radically different from that of the colonised', writes Bhambra (2007:17), who aligns Fanon's work with Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and the writings of Homi Bhabha. Said's *Orientalism* is a critique of patronising Western scholarship on Asian societies as a product of Western imperialism in the region. Said reminds us of the importance in recognising 'the configurations of power and cultural hegemony that enabled the Orient not only to be *discovered* to be Oriental, but also submitted to being *made* Oriental - namely, the relationships of colonisation and imperial domination that spanned the vast majority of the world at that time' (Bhambra 2007: 18). Hall reminds us that this identity of 'Other' is not only attributed from the outside, but internalised by the subjects of Othering - noting that this is experienced not only as Foucauldian power/ knowledge positioning of people of colour as Other in discourse, but as forcible domination, silencing and cultural crippling (1994: 394-5). Hall reminds us, in a way

that must be recalled throughout this thesis when considering questions of Bermudian identity, that:

'…this idea of otherness as an inner compulsion changes our conception of 'cultural identity'. In this perspective, cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture.'

(ibid.: 395)

Bhabha similarly argues that modernity is not derived from past events, but rather from the contestation of the present, and describes postcolonialism as 'an attempt to interrupt the Western discourses of modernity through…displacing, interrogative subaltern or postslavery narratives and the critical-theoretical perspectives they engender' (2004: 345-6). Moving forward, Bhambra, in response to the calls by Subrahmanyam (1997, 2005a, 2005b) for 'connected histories' (a representation of histories as not derived from a singular - colonial or subaltern - standpoint), argues for the connection of sociologies 'themselves located in time and space, including the time and space of colonialism, empire and (post)colonialism' (2014: 5). He argues that 'engaging with different voices must move us beyond simple pluralism to make a difference to what was initially thought; not so that we come to think the same, but that we think differently from how we had previously thought' (ibid.: 5) . True engagement with postcolonial thought must be transformative rather than merely supplementary to academic thought.

Postcolonialism cannot be an addendum to criminology, it must be intertwined within it.

Hidden Histories: Cultural Identities in Postcolonial States

An important postcolonial premise to apply to this study is the systematic silencing of Othered histories. It is necessary to adopt a historiographical approach, viewing the study of history as competing constructions, representations and interpretations of the past rather than a record of past truths. Dispesh Chakrabarty spoke of the phenomenon of 'asymmetric ignorance', where

> *"(t)hey' [white western historians] produce their work in relative ignorance of, say, non-Western histories and this does not seem to affect the quality of their work. This is a gesture, however, that 'we' cannot return. We cannot even afford an equality or symmetry of ignorance at this level without taking the risk of appearing 'old-fashioned' or 'outdated'.'*
>
> (1992: 337)

Maureen Cain (2000: 239) too, writes of '(t)he difficulties of teaching criminology in a society that self-defines as non-western derive both from lack of materials, and from the lack of a theory to make sense of these materials' - she warns against forcing Caribbean narratives into Western frames, using occidentalism to erase divergent experiences. Bhambra (2007: 2) also calls for the need to 'challenge the continued privileging of the West as the 'maker' of *universal history* and seek to develop alternatives from which to begin to deal with the questions that arise once we reject this categorization.' While introducing the concept of the production of identity, Hall reminds us not to neglect historical rediscovery, where

‘(h)idden histories’ have played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time - feminist, anti-colonial and anti-racist’ (1994: 393). If we accept that there is a plurality of narratives of the past, then we must also accept that some narratives are more powerful than others, the basis for which does not ‘reside in veracity or being a ‘better’ representation, but in the general acceptance of the *claim* that this is so’ (Bhambra 2007: 10). The privileging of Western written histories over oral history traditions further erases non-Western narratives of the past. Western scientific enquiry ‘draws from an ‘archive’ of knowledge and systems, rules and values which stretch beyond the boundaries of Western science to the system now referred to as the West’ (Bhambra ibid.: 44).

Hall’s application of *differance* to the inherent contradictions of Caribbean culture and experience are illuminated when examining hidden histories. Swan (2009: xi) notes that the ‘invisibility’ felt by the global African Diaspora is similarly felt by African Bermudians: ‘Bermuda’s flag, powdered wig wearing judges, and British names of its parishes are clear reminders’ of Bermuda’s colonial relationship with Britain (ibid.: 3). Bowling (2010: 44) also notes the ways in which the legacy of British colonial rule is felt across the Caribbean, where ‘all are members of the Commonwealth of Nations; many retain the Queen as Head of State and have ‘Royal’ police forces…the islands’ architecture, monuments and sensibilities all echo their colonial history’. Just as Swan writes of how Bermudian Black Power movements were branded as terrorism, Gilroy interrogates hostility towards anti-racist activism in the UK:

‘The popular opposition to municipal anti-racism also constructs a version of the national past which directly challenges the emphasis on slavery…‘British people are not and have never been, racist. This country has always involved a reputation as

a tolerant, welcoming haven for refugees and immigrants.' Racism has been redefined as the product of black and anti-racist zeal that is both destructive of democracy and subversive of order. The right to be prejudiced is claimed as the heritage of the freeborn Briton and articulated within the discourses of freedom, patriotism and democracy while despotic anti-racism is associated with authoritarianism, statism and censorship.'

(1994: 410)

Likewise, hooks (1994: 424) points to the 'pervasive politic of white supremacy which seeks to prevent the formation of radical black subjectivity' seeking to further silence people of colour. Agozino (2003:1) hypothesises that 'criminology is concentrated in former colonising countries, and virtually absent in the former colonised countries, because criminology is a social science that served colonialism more directly than many other social sciences.' Western social and political science has a legacy of neglecting genocide and colonialism as interruptions rather than products of modernity (Cohen 2001, Bauman 2001, Blagg 2008). Blagg (2008: 12) writes of Sumner's (1982) suggestion 'that colonial history remains too disturbing for criminologists because it lays bare the shoddy foundations of modern western societies, based not on principles of democracy and freedom, but on colonial pillage and the oppression of colonised peoples.'

Hall proposes thinking of black Caribbean identities 'as 'framed' by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture. Caribbean identities always have to be thought of in terms of the dialogic relationship between these two axes' (1994: 395). He points to the *differance* in Caribbean cultural identities, the tension between what is shared and what is distinctive:

'Visiting the French Caribbean for the first time, I also saw at once how different Martinique is from, say, Jamaica: and this is no mere difference of topography or climate. It is a profound difference of culture and history. And the difference matters*. It positions Martiniquains and Jamaicans as both the same* and *different. Moreover, the boundaries of difference are continually repositioned in relation to difference points of reference. Vis-à-vis the developed West, we are very much 'the same'. We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the 'Other.' We are at the outer edge, the 'rim', of the metropolitan world - always 'South' to someone else's* El Norte*.'*

(ibid.: 396)

Hall adopts Cèsaire and Senghors metaphor of *Présence Africaine, Présence Européene and Présence Americaine* in rethinking Caribbean cultural identities. *Présence Africaine* refers to the contemporary cultural meaning for black Caribbean people of the discovery of their African roots through learning the history of slavery. The reclaiming of this *Présence Africaine* is achieved through mediation through 'the impact on popular life of the post-colonial revolution, the civil rights struggles, the culture of Rastafarianism and the music of reggae' that 'signified a 'new' Africa of the New World, grounded in an 'old' Africa: a spiritual journey of discovery that led, in the Caribbean, to an indigenous cultural revolution' (ibid.: 398). *Présence Africaine* is what Africa has become for the Diaspora, a retelling of Africa, through 'politics, memory and desire' (ibid.: 399). Hall describes *Présence Européene as* 'where Africa was a case of the unspoken, Europe was a case of that which is endlessly speaking - and endlessly speaking *us*' (ibid.). *Présence Européene* is always fused, an irrevocably hybridised merging of African and Western culture, ever present in diasporic cultural expression and a constitutive element of diasporic identities. Finally, *Présence Americaine* refers to the New World identities represented not in power but in space, 'the juncture-point where the many cultural tributaries meet, the 'empty'

land (the European colonisers emptied it)…(n)one of the people who now occupy the islands - black, brown, white, African, European, American, Spanish, French, East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Jew, Dutch - originally 'belonged' there' (ibid.: 400). *Présence Americaine* is the site of the negotiation of creolisations and adaptations, but it is also the site of historic displacement of indigenous peoples.

These conflicting and overlapping Présences bring to mind the poem 'litany sargassum' by Bermudian poet yesha townsend (2018), outlining the multifaceted nature of Bermudianness, a culture scaffolded with intertwining colonial, familial and natural influences.

litany sargassum

Atlanteans with lungs full of salt water and disdain from the gods
all forsaken limb and fallen prayers limp the sands
pink'd by the psalms
bleeding lyric
without melody
just the timbre of a lost rib
being struck successively
with a tuning fork that's been strung out on a blue note for the past four hundred years
the new bodies roam
over humpback land
where the monarch wing spans the ocean

& the birds howl like devils
& the ashes of the witch bloom to flower
& the blue is cerulean
& the loquat pilfers the yellow of the sun
& the cedar smells of a bleeding love
& the casuarina gentrifies the shore

& the reef make back bone of wave
& the match-me-can leaf is salve
& the surinams crush under pulse to pulp red down chin & the fennel open palms to the bees
& the honey is wild & saccharine
& Mary, is a negro spiritual

& the union jack fetters off tongue
& gesture
& pomp
& parliament
& cricket & football pitch
& everyone's your cousin
& your cousin's fine
& your cousin's fucked up
& your mama be scientist of cassava pie & fish chowder
& dark & stormy be weathering your liver before home
& there's always wind

& the treefrogs serenade the moon
& codfish & potatoes be Portuguese
& malasadas be welcomed sweet
& the dialect be slosh of patois;
& an east coast block
& the fleet of Somers' ships
& the water weeps against the beach some mornings
& the water thrashes to tantrum some nights
& the water waits for the water bodies to feel whole
& the natives swim like they never have before

& they shake the water out their ears
& they forget the soothe of a whale's song
& their gills become shelves to host emeralds
& their necks become raw with salt

& they surrender their arms to the air
& they sing in swallowed sacrament

& they cry in sputtered gasps
& they pray for the float of rock

that their island may never sink again
that they will sojourn above water
that they will stay
and be home

Just as with townsend's poem, it is with these three '*Présences'* that Hall illustrates how the past interacts with the future and intertwines with black Caribbean cultural identity. Identity is a constant process, a meaning deferred and evolving, a dialogue between past and present.

Postcolonial Reflexivity and Intersectional Criminology

Our understanding of the past shapes our understanding of the present, it 'has implications for the social theories we develop to deal with the situations we live in today' (Bhambra 2007: 11). Competing Bermudian historical narratives play out in crime discourse and the construction of identities, however, as Bhambra reminds us, 'understanding interconnections in the present will require understanding them in the past *and* re-constructing our understanding *of* the past' (2007: 154, emphasis in original). Subsequently, I as the researcher have to fundamentally reframe my concept of home and my personal conception of Bermudian identity. Pfohl (2015: 126) writes of how criminologists must 'reckon with how our criminology is potentially influenced by the ways we inhabit *subject positions* embedded in systemic regimes of

race, class, sexuality, nation and religion'. I was unable to fully engage in this research until I embarked upon a personal journey of reflexive relearning. A quote by bell hooks particularly resonated with me upon deciding to undertake this reflexive work:

'Much postmodern engagement with culture emerges from the learning to do intellectual work that connects with habits of being, forms of artistic expression and aesthetics that inform the daily life of writers and scholars as well as a mass population.'

(1994: 427)

Researcher reflexivity is therefore inherent within postcolonial inquiry, and it is by embarking on a reflexive journey that I have come to appreciate the power of an intersectional approach to this analysis. Intersectionality is a term founded in critical race and black feminist theory, originated by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). Potter defines intersectionality as '*the concept or conceptualisation that each person has an assortment of coalesced socially constructed identities that are ordered into an inequitable social stratum*' (2015: 3, italics in original). Social identities around race, gender, age, sexuality do not exist independently but 'are, instead, 'intersectional' and operate in keeping with an interlocking matrix of domination' (Pfohl 2015: 109). Potter defines intersectional criminology as 'a perspective that incorporates the intersectional or intersectionality concept into criminological research and theory and into the evaluation of crime or crime-related policies and laws and the government administration of 'justice'' (2015: 3). Intersectional theory takes into account how experiences and meaning making vary across identities (an elderly white man will likely have a completely different relationship with state actors from that of a young black woman, for example) and challenges the cultural dominance of the white racial

frame (Potter 2015, Feagin 2010). An intersectional approach is vital to disentangling the competing frames in Bermudian crime discourse. Potter warns, however, that:

> *'(a)n excessive amount of criminological research offers only demographics of the individuals being studied, and does not tease out and interrogate intersectional identities, but then sweepingly applies findings to all persons. Criminologists must at least ponder the impact of individuals' interconnected, multiplicative identities in any research conducted involving the actions of people, whether as offenders, victims, criminal legal system agents, or lawmakers and policymakers.'*
>
> (2015: 112)

I needed to acknowledge in the undertaking of this project that although as a woman I could understand the experience of gendered power inequalities, as a white Oxford-educated middle-class woman I am still a member of a privileged group. Additionally, analysis of data must avoid sweeping generalisations - this is a project proclaiming the value of detail, nuance and specificity, which would be undermined through the erasure of intersecting identities. Potter urges that the privileged criminologist must 'serve to use our social capital to provide a conduit between the marginalised and the elite and ruling class' (ibid.: 160). A part of undertaking and accepting this role as a conduit involved me confronting my own guilt that as a white woman my research and perspective is awarded a legitimacy in Bermuda by the elite that black Bermudian academics are either not afforded or have to work twice as hard for. The more I learned about Bermudian history, the more I spoke to those affected by gang violence, the angrier I got at myself for my own audacity in thinking I could undertake this research. I felt like I was benefiting from the deaths of black men and was close to abandoning the project over this. I reached a crossroads - continue the self-centring hand wringing over potential criticism or utilise my privilege to deliver

the messages in this research. The following words of Potter particularly resonated with me:

'In qualitative research, particularly the use of in-depth group or individual interviews, we often speak of 'giving voice' to research respondents, particularly those respondents who are marginalised. However, individuals whose life-chances have relegated them to a subordinated social position already have voice; scholars must make better efforts to listen to what these individuals have to say about their lived experiences.'

(ibid.: 160)

This research is about listening - listening not only to the stories told but the stories unspoken. This is my responsibility as a researcher, a term which Tuhiwai Smith (2012: 1) reminds us is 'inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism.' Scientific research has historically dehumanised colonised peoples - 'the collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonised' (ibid.:1). Agozino writes that 'no one has examined the extent to which criminology is an inherently colonial enterprise or why this repressive technology is monopolised by imperialist countries while the former colonised countries seem indifferent to it' (2003: 7). I must take care not to make essentialist generalisations of communities I am not a member of, for as Tuhiwai Smith rightly points out:

'It galls us [people of colour] that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appalls us that the West can desire, extract and claim

ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations.'

(2012: 1)

Tuhiwai Smith calls for a decolonisation of methodologies and the application of a critical perspective towards researcher framings and responsibilities (ibid.). Bhambra (2007) and Spivak (1994) also point to the problematic nature of research where the elite are (mis)representing the subaltern - Spivak argues that 'the arena of the subaltern's persistent emergence into hegemony must always and by definition remain heterogenous to the efforts of the disciplinary historian' (1996: 217).

In '*Interrogating Whiteness Within Criminology',* Smith (2014:108) writes that 'white people view the world as fish views living in water…just as a fish does not recognise it lives in water, white people often fail to see that our daily movements are guided and surrounded by a set of racialized structured norms'. Smith argues that white supremacy is reinforced through the neglect of scrutinising the powerful. This research will unpack the framings of white people (of different ages, genders and class positions) in order to give witness to the process of normalisation, dehumanisation, denial and class weaponisation play out in white conversations about crime and society. It will also observe the way these frames are challenged and threatened in discourse about crime. Agozino (2003: 163) stresses that '(a)ny researcher, male or female, black or white, rich or poor, could tackle the problems of race-class-gender relations in research with a conscious sense of social commitment to the research subjects and also a commitment to be as objective as possible, even though objectivity is unpopular with many researchers who share the sense of

socially relevant scholarship'. I would argue that analysis of identity construction in crime discourse involves both subjective and objective examination - objective examination of the social structures which contribute to the construction of frames that produce subjective meaning. It is possible to do this as a white researcher, but I must maintain a constant state of reflexivity - I must interrogate my perspectives and observations in the context of my own identity frameworks.

Conclusion: Towards an Island Criminology

The two parts of this literature review have been laid out to outline the ways in which the literature around public sensibilities to crime, gang discourse and postcolonial theory can be utilised to decode Bermudian responses to crime, with their complementary theoretical emphases on space, place, history and the ways in which these influence conceptions of Bermudian identity. It was important to first identify why Bermudian gang talk does not constitute a moral panic, and why other theoretical frameworks are needed to investigate how the Bermudian response to gang violence differs from that in other countries.

It is hoped that this research will reinforce the importance of place in the study of public responses to crime, as well as underline the importance of a postcolonial approach to studies of meaning mapping and identity construction. Just as Cohen remarked on how studies of moral panics can now draw directly from the social constructionist paradigm rather than eclectically select from diverse bodies of work, it is hoped that this thesis will contribute to building a new paradigm of island criminology, which neatly encompasses the theories outlined above. Much of this

section will be a review and proposed expansion of work by John Scott and Zoe Staines in charting the place of islands in criminology.

Scott and Staines (2021: 579) attribute the neglect of islands as spaces of inquiry to 'criminology's obsession with urban crime' and 'the marginalisation of islands in the global North as places on the geographic and cultural peripheries. They are *Other* places, national backwaters or places to be colonised and, more recently, consumed as tourist sites'. Scott and Staines list the reasons criminological theorists should take interest in islands, such as their innovative governance strategies (particularly in environmental and technological fields), their contribution to natural sciences, their pioneering application of restorative justice as well as their undeniable *presence,* with nearly a quarter of all sovereign states and ten percent of the world's population being islands (2021: 579-580). Of particular interest to this study is the way Scott and Staines, with their case study of the Pitcairn Island sexual assault trials, interrogate the social construction of 'islandness' and the ways in which crime on islands can challenge the ways in which these places have by idyllically mythologised. Scott and Staines define crime in place as the social construction of crime in space, while crime in space as the objective social and geographic conditions that have criminogenic impacts (2021: 580).

Islands are defined both geographically and biologically as terrestrial systems which are isolated, remote, confined and bounded by sea. The extent to which islands must be termed 'small' is debatable, with Jedrusik (2011: 202) concluding that islands must be smaller than 10,000 square kilometres. Scott and Staines remind us of the ways in which the notion of islands as being synonymous with isolation is endemic within language:

'In many European languages the word island resembles terms for isolation, but isolation here has as much to do with geographic distance, as it does with the place-based nature of the communities and cultures living within island geographies.' (2021: 581)

The physical borders of islands are visible and physical, they are the end of the land itself. They are imbued with contrasting meanings, inclusion and exclusion, security and danger (Douglas 1992b, Hay 2006, Scott and Staines 2021). 'Islandness' is used interchangeably to refer to the qualities of the islands the people in it, qualities such as earthy common sense, opinionated machismo, eccentricity, independence (Conkling 2007) but also insularity, backwardness, incest and degeneracy (Bell 1997). Scott and Staines (2021: 582) assert that '(i)slands are a central metaphor in western discourse' but that the discourse around them veers between the two poles of 'island idylls' and 'island horrors'. Conkling (2007: 192) describes the practical consciousness of islanders and their relationship with the construct of 'islandness' - a concept known and felt instinctively by islander but rarely vocalised, and more frequently assigned to islands and their people by outsiders. The idyllization of islands is produced both by mainlanders and islanders, and involves a privileging of 'nature, romanticism, authenticity and nostalgia to create a sense of 'tropical paradise'' and a failure 'to account for the fact that small, close-knit island communities, which are havens for the mainland consumer or tourist, were often created violently at the expense of other cultures and other uses of the land' (Scott and Staines 2021: 583). Scott and Staines are describing a remarkably similar phenomenon to that described by NOBODY, a black Bermudian artist, who spoke to me of his aversion to incorporating traditional Bermudian imagery into his work.

'I had this genuine aversion to what I now think of as the very superficial tropes of Bermudian culture. You know, just recently I saw a young artist post a print that had you know, fish sandwiches and tourist crash helmets and wooden shutters and in some ways it made me want to puke. The one thing about Bermudian creative expression is that we've always created art, we've always created it to commodify it, and we also commodify our culture because there's a tourism industry here. So more often than not, I think what artists are doing, is that they create this work based on this deeply entrenched understanding that 'I have to sell this' and 'I have to sell me', but I also have to sell me in a way that is digestible, and so that means we create imagery that, as far as I'm concerned, is empty and vacuous. It's shallow. Because more often than not, the people that are interacting with this work are only looking for something that reminds them of being here. To invoke feelings of nostalgia, without any attempt to engage with the politics and social dynamics of Bermudian culture. For me, as a Bermudian, looking at this superficial imagery, or what I would deem superficial, it didn't seem to answer any questions about who I was. Loquats and fish sandwiches? Yeah, I get it, like. Guys like to eat loquats and fish sandwiches. What else? What are other things that embody us? We were focusing on lighter faire. We were focusing on things that didn't beg us to ask questions about ourselves. What fucking questions are raised with loquats? So now I create layered collages of scenic Bermudian imagery, with the central image revealing what's hidden, white washed, ignored. We're so preoccupied on holding up the illusion that we're not focusing on the truth. Let's dial in.'

NOBODY echoes the sentiments of Island Studies theorists of how islands are mythologised and commodified - where the physical beauty and illusion of paradise are used to mask uncomfortable truths about the island's history and the lives of islanders. Idyllization myths obscure the realities of conflict, inequality and prejudice, reducing the island to physical space and the people to beautiful caricatures.

The idyllization of islands is just one pole of the myths of islandness identified by Scott and Staines, the other being an isolated, claustrophobic horror trope. The same characteristics of remoteness and beauty in the idyllization myth are inverted to

create the wild, inescapable, dytopian island horror. These place myths not only appear in common discourse but also in popular literature and media (Scott and Staines 2021, Bell 2006, Kristeva 1982). These pervasive myths of place and space can therefore infiltrate the popular consciousness of both islanders and mainlanders in regard to what it means to be of, and on, an island.

Scott and Staines argue for an island criminology to deeply consider space and place within the island setting, 'the potential uniqueness [that] islands might hold *beyond* their mere rurality' (2021: 585). I argue that this thesis begins to investigate what Scott and Staines describe as the weakness in the small pool of existing criminological literature on islands:

> *'The extant literature rarely examines islands as unique ecological places or even provides an account of variations in crime on islands based on geographic dimensions such as size or demographics and social structures. Further, existing studies ignore the social construction of crime on islands, only examining its 'real' dimensions. In an era where post-colonial and southern criminologies have alerted attention to the forgotten places and spaces of criminology and the selectiveness of the northern gaze, it is timely to consider the place of islands in criminology.'*
>
> (2021: 587)

This thesis brings the subject of islands from the periphery to the forefront. It is not a perpetuation of island myths, but an interrogation of local conceptions of islandness and the ways in which these are (or are not) disrupted by crime. These conceptions may indeed be regurgitations of myths around islands, but the approach of this thesis is to deconstruct the reasons for the persistence of these myths within island culture. Gang violence in Bermuda is interpreted through the prism of long held local conceptions of 'Bermudianness'. Bermuda is not isolated or otherworldly, it

is situated within a global network of meaning and movement. However, within the borders of the island there are distinctive and unique maps of meaning emerging from the land, its people and its history - maps of meaning that can be deciphered through the examination of crime talk. This thesis makes a contribution to the field of criminology by further expanding the scope of fear of crime literature and applying a social constructionist lens of analysis within a postcolonial paradigm. It also further develops the emerging field of island criminology. This is not simply the study of crime on a small island. This is a study of crime with an understanding of what it means to be from a small island. This is a study of crime that carefully attends to the unique physical and social geography of a place. This is a study of crime concerned with Bermuda's social history and the ways this history shapes how Bermudians relate to one another and themselves today. This is a study of crime through the voices of the people of this island. Within those voices, emerge stories of Bermuda - who we are, who we have been, who we want to be.

Chapter Three

Understanding Identity in Crime Talk: A Bermudian Case Study

This dissertation is an investigation of the discursive frames through which Bermudians interpret and respond to violent events and through which Bermudians communicate with one another about these events and their meanings. In order to understand the process of identity construction within crime talk, specific attention must be paid to place. As Girling et al. (1998b) emphasise, the immersive intensity of ethnography best suits a study of this nature. Although this case study is not strictly an ethnography, it has an overarching ethnographic sensibility. Phase 1 interviews were undertaken during an uninterrupted two year period of living on the island. Phase 2 and 3 are the results of hours of monitoring forums and comment threads, resulting in the collection of 622,820 words of online commentary spanning the course of a decade for thematic analysis. This research is additionally performed by a born Bermudian and member of the community being studied, embedding a very specific and first hand understanding of being Bermudian and Bermudian responses to crime.

I will be referring to myself periodically throughout this chapter and the thesis in the first person. Stylistically, this may not be a generally preferred form of academic expression, but it is fundamentally necessary to acknowledge my membership of the community that I am studying. Part of the analytic process of this work involves reflexively examining my own prejudices, understandings and conceptions of home. If I am to understand the epistemological foundations of Bermudian discourse around crime, I must not neglect the frames which inform my

own analysis, interpretation and interactions. Giddens (1984: xxxii-iii) reminds us of the importance of reflexivity on the part of the social scientist. In his view, there is no clear distinction between theory and society, rather a 'mutual interpretive interplay' where '(t)he theories and findings of the social sciences cannot be kept wholly separate from the universe of meaning and action which they are about'. Research participants with whom I actively engaged in the first methodological stage of this research will have informed their response to me through their own frames. They will approach me with their own experiences and understandings of social theory and history. This is not to centre the research onto myself, but rather an acknowledgement that I am situated in the social context in which the events discussed occurred.

This chapter will first discuss why I have chosen to embark on a case study in order to answer my research questions. This will involve a discussion of the strengths and limitations of this research method, and the existing academic debates around the generalisability of case study conclusions. I then outline the methodological approach of the case study, which is structured into three stages. As one of the methodological stages involves data collected from Facebook, I will interrogate the role that social media plays in crime discourse. This necessitates a discussion of the mechanics of Facebook, the ethical implications of data collection in the digital realm, and the methodological steps taken in response to these concerns. The chapter will additionally address the reasons for applying interpretative phenomenological analysis to the data collected. The methodology for this thesis has been subject to ethical review and approved.

Why a Case Study?

This thesis explores and attempts to make sense of public responses to gang violence in Bermuda. At this point it is necessary to restate the primary research question of this thesis: *To what extent has crime talk about gang violence in Bermuda triggered a reconception of Bermudian identity?*

As with most research questions, this is a question that only begets more questions. First, there are questions of *how*. How do people in Bermuda talk about gang violence? How does Bermudian identity enter into these conversations? How has Bermudian identity historically been conceptualised? How is Bermudian identity conceptualised now? How does this differ between speakers? Once the extent to which people grapple with ideas around Bermudian identity in conversations about gang violence is revealed, the next questions are *why.* Why do questions of identity enter into conversations about crime and violence? Why do people agree or disagree on these subjects? Why is identity debatable? Why are island identities so difficult to define?

Although this research could be conducted anywhere, my focus is bound to a specific place, naturally aligning it with a 'single case' case study - 'the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case…concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question' (Bryman 2012: 66, referencing Stake 1995). The origins of case study research lie within life histories, oral histories and case work in social work, stretching as far back as the Chicago School (Platt 1992). In fact, one of the most enduring pieces of case study research bears many similarities with this one: William F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1993, originally 1943). *Street Corner Society* is an ethnographic study of the lives of young Italian-American men in

Boston's North End, under the pseudonym 'Cornerville'. When outlining the focus of his observations, Whyte distinguishes between the 'corner boys' - and the 'college boys':

Corner boys are groups of men who center their social activities upon particular street corners, with their adjoining barbershops, lunchrooms, poolrooms, or clubrooms. They constitute the bottom level of society within their age group, and at the same time they make up the great majority of the young men of Cornerville. During the depression most of them were unemployed or had only irregular employment. Few had completed high school, and many of them had left school before finishing the eighth grade. The college boys are a small group of young men who have risen above the corner-boy level through higher education. As they try to make places for themselves as professional men, they are still moving socially upward.'

(Whyte 1993: xviii)

In the first part of the book, Whyte examines the social worlds of the corner boys and college boys, including the formation of local street gangs and the ability or inability of Cornerville residents to break neighbourhood ties. The second part examines Cornerville politics and racketeering. *Street Corner Society* is a prime example of a location specific case study 'still used as a valuable source of knowledge in concrete field studies of group processes, street gangs, organized crime, and political corruption' (Andersson 2014: 80). Robert K. Yin (2018:7) noted that the value of *Street Corner Society* to the field is 'paradoxically, its generalizability even to contemporary issues of individual performance, group structure, and the social structure of neighbourhoods'. Despite being about a specific place in a specific time, the rich detail of Whyte's analysis imbue his conclusions with a timelessness and transferability. This is the paradox I am seeking to find within this case study - to unearth broader conclusions from a study bounded by time and place.

In *Case Study Research and Applications,* Yin identifies a case study as holding an advantage over other methods when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about 'a contemporary set of events' outside of a researcher's control (2018: 13). The case study as defined by Yin is an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon, within its real world context, 'especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident' (ibid.: 14-15). That is, in order to understand the contemporary phenomenon in question, one must understand the context in which that phenomenon is occurring, which is best explored through case study.

Calling a case study a 'research method' is somewhat of a misnomer - it is a research *design* within which many methodological approaches - qualitative, quantitative or mixed method - can be executed in data collection (Bryman 2012: 45). The question at hand - to what extent has crime talk about gang violence in Bermuda triggered a reconception of Bermudian identity - lends itself to a case study research design. It is an exploratory study of a contemporary phenomenon within and dependent on its real world context, relying on multiple sources of evidence. The case study allows for the intensive examination of a phenomenon, within a specific time and place while acknowledging and uncovering the historical and contemporary context for that phenomenon. The theoretical framework of this thesis - social constructionism within a postcolonial paradigm - requires that this contemporary study not be divorced from the historical context that influences the actors observed. Yin acknowledges that 'case studies and histories can overlap', but adds that 'the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence - documents, artifacts, interviews and direct observations, as well as participant-

observation' (2018: 11-12). Additionally, the postcolonial constructivist examination of Bermudian crime talk necessitates a relativist orientation - 'acknowledging multiple realities and having multiple meanings, with findings that are observer dependent' (ibid.: 16). The very fact that the people observed are interpreting and responding to events in different ways illuminates the enduring legacies of Bermuda's history.

Testing the Case: Construct and External Validity

The challenge with this particular case study is to meet the tests of *construct validity* - to ensure that the conclusions do not contain subjective bias - and *external validity* - to ensure that the conclusions can be applied to other cases. These are common concerns regarding case study research (see Platt 1992, Stake 1995, Thomas 2010) and are dismissed as misunderstandings and an oversimplification of the design by Flyvbjerg (2006).

Regarding concerns about subjective bias in case study research, I am inclined to agree with Flyvbjerg: just because a researcher has pre-conceived notions regarding their study does not mean that these notions cannot be challenged over the course of conducting the research. I did not find the answers I expected to find, as many other researchers have before me (Flyvberg 2006, 2001; Wieviorka 1992; Ragin 1992). Flyvberg notes that the intense observation and context specific detail of case study research - its 'proximity to reality' - frequently results in the case study researcher 'casting off preconceived notions and theories' - concluding that case studies hold 'no greater bias toward verification of the researcher's preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry' (2006: 236-7). Ironically, in identifying myself

as a member of the community being studied, vulnerable to all the same biases and unconscious influences of the people I am studying, I mitigate the risk to construct validity by openly acknowledging that I do not exist in a vacuum. My interpretations must accordingly be deconstructed as much as the interpretations of those I am observing. This is the rationale for utilising interpretative phenomenology in the analysis of the data collected, as it does not divorce the researcher from the world they research.

There is disagreement in the literature regarding the generalisability of case studies, and whether or not this is a strength or weakness of the research design. Many case study researchers argue that the purpose of this research is not to generalise, but to focus on specificity. A good example of this argument is that offered by Stake, who proposes that:

'The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself.'

(1995: 7)

This is supported by Thomas, who also endorses a research focus on 'the particular' in case studies, arguing that preoccupation over the generalisability of conclusions 'can inhibit or even extinguish the curiosity and interpretation that can come from phronesis' (2010: 576). Thomas (2010: 580) emphasises that the uniqueness of particular situations should be examined without the 'irritable search for order' coined by Oakeshott (1967:2).

Yin argues that the case study can be compared to or have implications for existing theoretical principles through 'analytic generalization' which 'may be based on either (a) corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that you referenced in designing your case study or (b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study' (2018: 38). In this sense, the case study acts as a test to existing theory. Flyvbjerg offers a similar sentiment, emphasising that 'despite the difficulty or undesirability in summarizing case studies, the case-study method in general can certainly contribute to the cumulative development of knowledge' (2006: 241). Eisenhardt and Graebner present a case that falls in between these two perspectives - to contribute to theory without ignoring the particularity, to convey 'both the emergent theory that is the research objective and the rich empirical evidence that supports the theory' (2007: 29).

Whether or not this research is generalisable is not an overwhelming concern of mine, as the rationale for the research itself stems from the dearth of criminological research that takes into account the particularities of island experience and research on Bermuda, specifically. I will not preoccupy or hinder myself with the generalisability of the findings when the focus is on the specificity of place. In this regard, I accept the position of Flyvbjerg that case studies such as this one further develop existing theories - in this case, moving outside of the bounds of American and Eurocentric criminological research.

Methodological Framework

Data collection was an immersive experience. As a Bermudian citizen, I had experiential knowledge of the island before embarking on the study, but the fieldwork

was collected over the course of two years living full time on the island, along with substantial periods of time living in Bermuda over the course of writing up the work. Additionally, interviewees were frequently seen repeatedly both formally and informally, establishing a relationship and a rapport that translated into our interviews and into my later interpretation of their words. The methodological framework of this thesis is structured into three stages: 1) Targeted Interviews, 2) Public Facebook Commentary, 3) Anonymous Comment Threads on Online News Articles. The knowledge that I gained from my interviews, whether that be directly related to the thesis question about how Bermudians frame gang violence and Bermudian identity or more foundational knowledge such as Bermudian history and the lived experience within particular neighbourhoods, informed my approach to interpreting the conversations collected in the second two stages of the fieldwork.

Stage 1: Targeted Interviews

'The sharing of stories is an important part of the human condition. People seem to have a fundamental drive to tell and listen to them. We use them to communicate and reproduce in-group solidarity…Stories are good at making simple what is complicated…They are an important resource in everyday life and in times of celebration and difficulty; crucial for the way we live, and for the organisation of society. Even our very identity and sense of self is narratively constructed. We make sense of ourselves and our relationships with others by sharing stories and through our individual on-going inner narrative. Stories are, simply put, at the core of what makes us who and what we are.'

(Sandberg and Ugelvik 2016: 129)

The first stage of this project involved targeted interviews with 33 individuals or 'key informants' affected by gang violence to varying degrees, whether in their personal or

professional lives or simply as vocal observers of the changing landscape of crime in Bermuda. Interviewees were approached by me to participate in the study - some due to their status as public figures who are outspoken on criminal justice issues and some due to their work within the Bermudian criminal justice system. Several participants I met by chance, and we took our conversations from there. A number of participants were recruited through a 'snowballing' effect, where one interviewee recommended I reach out to them or put me in touch with them. Although the interviewees are a diverse group of individuals, they were not selected as a representative sample of the Bermudian population but specifically for their potential narrative contribution to the thesis. I selected interviewees either due to the insight they could give me through their individual perspective on gang violence or their potential to expand my contextual knowledge of Bermudian history and gang violence. Some of these interviewees are prominent 'public' crime talkers, engaging in public discussion of gang violence frequently in online forums and/or through their work. Others expressed a preference for speaking on this topic in more private settings. Some interviewees had devoted their professional lives to tackling gang violence in Bermuda, others had no personal connection to gang violence whatsoever. Despite the very different levels of individual experience with gang violence, there were distinct thematic trends in what different interviewees said to me when they spoke about crime.

It was important to have in-depth, in-person conversations around the topic of gang violence. Online forums make up a significant database for this study - social media is a powerful tool in investigating Bermudian discourse and identity. That being said, the things that people say (or don't say) and the ways they behave in the digital sphere can be very different from face-to-face conversation. These targeted

interviews gave me access to a very different kind of conversation, and a conversation which directly involved me organised around questions I had posed. Though these interviewees may repeat many similar tropes to those found in the online data, the interview format awarded me the opportunity to question them on their perspectives, the ways in which they engaged with and responded to me and where that fits in their own narrative of self and place. Qualitative interviews are reflective accounts revealing the 'ways in which people organise views of themselves, of others, and of their social worlds' (Orbuch 1997: 455). In this way, the interviews provide the base knowledge from which I am able to interpret the online discourse phenomenologically.

Over the course of two years, I met with the interviewees formally between one and three occasions for one to two hour long audio recorded interviews, in some cases forming a close relationship with the research participants. The interviews were unstructured, covering the participants' perspectives and opinions regarding gang and gun violence in Bermuda, but in some instances also involving oral histories of individuals and their families to gain a greater insight into the context of their stories and the island's unwritten histories. I transcribed these interviews fully. All quotes from the research participants in this methodological stage (identified in the list below) are direct quotes from their interview transcriptions. Names have been changed and details have been omitted to protect the identities of the interviewees. I have described each of the interview participants in terms of their self-identified gender, profession (aside from Atara, as her profession would be potentially identifying, she is instead introduced as the sister of Idris), nationality and race, as these are valuable factors in analysing and comparing the frames employed by the interviewees when discussing violent crime and identity. Age and 'generation' are

also important factors when considering framing work undertaken by audiences to crime. Livingstone et al. (2001: 170) encourage acknowledgement of generational and life course and how they may 'affect how people interpret events around them, offering them cultural frameworks for perceiving and representing these events'. Although I was able to find out the exact ages of participants, in the interest of protecting anonymity, age will be grouped into five categories: A (18-30), B (31-40), C (41-50), D (51-60), and E (60+). These codes for age along with factors such as race and gender will aid in identifying patterns in feeling and opinion among particular social groups or 'interpretive communities' (Lindlof 1988, Jensen 1990). For the full biographies of each interviewee, please consult Appendix II.

This work does not include any interviews with Bermudian gang members. My aim is to interrogate the ways in which gang violence has incited debate and discussion around Bermudian identity rather than explore the experiences of being in a gang in Bermuda. This is not to dehumanise or erase the experiences of Bermudian gang members, but rather reflects the ways in which the gang member is frequently rendered mythological in Bermudian crime talk. Stanley Cohen faced a similar representational dilemma, writing that his Mods and Rockers 'will be seen through the eye of the societal reaction and in this reaction they tend to appear as disembodied objects, Rorshach blots on to which reactions are projected' (2011: 20). This is not to imply that the Mods and Rockers were actually inhuman without complicated histories and motivations, but that the focus of the study is on the ways in which their humanity is erased when they are assigned the status of folk devil. Persistent themes in discourse around gang violence in Bermuda revolve around problematising the coming together of 'at-risk' black Bermudian men and diagnosing their needs. Each speaker across each methodological stage of this thesis,

regardless of their connection to Bermudian gangs and gang violence, constructs their own concept of the Bermudian gang member, whether based in experience or myth, in order to engage in dialogue around gangs and crime in Bermuda. Gerbner et al.'s (1980) substitution theory observes how individuals with little or no personal experience with crime will establish opinions of crime based on media representations - thereby using media as a substitute for lack of experience. The voices that are not heard in these public conversations about crime and society are the voices of the gang members. The only representation of a gang member in this study, Idris, is through the voice of Atara, his sister. This is not an investigation of the narrative constructions of identity in offenders, but in audiences to crime - rendering the anonymous 'mass public' that reacts to crime and policy visible and heterogenous.

This first methodological stage of unstructured, naturalistic interviews is indispensable to this study; firstly, in understanding the contextual and situational background to social phenomena, and secondly, in how individuals attribute meaning to and utilise their personal experience to make sense of society, crime and identity. This is the only stage of this research in which I am an active participant in the conversations analysed. Drawing from oral history traditions (Boder 1949; Terkel 1968, 1992; Terry 2007) and approaching the interviews phenomenologically allowed me to take the time to establish a mutual sense of trust and learn about personal histories, assisting me in developing a more nuanced evaluation of social identity and audiences to crime. Interviews were transcribed with notes around tone or external events, coded into sub-themes and then extracts were grouped into themes.

Stage 2: Collection and Analysis of Facebook Commentary

In order to observe new publics and discourses that are forming in relation to crime, I needed to move beyond what people say to me and observe what people say to each other. This was done by investigating spaces in which discourse about crime occurs. This stage involved the analysis of hundreds (365,548 words) of public comments and conversations on the social media network Facebook. This is done with an understanding that Facebook is not an unbiased arena, people can communicate differently online than in person and additionally the Facebook algorithm itself can affect what conversations users participate in.

Van Dijck (2013: 8) describes Facebook as a 'social networking site' geared towards interpersonal connection and communication. The site, launched in 2004 as a networking tool for Harvard students, is a global phenomenon reporting 2.38 billion monthly active users as of March 31, 2019 and 1.56 billion daily active users on average for March 2019 (Facebook Newsroom 2019). Users can control the audience of their own content from a choice of public, friends only ('friends' being other users you can only connect with upon requesting or accepting 'friend requests') or custom settings (i.e. the ability to hide a post from specific individuals or groups). Users can reply to other users' posts, show their feelings about posts through a selection of emotional reaction buttons ('like', 'love', 'care', 'haha', 'sad', 'angry) and share posts to their own profiles to engage in discussion on particular issues or events. Facebook groups are run by administrators and moderators who can control the privacy settings of the group. This study uses data from public groups and public pages: anyone can see the members/likers of the group/page and the posts within the group/page discussion, whether they are a member of the group/follower of the page or not.

Conversations were found through search of key terms (i.e. gang, shooting, crime, violence) in digital spheres of crime talk. Spheres of crime talk include public Bermudian Facebook groups (ranging in size from 400 to 4000 members) set up specifically to discuss socio-political issues and events and some specifically as fora to discuss (with the view to resolve) gang violence in Bermuda. Media institution pages on Facebook also function as spheres of crime talk and have large numbers of active (commenting) and passive (observing) members. The Royal Gazette (Bermuda's only print paper at the time of writing) page has roughly 38,000 likes and 37,000 followers (populations which overlap but are distinct) while the Bernews page (an online news website) has around 56,000 likes and 56,000 followers as of June 2019. Conversations are often held in comment threads below shared articles to debate and interpret the issues encapsulated in the articles posted. After discarding unrelated posts and conversations, comments dating from 2018 as far back as 2007 were accumulated in a single document and later conversations were reviewed, coded and organised under superordinate topical umbrellas (community, race and gender) and then further sub-categorised into thematic trends.

If you are able to navigate the ethical minefield of digital data collection, Facebook data can be invaluable for studying discourse, identity and cultural frameworks. Users create a personal profile (and are policed by Facebook to use their real names rather than pseudonyms) where they can present an account of themselves and their lives through images and text to their chosen audiences. Facebook groups and communities are influential in Bermudian life - buy and sell groups can become public enacted dramas of interpersonal conflicts, discussions of events and conversations occurring in the digital sphere trickle into 'real world'

conversations and interactions. Social media is more than just media - it's a landscape in which relationships are formed, established, maintained and literally 'deleted.'

Though social media discourse is frequently 'trivialised as the playground of children and adolescents' (Salter 2016: 12), platforms such as Facebook can be immeasurably useful in audience and discursive studies, presenting users with 'new discursive opportunities in which meaning-making about crime and justice can unfold in efficacious ways' (ibid.: 5). Online communication, 'while noisy and unstructured, lend themselves to temporal analysis…(f)urthermore, users of social media are more likely to express emotional content' (Williams and Burnap 2016: 214). The use of Facebook allows me to analyse public conversations and debates taking place over the course of a decade. Salter advocates for applying critical theory in analysis of human behaviour online, in order to develop an understanding of 'the relationship between technology and society that takes account of historical and cultural context' (Salter 2016: 29). Online communication and expression must be considered within the wider context of the world outside of the computer. Adam, a white Bermudian former politician and police officer, reflected on the impact of social media on gang confrontations in Bermuda:

'What's interesting now is because we live in a digital age, the taunting and posturing is now occurring in cyber space so instead of driving through someone's neighbourhood with your buddies and pointing your finger at them and pulling a fake trigger or just ripping his chain off in a bar they just go on Instagram and they rap about you. Or they tweet things about you and your weak crew or how they slept with your girlfriend last night or how they beat one of your buddies up. It's all done now online. It makes the tension indicators peak and valley much more now because it can be done a lot easier. Hey, let's go drive to Somerset and piss off MOB. Well, they

don't have to now because if you have 400 followers on Twitter you can send a tweet out and that's going to be forwarded and viewed and shared by whomever wants to go onto your account.'

I chose to utilise Facebook rather than other social media platforms for a number of reasons. People use social media platforms in different ways for different purposes. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) illustrating that social media is not necessarily confined to social network platforms, identify six classifications of social media based on function:

1. Blogs and Microblogs (eg. Wordpress, Twitter, Tumblr)
2. Social Networking Sites (eg. Facebook, MySpace)
3. Content Communities (eg Youtube, Instagram, Pinterest)
4. Collaborative Projects (eg. Wikipedia)
5. Virtual Game Worlds (eg. World of Warcraft, EverQuest)
6. Virtual Social Worlds (eg. Farmville, Second Life)

Facebook is inarguably the most popular social media platform amongst Bermudians, with membership across a range of age and racial demographics. The detailed, personalised and archival nature of Facebook lends itself to socio-cultural discussion and dialogue, as many users utilise their profiles as platforms to lay out their beliefs and ideologies. Groups and pages offer visible communal spaces for dialogue and debate. Facebook offers users a way to control their image and content, tailored to represent their identities. Twitter (as the platform was known at the time) and Instagram tend to be populated by mostly younger Bermudian users and are used differently. Twitter is much more outward focused and arguably less individualised: expression at the time was limited to 140, later 280, characters in

tweets and profile descriptions, and there was less domestic political discussion and more engagement and connection on the basis of pop culture and international topics. The image-centred character of Instagram, where users can create profiles of images and videos, does not lend itself easily to dialogic study - though an examination of the connections between image, self, connection and dialogue in Instagram would make for an interesting study one day. Likewise, WhatsApp is highly utilised by Bermudians across ages to share news and rumour, often beating the print and online media and often sharing sensitive or illicit material. WhatsApp, with its encrypted conversations between users, is too private a platform for this study of public spheres of discussion on crime, though I acknowledge that WhatsApp also has groups and conversation threads, and plays a huge role in establishing networks of knowledge in Bermuda. I am choosing not to include 'reacts' (like/love/care/haha/sad/angry) and focus solely on written dialogue between users. The like button was only officially introduced in February 2009 and the other reaction options were not rolled out globally until February 2016 (and, more often than not, changes to Facebook features are not immediately activated in Bermuda as they would be in the US). The 'care' react was added during the global Covid 19 pandemic in 2020. I acknowledge the value of reacts in offering a quantitative measure of 'feeling', but considering likes and reacts on posts in addition to comments over the time period covered in this study would only serve to overcomplicate the task at hand. I do not believe quantifying reacts would contribute much of value in terms of nuance of feeling and meaning.

Reacts do in part inform the Facebook algorithm, a computerised system or 'machine-learning' individualised formula designed to extend user screen-time by promoting posts with which the user is more likely to engage. This formula is

informed by past user interactions and the post itself, balancing the likelihood of the user reacting to the post with the current popularity of the post independent of the user. Since 2018, the algorithm has been strategically programmed to encourage interaction, prioritising 'posts by friends and family and viral memes, but also divisive content' (Oremus et al. 2021). According to Oremus et al. (2021), the algorithmic strategy between 2011 and 2018 was more focused on maximising time spent on the app and therefore promoted more 'clickbait' articles and professionally produced videos. Prior to 2011, Facebook used an algorithm called 'Edgerank' which prioritised the most recent posts from people known to the user, posts that have mostly positive reactions and posts of a type the user has previously engaged with. The algorithm has faced considerable public scrutiny for creating echo chambers of opinion, pushing controversial posts to the top of user newsfeeds and promoting the spread of misinformation. Indeed, from 2017 the algorithm awarded an 'anger react' more value than a simple like, which promoted posts that were 'disproportionately likely to include misinformation, toxicity and low-quality news' (Merrill and Oremus 2021). Facebook continuously adjusts the algorithm to balance the need to respond to critiques of the algorithm's effect on social relationships and political discourse alongside the company's strategic need to extend use of the site and promote advertising partners. This study contains Facebook data from 2008 through to 2021. There have been several iterations of the algorithm in this time span, but the algorithm will have promoted controversial posts around political or social issues to users for the majority of this period. On the one hand, this makes this an ideal time frame to examine crime talk in social media, as the platform was designed to encourage users to engage with topics that promote debate and discussion, like gang and gun violence in Bermuda. On the other, by privileging 'controversial' posts over others, this can influence how users interact with each other. As a result, the

way in which users speak to each other cannot be seen as definitive of Bermudian social reactions and must instead be examined within a wider discursive context. This is part of the rationale for why this thesis empirically focuses on different arenas of discourse, not solely on social media.

There are many valid ethical concerns associated with using Facebook data, mainly associated around publicness and privateness of data, and whether a 'public' privacy setting can be aligned with consent for information to be used for research purposes. Weintraub (1997: 5) identifies two theoretical approaches to the public/ private divide, where firstly the delineation is used to identify what is 'hidden or withdrawn versus what is open, revealed or accessible' and secondly 'what is individual…versus what is collective'. Public Facebook posts may be open and accessible to me, but do they belong to the collective or the individual? Is the person posting aware that their post or comment is publicly available and accessible? Should consent be sought before collecting publicly available Facebook data? Williams et al. remind us that '(o)nline information is often intended only for a specific (imagined) public made up of peers, a support network or specific community, not necessarily the Internet public at large, and certainly not for publics beyond the Internet' (Williams et al. 2017). Townsend and Wallace (2016: 5) point out that the public/private question of social media content is to an extent dependent on 'whether or not the social media user can reasonably expect to be observed by strangers'. Kosinski et al. (2014: 553), write that it is possible to ethically use publicly available Facebook data without participant consent, so long as '(i)t is reasonable to assume that the data were knowingly made public by the individuals' and '(d)ata are anonymized after collection and no attempts are made to deanonymize them'.

In order for me to ethically use this Facebook data, I took significant steps to minimise the potential for harm if the posters were to be identified. This cannot be achieved simply by changing names: content of comments and posts can be input into Facebook's internal search tool to identify users. As Markham (2012: 336) states, traditional methods of data protection must be adapted in order to protect individual privacy in an online context, for now 'social researchers need to design studies, manage data, and build research reports in increasing public, archivable, searchable, and traceable spaces.' I have not sought informed consent from these users to observe and analyse their conversations. Therefore, not only are names changed but comments have been paraphrased, group names changed, dates and time are not precisely referenced but instead by month and year. This obscuring and paraphrasing - Markham uses the term 'fabrication' - is, as Markham describes, 'a sensible and ethically grounded solution for protecting privacy in arenas of shifting public/private contexts' (ibid.: 341). No data is collected from users known to be under 18. All data is collected from public groups and pages where posts and replies are intended to be a part of publicly visible and communally participative discussions, rather than personal profile pages. Therefore, it can be surmised that participants can reasonably expect that their content is publicly visible and available. This is also laid out in Facebook's Terms of Service, which explains the nature of privacy settings and access to data by third party partners, which include businesses and researchers (Meta 2022).

The nature of what is easily definable as public and private is changing as the increasing availability of media and technology redefine communicative spaces. Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) conceptualised the public sphere as spaces in which 'meanings are articulated,

distributed, and negotiated, as well as the collective body constituted by and in this process, "the public"' (Hansen 1993: ix). In Habermas' own words, the public sphere 'may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people cling together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatised but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour' (Habermas 1989: 27). Media channels formed a social space 'through which norms for communication and interaction are produced' (Van Dijck 2013: 79). Several authors have stressed the need to expand upon Habermas' theory of public space to take into account the increasing influence of technology in public discourse and the decreasing significant of nation states and physical space (Ito 2008, Fraser 2014). Social media 'complicate what it means to be public, to address audiences, and to build publics and counterpublics' (Baym and boyd 2012: 320). Keane (1995: 8) reflects that the 'old dominance of state-structured and territorially bounded public life mediated by radio, television, newspapers and books is coming to an end. Its hegemony is rapidly being eroded by the development of a multiplicity of networked spaces of communication which are not tied immediately to territory'.

Social media can be viewed as a rare, desegregated space for discourse in Bermuda (although group membership and affiliation can still be drawn along racial lines), a de-localised space where conversation can take place intranationally between separate communities on the island and internationally with people living abroad. Additionally, social media provides a forum to de-legitimise traditional hierarchies of expression, communication and news media, wherein historically marginalised voices and perspectives can be amplified. The increasingly widespread

availability of technology and access to news means that there can be greater engagement with news and media than ever before, though societal inequalities nonetheless play out in access to and participation in online discussions (Schneider 1996, Poster 1998, Dahlberg 2001). It is important not to fall under the misapprehension that social media users are representative of populations (Ruths and Jurgen 2014). Baym (2010: 150) warns against 'the myth of cyberspace' - that is, the conception that online life is impermeable to offline social structures and cultural frames. That being said, in lowering the potential social cost of being a speaker in a public sphere, social media allows for a greater number of speakers to engage in debate (Benkler 2006). Baym and boyd (2012: 320) argue that '(s)ocial media mirror, magnify, and complicate countless aspects of everyday life, bringing into question practices that are presumed stable and shedding light on contested social phenomena.' The algorithm contributes to this catalysis of contestation.

It is also important to acknowledge the ways in which human behaviour changes in online forums, particularly what is known as the 'online disinhibition effect' (Suler 2004). Online disinhibition refers to the extent to what people share and how they share it being less inhibited online than in person. Suler (ibid.: 321) writes of how this disinhibition can be both 'benign' (that is, sharing personal information about oneself, emotional openness and exhibiting acts of extreme kindness and generosity) or 'toxic (rude language, aggression, threats, lack of empathy). Much literature on online disinhibition focuses on toxic disinhibition, the interpersonal hostility and dismissive obstinance of opinion exhibited online as opposed to offline (Lapidot-Lefler and Barak 2012; Alonzo and Aiken 2004; Derks et al. 2008; Dyer et al. 1995).

This calls into question the extent to which conclusions can be drawn from opinions shared on social media. Which self is the 'true self' - the more inhibited offline, face to face self that is sensitive to 'a frown, a shaking head, a sigh, a bored expression, and many other subtle and not so subtle signs of disapproval or indifference' and changes their message based on physical and verbal signs (Suler 2004: 322)? Or the disinhibited online self who can take advantage of the dissociation of physical invisibility? I agree with Suler's assertion that environmental variabilities in expression do not reveal one true and one false self, but that different dimensions of self are revealed within different situational contexts. As Suler puts it:

'Different modalities of online communication (e.g., e-mail, chat, video) and different environments (e.g., social, vocational, fantasy) may facilitate diverse expressions of self. Each setting allows us to see a different perspective on identity. Neither one is necessarily more true than another.'

(ibid.: 324)

Recent studies focusing on the decision to share an opinion online or engage in political conversations online have found that in general, people are hesitant to share opinions online if they aren't confident their opinion is widely shared by their audience, challenging 'the notion that social media spaces might be considered useful venues for people sharing views they would not otherwise express when they are in the physical presence of others' (Hampton et al. 2014: 5). In their study of the willingness to share political opinions online, Hampton et al. also found that audience consensus was not the only influence on whether or not somebody shared a political opinion online, but also confidence in knowledge of the subject, the intensity of opinion and the level of interest in the subject. In this sense, social media is not an alternative platform for those unwilling to discuss issues in person, but it does bring

those willing to engage in crime talk together who may not necessarily speak offline. It also highlights that opinions shared online are more likely to be opinions that the speaker feels intensely and is confident in. People may not participate in public crime talk for a number of reasons - fear of personal and professional repercussions, lack of confidence or interest in the subject or a dislike of online discourse in general. Unfortunately, the limit of discursive studies is that I can only analyse the discourse that people participate in. Even in the much more reflective arena of in person interviews, I can only analyse what is said. What is unsaid and unshared is untouchable.

The fact that people generally share opinions they hold intensely and are confident in, along with the individually curated nature of social media gives me greater confidence in the reliability of these opinions. Social media gives users an opportunity to selectively present a version of themselves for the consumption of others, with many opting to filter out negative experiences and generally avoid making themselves vulnerable to criticism (Back et al. 2010, Gosling et al. 2007, Wilcox and Stephen 2012). When someone makes the decision to share an opinion on social media, with their name and often photo of their face attached to it, this becomes a declarative statement. Additionally, Hampton et al.'s work shows that people share opinions on social media to have a pre-existing group opinion affirmed. In this way, social media comments can be understood as reflective of wider shared social attitudes.

In considering this, I argue that this second methodological stage is invaluable to examining constructions of identity in crime discourse, and also provides a contribution to the existing literature which has thus far neglected digital publics. Hier

(2019: 385) writes of how the landscape of social networks has transformed how the public interact with news, where 'once content is posted…video files and digital images are subjected to an ongoing sequence of editing, sharing, tagging, categorizing, reposting, repositioning, commenting, remixing, and deleting that continually influences the original meaning of uploaded content, the dynamics of audience engagement, and the future memory of events.' This not only injects a fluidity into the public arena of opinion, but also publicises informal modes of communicating opinion, where 'digital communication networks are creating opportunities to subvert the traditional gatekeeping role of journalists and elites by providing spatially and temporally distant users with an unprecedented set of opportunities to participate in interactions that range from morally righteous digital firestorms to shaming ordinary people for minor indiscretions' (ibid.: 387). The rise of social media in Bermuda has changed the way Bermudians share and respond to news, and in turn has changed the way the news communicates with the public - take, for example, the Royal Gazette, which has dramatically changed its tone and voice in response to the risk of online condemnation. The production of public knowledge has changed, and any attention paid to the construction of news and meaning must take this into account.

Stage 3: Collection and Analysis of News Media Comment Threads

The third methodological stage of this work involved the collection of comments from threads associated with online new articles. These were all from the Royal Gazette (which has both a print and online presence) and Bernews articles. Although other news websites have come and gone over the course of the time observed in this

research, Royal Gazette and Bernews have been the only constant presences and are indisputably the most popular news sources with the highest online engagement.

At the time of writing, there is only one daily print newspaper on the island - the Royal Gazette, established in 1828. The paper is often the subject of controversy and accused of representing the views of a white, conservative elite group. Kevin, a white Bermudian journalist for the Royal Gazette, explained to me how he navigates public attitudes towards the paper:

'I mean with a name and history like what it has it's naturally going to be considered an establishment newspaper. And it's fair to say that for a lot of the business community it provides a voice for them, it's a huge business section. With that link you're inevitably going to be linked with the 'bad status quo' in Bermuda. I refer to it as the Gazette, I tend to leave the Royal off of it but that's my personal preference. There's a sort of mistrust and an expectation that you're going to twist what they say into something pro-establishment.'

The more liberal leaning print paper, The Bermuda Sun, was printed on Wednesdays and Fridays. Established in 1964, it ceased publication in 2014. One of the most prominent sources of news on the island is Bernews, an online-only news website founded in 2010. Bernews is seen as a left-leaning news source, despite having very few opinion-style pieces. Bernews is widely regarded as the first source of news on the island - the first on the scene and the first to publish[1]. Orbiting around these formal sources of news are informal discussion and debate in the form of online comment threads. Comments on Royal Gazette articles can be made using

[1] Another online news source which is new on the scene, TNN Bermuda, is often as quick or quicker to publish stories, arguably before fact checking. TNN Bermuda has a website, but much more regularly posts short form stories on Facebook. There is also Bermuda Real, an online news website which shares news from Bermuda and overseas. Bermuda Real is probably engaged with the least despite its use of far more sensationalist language.

the Disqus platform, in which users can leave comments under their Facebook profile or a manually entered true name or pseudonym. Comments on Bernews are more often than not made under pseudonyms with cartoon avatars. Despite the lack of identifying information, commenters are often familiar with each other and their political standpoints and converse with a degree of (often hostile) familiarity. Speculations as to the true identities of frequent pseudonymous posters are also common.

Articles and associated comment threads were found through searching online archives for relevant articles, using tags or keywords such as ‘crime’, ‘gang’, ‘murder’, ‘arrest’, ‘shooting’, ‘gun violence.’ Articles were also found through the monitoring of the public Facebook groups and pages featured in this study - an article would be shared on a group or a page, spark discussion on that group or page (stage 2), but the link to that article takes the researcher away from Facebook to the news site itself, with its own space for debate and commentary. Conversations (totally 257,272 words) were extracted, coded and organised thematically.

These comment threads do not require the same measures employed in Stage 2 to protect poster identities. Firstly, it can reasonably be assumed the commenters expect their views to be publicly visible and accessed as they are commenting on the article on the news site itself. Secondly, commenters on news articles so frequently use pseudonyms that there is no need to paraphrase to protect identities. That being said, as informed consent has not been sought to use this data, some names have been changed if I know or suspect the poster is not using a pseudonym. There is considerable value in analysing conversations where the speakers have chosen to hide their own identities - they have found a way to voice

opinion to the public while protecting their private identities. The online disinhibition effect is often much stronger when accompanied by anonymity. As a result the content of the posts can be harsher, more abusive but also arguably more direct as the posters do not have to hold back in concern about social stigma, familial connections and the knock on effects of being uncensored in discourse. As a result of this, anonymous comment threads are an important addition to studies of Bermudian crime talk. Lapidot-Lefler and Barak (2012: 435) point out that anonymity is not only the state of namelessness, but confidence in a dimension of unidentifiability, 'the realistic condition of being unknown to online partners in terms of identifying personal details'. Though many Facebook comment threads in larger countries may show the effects of online disinhibition and unidentifiability in discourse, Bermuda's interconnected population bleeds into online discourse. This is arguably different from small communities within larger countries, as the small community *is* the country, in physically bounded space. People have hundreds of mutual Facebook friends with individuals they've never met. The expectation of unidentifiability is significantly limited on Facebook in Bermuda. The inclusion of newspaper comment threads in this methodology expands the inquiry into the least inhibited arena of Bermudian crime talk. The talk here is less coherent and much more aggressive. There is also evidence to support that the anonymity and unidentifiability of newspaper comment threads correlates with more intense disclosure of opinion or personal experience (Hollenbaugh and Everett 2013, Bailenson et al. 2006, Chiou 2007). The extent to which a researcher can be sure these comments are from many different individuals rather than a single impassioned person posting under multiple names is limited. It would therefore be difficult to make conclusions regarding the distribution of opinion if this research were only confined to the anonymous sphere of crime talk.

The spreading of misinformation is also common in both online and in-person crime talk. People may misremember the truth or may bend it to support their narrative. Some discussants are more informed than others, all phases of this interview stage involve input from a blend of people with professional and personal experience of gang violence and those with no experience of it whatsoever. There is no form of crime talk that is completely transparent - but that does not mean that it is of no use for phenomenological analysis. As Samuel and Thompson (1990: 20) argue - myths and historical inaccuracies have value in the constructivist study of history, where the origins and perpetuations of myths and misconceptions must be understood 'both as evidence of the past, and as a continuing historical force in the present'. In monitoring a decade's worth of social media and comment threads, we can see the persistence of misunderstanding and myth and the ways in which these affect Bermudian conceptions of community and identity.

The distrust of what is viewed to be establishment media (Royal Gazette) over what is seen as a more grassroots new site (Bernews) affects the types of conversations had in relation to these two news sources. The perception of the Royal Gazette as an institutionally (read: white elite) aligned paper (and the fact that it is the last print newspaper on island to survive after several black owned and left leaning papers were unable to fund a print paper) bears huge significance on the discourse around their stories. Comment threads are responses to the news stories themselves, inviting wider discussion on the topic and replying to other comments posted by discussants. The discussion around Letters to the Editor and Hate Mail in *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978) features a review of formal and informal channels of public opinion. Bermudian comment threads operate a discursive space

somewhere between the formal, structured and selected Letters to the Editor and the private, unstructured letters of harassment.

Analysing Crime Talk

"Public opinion' about crime does not simply form up at random. It exhibits a shape and structure. It followed a sequence. It is a social process, not a mystery. Even at the lowest threshold of visibility - in talk, in rumour, in the exchange of quick views and common-sense judgements - crime talk is not socially innocent; already it is informed and penetrated by the lay opinions and ideologies about crime as a public topic'.

(Hall et al. 1978: 136)

Analysis of the qualitative data derived from the study utilised an interpretative phenomenological approach - identifying thematic patterns that arose in interview transcripts and online discourse and arranging the data under superordinate themes for further inquiry. Interpretative phenomenology is under-utilised in qualitative criminological studies. It provides a valuable prism through which we can gain understanding of how speakers make sense of experiences while incorporating the experience and perspective of the researcher. This is a holistic approach which takes into account 'cultural, social and political environments' and the ways in which interpretation, discourse and understanding in the study are shaped by the researchers' own lived experiences (Miner-Romanoff 2012: 2). This methodology does not attempt to mechanise what is ultimately subjective, and instead embraces the subjectivity of actors as a valuable tool in making sense of 'frameworks of understanding' - in this study, the ways in which discussants make sense of gang violence and how this may or may not alter their perceptions of the nature of Bermudian society.

Interpretative Phenomenology is most frequently applied within psychology, but it is arguably a valuable qualitative methodological approach across the social sciences. Smith (2004: 40) writes that interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) 'represents an epistemological position, offers a set of guidelines for conducting research, and describes a corpus of empirical research.' This inductive strategy of inquiry looks to understand how research participants assign meaning to experience, with the assumption that participants are the experts in their own experience and are recruited accordingly (the sample of interviewees is not randomised but specific and deliberate). The phenomenological aspect of IPA resides within its concern around participants' perceptions and opinions, whereas the interpretative aspect of IPA comes from the recognition of 'the central role for the analyst in making sense of that personal and is thus, strongly connected to the interpretative or hermeneutic tradition' (Smith 2004: 40, see Giorgi and Giorgi 2003 and Palmer 1969). Reid et al. (2005: 23) write of how IPA is 'particularly suited to researching in 'unexplored territory', where a theoretical pretext may be lacking' - an inductive and exploratory method of inquiry not seeking to test a hypothesis but glean greater understandings of the ways in which the subjects of inquiry construct meaning and identity (see also Timotijevic and Breakwell 2000). That being said, a theoretical framework is still necessary when conducting phenomenological research, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how people relate to themselves and others through crime talk (Zahavi 2019). This is why it is important for this thesis to utilise the existing literature on public sensibilities towards crime but also explore Bermuda-specific literature on Bermudian history, space and identity. This hybridised theoretical framework is necessary in order to be informed in my interpretation and representation of the 'lifeworld' of my research participants (Tuohy et al. 2013, Bush et al. 2019).

One-to-one semi structured interviews are the predominant method of data collection, but analysis can be applied to other forms of text and testimony (see Clare 2003, Larkin and Griffiths 2000, Timotijevic and Breakwell 2000). Although phenomenology is argued to be best applied to individual accounts and perspectives, these accounts can be collated in order to gain an understanding of community experiences (Bush et al. 2019). Analysis is 'interpretive' and subjective and the researcher is careful not to present findings as fact, but interpretations are justified while balancing the lived experiences of research participants with input from a range of theoretical perspectives. Reflexivity is a key feature of interpretative phenomenological analysis, with the researcher understanding the potential impact of their participation in interviews and critically examining their own interpretations of the data. Transcripts are meticulously coded and arranged into themes which then shape the analytic commentary that follows. The presentation of interpretative phenomenological research seeks to elevate the voices of the participants, and analysis is 'developed around substantial verbatim excerpts from the data' (Reid et al. 2005: 22). This thesis has implemented this coding and analysis strategy for the data collected, as outlined above.

The methodological approach to this thesis has been designed in order to observe different publics and forms of crime talk, and also to develop an intimate understanding of the social and historical context of this talk. With this understanding, I am able to deconstruct, interpret and extract meaning from the conversations included in this study. Data was collected from one extreme of crime talk to another - with Phase 1 being a reflective phase with special attention paid to people with personal experience of gang violence, to Phase 3 being the most anonymous and

agitated form of crime talk. When initially designing this study, I expected to see a divergence in the content of crime talk across these three different arenas of discourse due to the increasing influence of the online disinhibition effect. What I found were distinct differences in tone and reflectiveness, but thematically, the content was the same. For each of the sub-themes with the superordinate themes, there were multiple examples from every methodological phase. Due to the thematic consistency of these themes across each methodological stage, there is no epistemic privilege awarded to any form of crime talk in the presentation of the data. The tone is different, but the message conveyed is the same.

The existing literature on public sensibilities towards crime and postcolonial criminology emphasises the importance of situating crime talk in place and history. The following chapter will review Bermudian history and debates around defining Bermudian identity. This is necessary contextual information which, in tandem with the theoretical framework, informed my interpretation of the data collected in this study.

Chapter Four

Bermudian History and Identity

Existing scholarship on public sensibilities towards crime has underlined the importance of the history of a community to how people make sense of crime in place. When I speak of history in this thesis, I am not only speaking of a series of past events. I am also speaking to awareness and understanding of history. History is not only the event, but the divergent legacies of that event on contemporary actors, the extent to which it has benefited or constrained their everyday lives and the subsequent interpretations and myths that evolve from it. Bermudian history is frequently referenced and disputed when people discuss gang violence, to the extent that crime talk reveals long-standing truths about Bermudian society that go beyond the crime itself. Bermudian history is also inextricably tied to contemporary conceptions of Bermudian identity.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses events in Bermudian history through the frames of Community, Race and Gender from discovery of the island through to the present day. The empirical data collected in this study is organised through these same three frames. The second section of the chapter discusses the postcolonial debates around defining island identities and contemporary conceptions of Bermudian identity specifically. This chapter provides necessary context. It summarises the historical origins of contemporary Bermudian relationships and introduces the debates around Bermudian identity. I will use this context to assess whether crime talk has significantly developed or changed

Bermudian conceptions of identity and, consequently, to evaluate the transformative potential of crime talk to disrupt historical cycles.

Community and Bermudian History

Bermuda is a tiny dot on the map of the world, isolated in the mid-Atlantic. Located right in the middle of the best sailing routes between Europe and the Americas, discovery of the uninhabited island was inevitable. Spaniard Juan de Bermúdez discovered the island on his way back to Spain from Hispaniola circa 1505. It remained unsettled until the wreck of the Sea Venture in 1609. The English armed merchant vessel had been sent from Plymouth by the Virginia Company as part of the Third Supply mission to support the struggling Jamestown Settlement. A violent summer hurricane separated the ship from the rest of the fleet and severely damaged it. After four days drifting, a lookout spotted an island. The ship was purposefully steered into the rocky halo of reef encircling it. The pilgrims soon discovered the 'hidden and long concealed truth' - that the much avoided 'Isle of Devils' was in fact 'one of the sweetest Paradises that be upon the earth' (Jourdain 1613: 3). Not a single life was lost in the wreck, beginning 'a ten-month occupation during which Bermuda was transformed from the Isle of Devils into the Summer Islands, from a place to avoid into a paradise that invited settlement' (Jarvis 2010:13).

This shipwreck, and the seemingly miraculous gift of a remote fertile island in the middle of the ocean not only inspired William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* but also became emblematic to future Bermudians. The Bermuda coat of arms is an English red lion holding a shield depicting the Sea Venture shipwreck, and the country motto is 'Quo Fata Ferunt' – meaning 'whatever the fates may bring.'

Convinced that the wreck of the Sea Venture had been a sign from God that the English should seize Bermuda, the island was officially colonised in 1612. Compared to Virginia, Bermuda was a paradise. With no indigenous population and an abundance of natural resources, Bermuda was simple to colonise and prospered quickly. By 1684 the territory was self-governing.

The ‘Somers Isles Company’ was established to administer Bermuda as a commercial venture, dividing the island into eight tribes or parishes named after adventurers or shareholders in the Company, then further divided into tribe roads and lots and distributed amongst other shareholders, much of which is still owned by the descendants of the shareholders today. This distribution of land founded the Bermudian white elite, known colloquially as the ‘Forty Thieves’, who controlled the Bermudian economy and politics for centuries. The intention was to return the investment through cash crops, but with limited space for agriculture, it was soon clear that Bermuda could not be another outpost of the North American tobacco industry. Instead, Bermuda exported vegetables and flowers, particularly the onion and Easter Lily. Moving into the 17th century, the economic focus turned to maritime industries, including shipbuilding, piloting and whaling. These remained pillars of the economy until the 20th century, when the focus shifted to tourism, leading to a sudden economic growth which attracted international business from the 1950s onwards. Bermuda had transitioned rapidly from an isolated, low income, agricultural society to a ‘high growth, high income and high immigration society catering to an international demand for tourist and business facilities’ (Pitt et al. 1978: 2). Most of this ‘high income’ was possessed by white Bermudians.

Bermudian space continues to be racially and economically segregated. The contentious story of Tuckers Town is an important one to highlight. The area, at the mouth of Castle Harbour in the East End of the island, was originally owned by free Blacks from the 1800s onwards. However, in response to the growing tourism industry in the early 20th century, residents were forcibly evicted by the newly formed Bermuda Development Company, which purchased the land for well below its value. The land was redeveloped, with a hotel and golf course built in the 1920s. Wealthy visitors were encouraged to build luxury summer homes. To this day, Tuckers Town remains associated with the extremely wealthy - residents (some of whom are celebrities and American political figures) live in large mansions adjacent to Mid Ocean and Tucker's Point golf clubs. Former Tuckers Town residents were displaced to nearby Devil's Hole, Angel's Grotto, Harris' Bay and an area near Bailey's Bay called 'Harlem Heights.' To this day their descendants still live in these mixed income, mostly black neighbourhoods.

North Hamilton was where many immigrants from across the Caribbean settled in the early 20th century, and their cultural legacy is unmistakable as you walk the streets today. This is evidenced through the prominence of Caribbean restaurants and bakeries, through the reggae and dancehall music played in local bars and even in the architecture. There is a marked cluster of wooden and colonial style buildings more comparable to Caribbean Island architecture than traditional Bermuda limestone buildings. Even the colour of the buildings in this part of Town is distinctly brighter and punchier than the traditional Bermuda pastel palette. This part of Hamilton, known as 'bakatawn' is known as gang territory, associated with the group Parkside and the nearby gang 42. A particularly notorious area is 'Court Street'. The incidents that gained Court Street its reputation (ironically named after the Supreme

and Magistrates' Courts located on the Southern end of the street) - the drug dealing in the 80s, gun crime and the gang territory of early Bermuda gangs such as Front Line - haven't necessarily reduced. Although there is certainly less visible drug and gang activity in this area, as recently as August 3rd, 2021 two men were wounded in a daylight shooting on Court Street (Johnston-Barnes and Lagan 2021). In July 2018, there was a fatal shooting on the street (Lagan 2018).

Many families, black and white, live in the same neighbourhoods or parishes over generations. It is not unusual for the homes of patriarchs and matriarchs to be referred to as the 'homestead'. For upper class white Bermudians from 'Forty Thieves' families, the homestead is often a centuries-old Bermuda house. Neighbours are blood relatives. This dogged tendency to stay put, coupled with the minimal threat to the safety of white Bermudians, means that 'white flight' is not easily applicable to Bermudian space. Firstly, when considering the actual size of the island - where would white people 'fly' to? Secondly, the current racial segregation of neighbourhoods is a product of a history where white Bermudians had the first choice of real estate and were able to generate significant wealth to secure large homes on large plots of land. Upon emancipation, if they were not banished from the island, black Bermudians had no choice but to settle in the space that was left - invariably inland, creating densely populated communities. This history, coupled with generations staying in the same areas, has contributed to the persistent racial segregation of space in Bermuda. There has been no 'resegregation' or 'renegotiation of racial and spatial identities' that is characteristic of white flight (Avila 2004: 14). White Bermudians have no reason to flee from crime as violent crime is generally only occurring in black neighbourhoods with black victims. White concern about crime is reflected in defence of their homes rather than movement away from

'high crime' areas, as the wealthiest are already located far from these zones of conflict.

Race and Bermudian History

Bermuda was the first British territory to import black slaves (Bermuda National Museum 2014, Jarvis 2010). Slaves were brought in from Africa and the West Indies as cheap labour on tobacco plantations, although eventually Bermudian soil was exhausted and Bermuda was unable to compete with Virginia's production rates. Black and Native American people were also brought in as diving specialists for pearls - 'the first imported Blacks came not for their brawn, but for their skills', resulting in a different system of slavery and indentured servitude from the larger agricultural production sites in North America and the Caribbean (Outerbridge Packwood 1975:2). In the 18th and 19th centuries black people were primarily brought in as indentured servants (Bermuda National Museum 2014). Accounts of slavery vary depending on the author - (often white) historians focusing on stories of the powerful in Bermuda's history recount a 'benign slavery' where Blacks and Native Americans were unfree but not mistreated, whereas (invariably black) historians looking at the lived realities of slaves dismiss this 'benign slavery' as a persistent, harmful myth. Outerbridge Packwood speaks to this narrative disparity in his book *Chained on the Rock:*

'The few books, dealing with 17th through early 19th century Bermuda, are more concerned with the white settlers and their survival, than with slavery. Slavery is mentioned, but in a condescending way, stating slaves were treated benevolently…A benevolent slave system would never have resulted in the numerous slave escapes and conspiracies, which occurred throughout slavery.'

(1975: xi)

Despite the influence of Outerbridge Packwood's book, the narrative of benign slavery persists. Jarvis (2010: 13) writes that although 'Bermuda's many Atlantic Africans were clearly considered unfree and were subject to the control of company officials and landlords' designated local agents…white servants and many tenants fell under the same authorities' and emphasises how white servants worked alongside black slaves. Ayton (2013: 24) also states that '(w)hile whites exhibited some racial bias by passing laws restricting black slaves' freedoms there was a lack of violent and hateful prejudice exhibited in other Caribbean colonies, in the United States or elsewhere in the British Empire.'

The historical evidence points to a far different story. This enslavement was not 'benign', for acts passed in this time 'included frequent banishment for free Blacks and extreme punishment for enslaved Africans, which could involve hanging, whipping, castration, cutting off of ears, beheading, even to the extent that two youths in one year had their heads put on spikes as a warning to other slaves' (Winfield 2014: 4). Bermudian slavery was not simply the denial of liberty, but a denial of liberty defined and sustained by violence. Winfield points to other events such as the burning of Sally Bassett in 1730 for attempted murder of her masters, and punishments such as mutilation, whipping and hangings (see Outerbridge Packwood 1975: 131-142; Smith 1976: 32). Mary Prince, a black Bermudian born into slavery whose autobiography was the first account of the life of a black woman published in the United Kingdom, wrote of the violent treatment she experienced and witnessed whilst owned by Bermudian Robert Darrell:

'Seldom a day passed without these boys receiving the most severe treatment, and often for no fault at all. Both my master and mistress seemed to think that they had a right to ill-use them at their pleasure: and very often accompanied their commands with blows, whether the children were behaving well or ill. I have seen their flesh ragged and raw with licks. —Lick—lick—they were never secure one moment from a blow, and their lives were passed in continual fear. My mistress was not contented in using the whip, but often pinched their cheeks and arms in the most cruel manner. My pity for these poor boys was soon transferred to myself: for I was licked, and flogged, and pinched by her pitiless fingers in the neck and arms, exactly as they were. To strip me naked, to hang me up by the wrists and lay my flesh open with the cow-skin, was an ordinary punishment for even a slight offence.'

(Prince 1831: 6-7)

Banishment was also used to control the size and strength of the free Black population in Bermuda and ensure power remained in the hands of the white oligarchy. Governor Popple addressed the House in 1762, saying 'The number of Free Negroes residing here has been and will continue as they multiply a great nuisance to these Islands' (Outerbridge Packwood 1975: 78). Free blacks were required to leave the island within six months from being freed, and could not return to Bermuda lest they be seized and sold back into slavery (ibid.: 78). An Act in 1806 stated '(w)hereas the black population of these Islands, has of late years increased, and is increasing, in a manner very injurious to the welfare of this Community; and whereas it is thought expedient to adopt all such proper and practicable measures as may be calculated to diminish the relative proportion of the black to the white population...". (Robinson 1985: 13). Another act passed that same year, 'An Act to Regulate the Emancipation of Slaves and to disable Free Negroes and Persons of Colour from Being Seized of Real Estate' was 'not just to stop Blacks from possessing land, but to make it impossible to inherit land as well' (Outerbridge Packwood 1975: 120). By 1833, the year before slavery was abolished throughout

the British colonies, black Bermudians represented the majority of the island's 9000-strong population, approximately 5000 of whom were enslaved and free Blacks. If it hadn't been for centuries of enforced banishment, it's highly possible the racial demographic ratios would have been far more comparable to other Caribbean colonies.

To ensure continued power after the abolition of slavery, the white oligarchy put in place racist 'qualifications for voters, electors, jurors, candidates, and positions of trust, with the voting property qualification being doubled' (Winfield 2014: 6). Ayton (2013: 24-25) looks to the lack of violence against blacks by whites (akin to the American White South) to be indicative of benign oppression which only left black Bermudians with 'bitterness.' However, in addition to physical violence inflicted on slaves, the state enacted racial violence through legislation. Acts to encourage white and Portuguese immigration were enacted to control the black population now that banishment was illegal, with a £400 bounty offered for the first vessel to bring in Portuguese settlers in 1847 (Winfield 2014: 29). As Brown (2011: 11) points out, '(t)he collective weakness of blacks/workers meant the white ruling elite had almost a free hand in reorganizing society at emancipation to guarantee its continued hegemony.'

A century on, the burgeoning tourism industry brought in increased wealthy white immigration in the 1920s and 30s. In 1931 the Hotel Keepers Protection Act permitted owners to refuse accommodation to Jews and Blacks. Tourism was used to justify segregation, claimed to be an 'economic necessity' where 'American tourists, [the white oligarchical officials] warned, would stop coming if these policies were repealed.' (High 2009: 118). This economic justification for racist policies persisted throughout the 20th century, as David Critchley pointed out in his book *Shackles of*

the Past, where in the 1950s he was 'told by white Bermudians that Americans would not come to an integrated Bermuda' and that in the 1970s attempts to establish research on the self concept of Bermudians were scuppered by government ministers fearing potential tourist backlash (1989: 21).[2] By the early 20th century the Portuguese class in Bermuda, a third race introduced as a 'buffer' between whites and blacks (High 2009, Winfield 2014) was part of the growing working class alongside blacks. Separate schools were built and privileges awarded to Portuguese Bermudians to ensure a division between the Portuguese and Black communities in what Winfield (2014: 10) describes as a 'divide and conquer' tactic. Again, through policy and law, the white oligarchy was able to secure power. Today, although Portuguese Bermudians a**r**e frequently culturally seen as 'white**'** and to some extent enjoy the privilege of associated whiteness**,** on average Bermudians with Portuguese heritage have lower incomes than Anglo-white Bermudians. Bermudians with Portuguese heritage accounted for 10% of the population in 2010, and generally represent the majority of the Roman Catholic and certain Seventh Day Adventist congregations (Bermuda Department of Statistics 2010: 15).

The high cost of living on the island ensured that the poor stayed poor, particularly the black working class. US vice consul to Bermuda Hector Adam noted in the 40s that 'the attitude of the ruling [white] class…may be summed up in such expressions as 'We may have to give the negro equal political rights, but we keep him so poor it makes no difference'. Much of this was achieved through taxation

[2] It is striking when reading Critchley's book just how little has changed in Bermudian discourse. Much of the debates and discussions he writes of bear a remarkable similarity to those that take place today, despite differing contexts. There were several moments while reading (for example, on the uproar over an airport redevelopment) when I was stunned by the abiding nature of Bermudian conversation - were I not to know I was reading a book written in the 80s about the 1950s, 60s and 70s I would have thought it was set in the present day.

policy, which 'kept all but [the white oligarchy] in strict economic subjection while they themselves accumulated fortunes subject to no taxes whatsoever' (High 2009: 119). Numerous strikes throughout the Caribbean in the 1930s pressured the British Colonial Office to pursue reform in its colonies. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 awarded extra funding for social and economic development to colonies on the condition that the colonies enact social and labour reforms. Bermuda refused to do so, and was thus ineligible for funding (High 2009).

The 1930s strikes in the Caribbean were only a hint of what was to come – a wave of post-war black consciousness movements across the colonies and territories. After a failed first attempt, the Bermuda Workers' Association was formed in 1944. Led by Trinidadian born Dr. E.F. Gordon, a well-known campaigner against racial injustice in Bermuda, union membership increased despite the union itself being technically illegal. Dr. Gordon, later known as Mazumbo, was a force to be reckoned with. He actively resisted disrespect from parliamentary officials who refused to address him by his appropriate title (which eventually led to his name change - no need for the white elite to worry themselves with cumbersome prefixes) and vocally criticised the tendency of the press to highlight black crimes over black achievements, all 'tactics calculated to reduce black leadership and assert white superiority' (Philip 1987: 198). The Workers' Association gave collective voice to Black Bermudians to assert their membership in Bermudian society. In 1946, a petition was presented by the Bermuda Workers' Association to the Secretary of State for the Colonies requesting a Commission to 'investigate and report on the social, economic and political conditions of Bermuda, with recommendations for the alleviation of the inequities under which the black population were suffering' (Pitt et al. 1978: 1). The Secretary of State did request that the Bermuda Colonial Parliament

consider the petition, but as Zuill (1973: 189) wrote, '(i)t was a tremendous effort; but at the time it fell flat. The Legislature considered the petition and issued a report on it and that was about all.' Membership of the group was mostly black, representing the labour force segregation in Bermuda that persists to this day. The state passed the Trade Union and Trade Union Disputes Act in 1946, which both legalised the existence of unions but 'prohibited the use of union funds for any political purpose and even outlawed a union published newspaper' (Brown 2011: 37). Brown (ibid.: 40) attributes the BWA's ultimate ineffectiveness due to its inherent limitations: 'it failed to actively mobilize workers around the issues and because of its deference to the parliamentary process.' By the 1950s, the BWA was struggling. However, several black MPs were elected to the House of Assembly (in 1950, 7 out of 36 members were black, in 1953 this number rose to 9) despite the fact that there were no political parties and voting was restricted to homeowners of more than £60 worth of real estate (Harries Hunter 1993: 26). A House of Assembly appointed Select Committee, tasked with investigating race relations on the island in 1953, reported that '[y]our Committee believe that racial tension has increased in these islands within the last ten years' and recommending that there be no racial ban in Government employment, which did trigger some limited changes - 'black nurses were engaged in the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital; black players were permitted to use the Government-run tennis courts and the Jockey Club was forced to modify its policies of segregation.' (Pitt et al. 1978:1).

The Theatre Boycott of 1959 marked a turning point in Bermuda's racial history, where protesters peacefully demanded an end to segregation in the island's movie theatres led by an anonymous organisation named The Progressive Group.

The theatres shut down while the boycott organisers refused to negotiate with the theatre owners. Eva Hodgson writes of the grassroots movement:

'It was a moment of triumph in the history of the Negro not because someone had masterminded the plan, but because the people themselves responded and made their presence felt. And the fact that the planners were lost in the people was part of the triumph.

The President of the Bermuda General Theatres lashed out in fury in the House of Assembly that he would not be "coerced by hoodlums." "The boycott was not the traditional way to solve problems in Bermuda," he declared. He completely overlooked that Negro problems had not been solved.'

(1988: 150-1)

The change effected was not gradual but immediate, and the theatres reopened to all, regardless of race. This began a wave of desegregation across the island as the ruling elite recognised that with the increasing organisation of the black working class, concessions had to be made. Winfield (2014: 14) notes, however, that 'the last vestiges of segregation codified in law were not eliminated till 1971' when primary schools were finally desegregated.

By June 1961, after much resistance, the House of Assembly Select Committee recommended universal adult suffrage. The 1963 Parliamentary Election Act made provisions for universal but not equal suffrage - raising the voting age from 21 to 25 (presumably to silence the radicalising black youth), granting British citizens who had lived on the island for at least three years the right to vote (a piece of legislation that remained in place until 1979) and introducing a property vote (which gave whites an advantage) (Brown 2011, Winfield 2014). Bermuda's first political

party, the Progressive Labour Party, was formed in 1963. Representing working class interests, it became the opposition party to the conservative United Bermuda Party (formed 1964), the centrist party seen as representative of the ruling elite. Six PLP candidates were elected to the House of Assembly in the 1963 General Election, despite the party being leaderless at the time and only three months old. In 1967, the Constitution was approved which paved the way for the 1968 general election, the first held under universal adult suffrage. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the UBP won. The Bermudian Parliament that had been established in 1620 and controlled through the centuries by the descendants of the original colonists had technically been deconstructed, yet the UBP was seen as a continuation of this tradition. Although the PLP leadership tried to distance themselves from being seen as a 'black party' (Hodgson 1988: 230), the two parties were and still are seen as representative of the struggle between the white ruling class and the black minority in Bermuda.

The 1960s marked a period of civil unrest in Bermuda. The dockworkers, seen as the 'radical' union members (Hodgson 1988, Brown 2011) went on strike in 1959 resulting in violence between the workers and police. Despite fragmentation, the Bermuda Industrial Union rose from strength to strength in the 1960s. Class tensions came to a head in 1965, which resulted in the violent 1965 Bermuda Electric Light Company Ltd (BELCO) strike (Brown 2011: 85). Police intervention (at the time the police force was mostly made up of British expat officers) triggered a riot. The strike and riots that ensued marked an historic moment of crisis in Bermuda, only resolved after input from the Colonial Office and National Workers Union of Jamaica.

The strikes were followed by intensified civil unrest, with particular antipathy developing between the police force and Black Bermudians (Ayton 2013). At the time,

Black Power and Black Muslim movements were strengthening in the US and Bermuda was no exception to this trend of increasing black militancy (with the Black Beret Cadre, a Black Panther-esque organisation formed in 1970). The growing tension following Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968 sparked a riot after the mistreatment of a young black man by a white police officer at the Annual Floral Pageant Day (Wooding 1969, Brown 2011, Ayton 2013). This triggered widespread riots throughout the island. The Bermuda Civil Disorders 1968 Report of Commission & Statement by the Government of Bermuda, also known as the Wooding Report, found that:

'(T)he roots of the civil disorders lie deep in the history of Bermuda's society. The society was typically white plantation in character and the history, in the years before the forties, was of accepted white supremacy with all the concomitant evils of segregation. Since the forties, there has been a constant struggle for change and the struggle is not yet done.'

(Wooding 1969: 63)

The Wooding Report also made a statement which bears particular relevance to this thesis:

'*(T)he fact as we find it is that practically everything is viewed in profile in Bermuda because it is seen by everyone in each racial group from a subjective racial angle…Therein lies the danger yet to be overcome.'*

(ibid.: 86-7)

Unrest resulting in violence and arson resurged again in 1970 prior to Prince Charles' visit to the island. The Black Beret Cadre was gaining more radical support. The island was seized by racial tension, climaxing in the murder of Police Chief

George Duckett in 1972 and assassination Governor Richard Sharples and his aide-de-camp Captain Hugh Sayers a year later. These assassinations were a dramatic punctuation mark in Bermudian history, as murder was so rare on the island. Buck Burrows and Larry Tacklyn, two young black men associated with the Black Berets, were arrested and tried for the murders. Both Burrows and Tacklyn were found guilty on all counts in 1976. The two men were executed on the Casemates prison grounds in December 1977, triggering riots which resulted in three deaths. Historian Frank Manning characterised the chaotic events that defined the decade as 'fundamentally racial, dramatizing black rage against a white-dominated political economy and the persons who physically symbolize it' (Manning 1978: 13). Two reports to investigate racial tensions on the island were released around this time, the Clark Report and the Pitt Report. Clark et al. wrote that '(t)he most frequently discussed problem by all Bermudians, and particularly black Bermudians of all economic levels, is the problem of the need for a "more equitable distribution of the wealth" of Bermuda' (ibid.: 7). Both reports listed many accounts of discrimination, humiliation and corruption from businesses, banks and the criminal justice system perpetuating this inequality and made similar recommendations. The Pitt Report went further by engaging in constitutional discussion: as a response to what Lord Pitt saw as the absence of a cohesive national identity, the Report questioned 'whether those who are presently alienated from the social order would identify themselves more effectively with an independent Bermuda' (Pitt et al. 1978: 36).

The 1977 riots stemmed from deeply entrenched racial grievances which 'found no expression in the party of labour' or any organised movements, and thus 'took to the streets in an explosion of anger at the status quo' (Brown 2011: 142). Brown (ibid.: 143) points to this lack of organisation as a sign that the BIU and PLP

were losing touch with their supporters, further compounded by Bermuda's first general strike in 1981 where the BIU and PLP 'steered clear of the obvious political dimension to the struggle many workers wanted to see accentuated.' The strike emerged from the substantial increase in taxes tabled in the 1981/82 budget and a breakdown in wage negotiations between non-medical hospital staff and the Hospitals Board and industrial workers and the Government. On April 12th, hospital and government workers went on strike, followed by a sympathy strike from other BIU divisions. It was the first and remains the only general strike to have taken place on the island, though it takes its place as part of a historical of black Bermudian civil action. The PLP called for a no confidence vote in the UBP government. This was the beginning of the end for the UBP, which would flounder until its demise in 2011. The PLP would finally win the election in 1998, but would lose in 2012 after a surprise victory by the newly formed One Bermuda Alliance. Although a new party in name and membership, many Bermudians still see the OBA as the UBP in a new suit. The PLP did eventually regain power in a landslide vote in 2017.

Gender and Bermudian History

The Bermudian history of gender is inextricable from the history of race - not least because, in similar fashion to the banishment policies of the late 19th century, social policies regarding birth control were used to regulate the size of the Black Bermudian population. In the 1920s, the Bermuda Welfare Society was established to monitor black births - particularly illegitimate births. In 1935 the Select Committee of the House produced a 'Report of Unemployment,' 'a document that in many ways represents the pinnacle of Caribbean conservative eugenics' (Bourbonnais 2016: 38). The report recommended the dissemination of birth control and legalisation of

voluntary sterilisation, in themselves unproblematic policies, yet it 'also called for the compulsory sterilisation of "mental defectives", women who mothered two illegitimate children, and men who fathered one illegitimate child, as well as the castration of persons found guilty of rape, attempted rape, or "other sexual and/or unnatural offences"' (ibid.: 38). The recommendations of the report were widely condemned as extreme and decried by the Black community as racist, with many noting the disproportionate effects the proposed measures would have on the Black Bermudian population. Columnist 'Vigilant' in the *Recorder* wrote:

'*if one half of the energy spent in fulminating Birth-control plans for the Negro was diverted into channels calculated to afford equal chances of social and economic development of this same group there would be less need for talk of Birth-control.'*
(The Recorder 1936, in Bourbonnais 2016: 40)

Margaret Sanger was invited by the Bermuda Health Department in 1937 as a consultant in the establishment of a new birth control clinic, although the chief medical officer had already received contact from American eugenicists keen 'to collaborate on a program targeting "the Negro element in your territory"' (Bourbonnais 2016: 101). Sanger, although she had the support of prominent black activists and organisations and stressed that the goal was to protect child and maternal welfare, faced opposition from a community on alert after the disastrous 'Report of Unemployment.' As Bourbonnais (ibid.: 104) illustrates, whether her motivations were eugenicist or not, 'Sanger's visit was…shaped by the local politics of birth control on the island'. The colonial secretary wrote in 1940 of his admiration for anti-Semitic sterilisation programmes in Europe, but bemoaned his doubts 'whether many people in Bermuda would go as far as that with regard to the coloured population' though it 'had better come up for further discussion' (High 2009:

118). In 1957 the government launched a family planning programme eliciting a decade of declining birth rates, though it is argued that these programmes primarily targeted Black Bermudian families (Winfield 2014: 14).

After the First World War, Gladys Morrell of Somerset Village began a campaign for women's suffrage, and led the Bermuda Women's Suffrage Society (est. 1923). Morrell refused to pay her taxes each year that she was not allowed to vote, resulting in her property being seized and auctioned at the Somerset Police Station (it was invariably purchased by her fellow suffragettes and returned to her). Suffrage was granted to 'property owning' women in 1944. The property ownership clause excluded many black women, but in the 1944 bi-election Edna Williams was the first black woman to vote (Bermuda College Library 2009).

Bermuda's history cannot be told without addressing race relations and the legacy of oppression and exploitation of black Bermudians. This must also be understood as a *submerged* reality of inequality and oppression - one that emerges to the forefront at times of discursive emergency. Critical discussion of the nature of Bermudian society is characterised by peaks and troughs of discursive energy - triggered by political movements or events, then dying down until the next trigger point.

Bermudian history is a history defined by division and forgotten by many white Bermudians, ensuring those divisions persist to this day. This thesis cannot be written without addressing firstly the issue of race as a feature of identity but also how race relations have shaped Bermuda and discourse around violence in Bermuda. It is

impossible to examine modern identity constructions in Bermuda without examining the cultural boundaries and relationships that have come to define them.

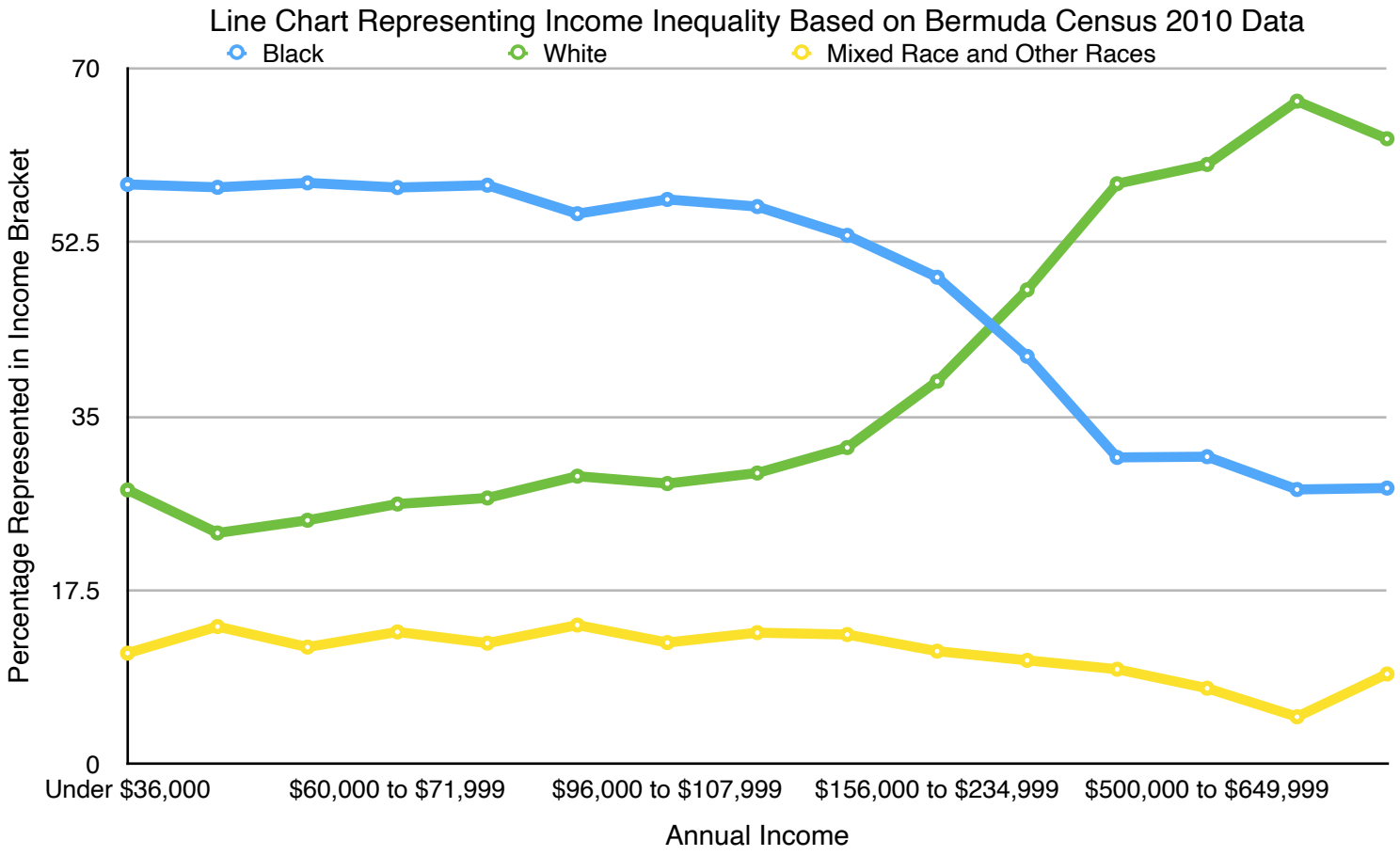
Bermuda Today

Today's Bermuda still sees old white Bermudian families and foreign white professionals in possession of the vast majority of the island's wealth and land, with limited opportunities for upward mobility for poor black Bermudians. Bermuda's status as an offshore financial centre has given it one of the highest GDPs in the world, with the vast majority of the GDP generated through international business, particularly the insurance and reinsurance industries. The civil service on the island is largely black, while the private sector is mostly white. The country is rich, and although there is no formal welfare system, there are very few instances of extreme poverty on the island. However, there is still distinct inequality when comparing black and white household earnings, as displayed by Figure 10. Figure 10 illustrates the percentage by race for increasing income categories, calculated from 'Bermudian Households by Annual Household Income for Members 16 Years and Older by Race and Sex of Household Reference Person', Chart 12.2 of the 2010 Bermuda Census (Bermuda Department of Statistics 2010: 167). These racial inequalities are stark, but it should be noted that there is a sizeable minority of black Bermudians who are extremely wealthy alongside very poor white Bermudians. This being said, class inequality and racial inequality are closely intertwined.

With no university on the island, higher education is only available to those who can afford to leave. In 2014, the government cut allocated funds for scholarships from $760,000pa to $40,000pa and Bermuda College's budget by $1.3million (Zuill

2014, McDonald 2014). Modern Bermuda is still a territory of the United Kingdom, although Bermudians are divided on the issue of independence, which is mostly opposed by the affluent, white population. Bermuda's first referendum on independence was held in 1995, led by Premier John Swan. He honoured his promise to step down after 75% of Bermudians voted no to independence (although the PLP encouraged members to abstain from voting, and the UBP itself was so split on the idea that the government did not take a formal stance on the issue). Today, the PLP is seen as a 'pro-independence' party while the OBA is staunchly anti-independence.

Figure 10: Income Inequality in Bermuda



Bermuda's population is declining - the 2010 census put Bermuda's population at 64,129, the Department of Statistics projects that this will decrease to 61,566 by

2020 due to increased emigration (Bermuda Department of Statistics 2014: 1; 9). The census reported the population was made up of 21% non-Bermudians (Bermuda Department of Statistics 2010: 3), and that Bermuda's demographics were 54% black, 31% white (ibid.: appendix page i) with the remainder being Asian (mostly Filipino immigrants), Azorean Portuguese and other.

When proceeding with this work, I am confronted with the question as to whether Bermuda can be considered a Caribbean society. Geographically, the answer has to be a firm 'no.' Bermuda is situated in the North Atlantic, 909.4 miles from the Bahamas, the most northerly of the islands in the Caribbean Sea. Many Bermudians would point to the geographical distance as evidence that Bermuda is not Caribbean. Likewise, politically Bermuda is not a part of the Caribbean – it is not a full member of CARICOM (the Caribbean Community), established to foment economic, foreign policy and functional cooperation and coordination amongst member states (CARICOM Treaty, 1973: Article 4). Nor is it a member of SIDS (Small Island Developing States) – although a global forum, Bermuda is not part of the Caribbean group nor any other regional group of small island states. It could be argued that this exclusion from SIDS is not only geographic but also because Bermuda is not a developing country like many Caribbean states. In 2013 the World Bank listed Bermuda as having the fifth highest GDP per capita in the world, after Luxembourg, Norway, Qatar and Macao (World Bank 2015). At 85,748.1 USD per capita, this is significantly higher than the richest Caribbean state listed, Puerto Rico (28,681.7 USD per capita; World Bank 2015). It must be noted however, that the World Bank does not list the Cayman Islands' GDP per capita - Bermuda's closest Caribbean competitor. According to UNData, this was 59,448 USD in 2013, still well below UNData calculations which put Bermuda's 2013 GDP per capita at 85,302

USD (UNData 2015). Although these calculations do not factor in inequality, it goes without saying that daily realities for the average Bermudian are not comparable to the lived experiences of many Caribbean nationals.

To agree that Bermuda is not geographically in the Caribbean is not to say that it cannot be associated with or compared to the Caribbean. Even within the Caribbean, the idea of a cohesive 'Caribbean identity' is nigh impossible. The Caribbean Islands themselves are diverse in terms of development, language, race and culture – is it possible to even form a collective Caribbean identity amongst the islands situated in the Caribbean Sea? Bermuda itself shares many similarities with Caribbean Islands, particularly in terms of history (settlement, colonisation) and culture (for example, the Bermudian dish of codfish and potatoes is very similar to the Jamaican ackee and saltfish). The Bermudian accent has been compared to that of the Turks and Caicos islands, although the accents across the Caribbean are very diverse themselves.

What are the repercussions of ignoring these shared cultural and historical roots? Disregarding the historical and cultural ties that bind Bermuda to the Caribbean, such as the experiences of being small island colonies and migration brought on by the slave and salt trades, supports a worrying trend of cultural imperialism. Bermuda's history is only taught in the most limited sense in curricula across schools, in favour of white European history. Many Bermudians would say they identify more with British and American culture over Caribbean culture, despite glaring similarities between Bermudian and Caribbean cultural signifiers. This white colonial narrative not only controls what is taught in schools, but what Bermudians, particularly those of Afro-Caribbean descent, identify with. Denying cultural heritage

and emphasising Bermuda's uniqueness whitewashes the influence colonisation has had in the past and on present Bermuda and gives little regard to the heritage and stories of many black Bermudians. This creates an historical narrative that erases the place of black Bermudians in the past – how the past is understood has great bearing on how the present is understood. Uncomfortable aspects of Bermudian history are conveniently swept under the rug until trigger events reveal them. Therefore, the conversation about whether Bermuda is Caribbean is political.

What are the reasons for Bermudians emphasising the uniqueness of Bermuda and downplaying cultural and historical connections to the Caribbean (whilst promoting 'Britishness' as a tourist attraction)? Is it simply geography? Is it prejudice towards Caribbean countries (particularly developing nations)? Is it patriotism? Or is it that Bermudian customs and culture are truly so distinct from those of the Caribbean that any historical connections that existed are no longer relevant?

Upon examination of Bermudian customs and their origins I am drawn to Winfield's analysis of the Bermudian rejection of Caribbean identity. Examining the history of immigration in Bermuda, Winfield looks at the worsening shift in relations between Black Bermudians and West Indians, attributing it to a 'Divide and Conquer' strategy by the white elite. A boom in West Indian emigration in 1894 and in the early 1900s for the Dockyard Extension Works Project brought out fear of radicalisation of the black Bermudian community amongst whites, leading them to encourage Black Bermudians to view themselves as superior - despite the fact that many Black Bermudians are descended from Africans brought to the West Indies (2014: 8). I

would argue, as Winfield does, that amongst both White and Black Bermudians this sense of superiority over the rest of the Caribbean remains to this day.

I will nonetheless use Caribbean literature in this and the following chapter, for, while acknowledging the many differences between Bermuda and the Caribbean (and many Bermudians' own desire to be seen as separate from the Caribbean), there are many shared experiences regarding identity and history that cannot be ignored.

Defining Bermudian Identity

Figure 11

home, a definition

adjective
adjective: home

1. your mouth has home-court advantage, sounds like a tempest brewing some days, a red sky some mornings, a mooring to wherever you currently are some nights. see: *code-switch,* see: *accent*
2. domestic affairs: muffler burns on right forearm and left calf; road-rash on left knee, right foot, left abdomen, under right eye; various scars from cedar branches, limestone scrape, coral piercing, feral cat bites.
3. crushed bay grape, dripping aloe, cedar berries in tea, loquats macerated in sugar cane syrup, squashed surinams on road side.
4. your mother's grave: where you're from, where you're going.

(*townsend 2018: 22)*

Cultural geography, crime talk and postcolonial criminology illuminate the challenge of defining a singular 'identity', for collectives are made themselves of disparate identities. When we consider the impact of displaced and colonised histories, the lines are blurred further. The Bermudian population is entirely 'of elsewhere'. With no

indigenous population, Bermudians are entirely displaced, much like the Caribbean islands and their relationship with the extinct *Présence Americaine* described by Hall (1994). This does not erase the concept of a 'Bermudian culture' or 'Bermudian identity' but it does dilute the confidence of Bermudian academics and indeed lay people in giving voice to what Bermudian culture and identity really are. The artist NOBODY also noticed this phenomenon within our collective conversations around Bermudian identity:

'Bermudians for lack of a better term are imbued with a mongrel complex. I call it a lack of cultural esteem. We try to gain inspiration from what we deem as superior and/or better. I went to a bar called Legends - all the pictures on the wall were of Jay Z, Frank Sinatra…no Bermudians. There were pictures 'of Bermuda', a map of the island, the beaches. But nothing that points to the people. And this extends to the things that we're not proud of as well. It's like these negative cultural ideals that we have, there's the accusation that they've come from somewhere else. It's because of them that we think like this. It's because of them we feel like this.'

Michel-Rolf Trouillot (1992: 19) described the Caribbean as 'the open frontier of cultural anthropology', not white enough to fit into Western sociological discipline, not 'native' enough to conform to anthropological paradigms (ibid.: 20). He describes Caribbean societies as 'inescapably heterogenous…the Caribbean has long been an area where some people live next to others who are remarkably distinct' (ibid.: 21). Bermuda too, has a multilingual and multiracial society whose history both directly influences the makeup of its society today and does not place it into simply sociological or anthropological categories. In this section I will discuss Bermudian identity using the categories of Homeland, Language, Religion, Culture and Customs and Race – categories listed by Ralph R. Premdas (1996) as components of Caribbean identity in a Bermudian context. I decided to use Premdas' categories, as

they offer a clear breakdown of facets of island identity and an excellent foundation for comparison of Bermudian and Caribbean experiences. In lands with histories of slavery and transient populations these categories neatly compartmentalise different aspects of island life.

The question of homeland and Caribbean identity is particularly pertinent in countries in which there was no indigenous population, like Bermuda, which is 'a very special case' as it still maintains its status as a territory of the United Kingdom (Nettleford 2003). Bermuda has no aboriginal community, is not quite colonial but not quite post-colonial, is not quite in the Caribbean but not quite North American. Additionally, with the high levels of professional immigration in Bermuda the concept of homeland as a claim to membership of Bermudian communities is becoming increasingly pertinent. Premdas (1996: 14) identifies homeland as the first factor in constructing Caribbean identity, as homeland 'had to be reinvented', native populations were in a sense created as '(t)he descendents of the postindigenous immigrants are now the legitimate heirs to the Caribbean. They assume the mantle of the new 'natives' of the region' (ibid.: 15). In Bermuda it is the identification of who is this native population, who has the greater claim to 'Bermudianness' that sets the foundation for modern social dynamics on the island.

In this sense, for some Bermudians, how far back your Bermudian family tree dates can in essence give you a free pass to Bermudianness, even without other cultural markers such as accent. For many, however, the inescapable heterogeneity of Bermuda's population, coupled with its position as a mid-Atlantic transit point for many, means that history, mother country and language matter little as identifying Bermudian qualities. Bermuda's status as a 'tax relaxed' country means that much of

Bermuda's immigrant population is of a high socioeconomic and professional status, while many Bermudians feel excluded from the economic sector that contributes to so much of Bermuda's wealth. Additionally, the colonial history of Bermuda means that race also becomes an issue of homeland. Who has greater claim to Bermudianness, the colonisers or the colonised?

It is clear that homeland and race are inextricably linked. Although no race in Bermuda technically holds greater claim to Bermuda as a homeland, the connection between whiteness and colonial power and blackness and 'island identity' means that many white Bermudians feel excluded from the Bermudian identity. There is an external association with blackness and island or Caribbean identities (Premdas 1996, Banton 2012, Premdas 2011). As pointed out by Lewis (2004:2), 'a whole school of Black nationalist writers, following Herkovits, have seen the region as part of the African diaspora, thus tending to overlook its European, Asian, and Arab ethnic components.' In this sense, a racial and cultural component is added to the factor of homeland.

The second factor identified by Premdas is language, who looks to linguistic diversity in the Caribbean as evidence of its history, class structure and social dynamic (1996: 23-24). He states that 'language assumes the stature of a fixture with deep historical roots', where Caribbean languages and dialects are evolutions from colonial languages (ibid.: 24). Caribbean accents in their modern forms are products of their diverse histories. There was never an aboriginal population in Bermuda, white colonisers imported slaves. Nonetheless, there was still the 'linguistic vacuum' described by Premdas (ibid.), filled by an accent connecting the different cultures forming part of the tapestry of Bermuda's population. In this way Bermudians created

a ‘language of their own’, an accent formed from a hybridisation of countless others. An accent that sounds distinctly different from any found in the Caribbean Sea, despite similar colonial histories in many cases.

The origins of the Bermudian accent are indeed rooted in slavery and colonialism, but for many, possessing this offspring accent is a source of pride. It is seen as a sign of being more legitimately Bermudian, or a badge affirming one’s Bermudian identity to foreigners. The poets Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott both look to language and dialect as a symbol of Caribbean identity. Walcott looks at the relationship between colonial and territorial speech, ‘develop(ing) a variety of overlapping tropes for the relationship between Creole speech and Standard English...to suggest the contributions and limitations of each in representing Caribbean life’ (Pollard 2004: 133). Brathwaite reasserts the power of regional dialects and accents, reclaiming them as symbols of a cultural identity in their own right, rather than as products of colonial mother-tongues (Hawley 1996, Pollard 2004). In *Nam(e)tracks* (Figure 12), Brathwaite phonetically transcribes Bajan slang and dialect opposed to and oppressed by ‘proper’ colonial English:

Figure 12

say right say white say wrong
say strong ogrady says not

song

say trip say trap say sit
ogrady says say shit

say pain say blame say cane
say name

ogrady says
not me not muh not mudda

drain
ogrady says say name

say run ogrady says say shame

say sun say flame say bramble

i come
ogrady says

to strangle you maim
in de grounn

(Brathwaite 2001: 90)

Brathwaite's poem illustrates the complex relationship between dialects in colonial and postcolonial settings, a tension felt acutely within Bermuda, where more black Bermudians have the Bermudian accent than white Bermudians. In some cases, there is an association between the Bermudian accent and a lack of education – where privately educated (generally white) Bermudians do not have the accent and those who have gone through the struggling public school system (generally black Bermudians) do. Possessing the accent is seen by some as a barrier to success, which may explain why many of the black middle class in Bermuda generally do not speak with a Bermudian accent.

The connection between the Bermudian accent with both Bermudian identity and black identity illustrates both the racial and social stratification divisions in Bermudian society. White Bermudians are in essence able to buy themselves out of their culture with education, black Bermudians are denied this opportunity, and those that are awarded it are accused of rejecting both their blackness and Bermudianness. Simultaneously, black Bermudians with the Bermudian accent have had to adapt their accent to accommodate for local perceptions that it is uneducated.

Religion is the third feature of Caribbean identity indicated by Premdas, who looks to religious diversity in the Caribbean as representative of the inherent diversity of Caribbean countries. Religion is a powerful force in Bermuda and many locals acknowledge it as heavily influential in local life and culture. Locals often claim that Bermuda has more churches per square mile than any country in the world (Jones 2009, Crooker 2009, Bermuda Yellow Pages 2014). Although predominantly Christian, a huge range of religions can be found in Bermuda. The 2010 Census reports that 16% of Bermudians identify as Anglican, 15% Roman Catholic, 9% African Methodist Episcopal, 7% Seventh Day Adventist, 9% Non-Denominational, 4% Pentecostal, 3% Methodist, 2% Presbyterian/Congregational, 2% Church of God, 1% Salvation Army, 1% Brethren, 1% Baptist, 9% Other, 19% None and 2% not stated (Bermuda Department of Statistics 2010: 15). The census reported that, with the exception of Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists and non-denominational groups, religious following had fallen across the board since the 2000 census, reporting that '(n)early one fifth…of the population claimed no religion in 2010 compared with a 14% share in 2000' (ibid.: 3).

Premdas describes the Caribbean as ‘an integrated cultural region’, where, despite ethnic, religious and historical diversity, ‘Caribbean peoples themselves often speak as though the region were a seamless expression of common customs, beliefs, and values’ (1996: 33). He looks to the expressions ‘Caribbean food’ and ‘Caribbean music’ as finding common ground amongst diversity – although there are many different types of national dishes and music found across the Caribbean, shared history and experience mean that they are classified under the same cultural umbrella. These shared experiences ‘are configured into a cultural mold that gives unique shape to the Caribbean mind. A prototypical Caribbean person may be projected as one who is a carrier of a common core of cultural consciousness that is constructed around these symbols and practices, constituting a distinctive and a separate way of life’ (ibid.: 34).

Caribbean music, food and festivals are often considered to be ‘other’ to Bermudians, who consider themselves separate and distinct. The Bermudian rejection of the Caribbean, could be seen as an attempt to escape ‘monolithic Caribbean cultural identity’ described by Premdas (ibid.). However, Bermudian traditional foods such as codfish and potatoes (similar to the Jamaican ackee and saltfish), the dancing and marching at Cup Match could easily be compared to Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago, the ‘gombey’ dancers incorporate music, costume (always masked) and styles from a mishmash of Bermuda’s various cultural influences, both from the Caribbean and Native American culture. The dance itself originated from slaves not being permitted to dance and thus having to wear masks to dance in secret.

Many Bermudian citizens have little to no knowledge of how and where many cultural emblems come from. Like NOBODY, I have noticed often this erosion of cultural awareness is accompanied by a fetishization of external cultures, particularly American culture. Bermudians both exhibit intense national pride and intense national disparagement. Bermudians are caught between a love for, even boasting about, their own country (particularly when based outside of it) and a simultaneous adulation of the cultures of larger, more powerful and influential countries. A similar experience is recounted in Naipaul's investigation of the Trinidadian obsession with external cultures, refusing to buy local produce and instead proclaim English and American products as superior. He claims that the Trinidadians

'can never completely identify themselves with what they read in magazines or see in films. Then frustration can only deepen for their minds are closed to everything else. Reality is always separate from the ideal; but in Trinidad this fantasy is a form of masochism and is infinitely more cheating than the fantasy which makes the poor delight in films about rich or makes the English singer use an American accent.'

(2011: 61)

A similar pattern of adulation can be seen with Bermuda and the Caribbean. Although Bermudians take pride in distinguishing themselves from Caribbean countries, there is an element of idealization of Caribbean cultures. Take, for example, the immense popularity of Bob Marley, whose face and music can be found all over Bermuda, most recently in the form of a mural of his face next to local musician Lance Hayward (Lagan 2014, Arandjelovic 2014). Reggae and Soca music are embraced as Bermudian and play a huge part in celebrations such as Cupmatch, despite their foreign origins. Bermudians pick and choose which elements of Caribbean culture they are willing to connect to – notably the elements that are seen as interesting or special by other countries. I would propose that the appropriation of

certain forms of Caribbean cultural expression is the employment of universally recognized signifiers of island life. People in New York don't know about gombeys, but they know about Bob Marley, and so Bermudians emulate familiar aspects of the Caribbean for outsiders. This fetishization of the external could be interpreted as further erosion of true, distinctly different Bermudian culture.

That being said, influence and borrowing from other cultures such as America and the Caribbean need not be interpreted as a loss of Bermudian agency and identity but rather a methodology for discovering it and reinforcing it. Historically, many moments of discursive eruption have been galvanised by American and Caribbean civil rights and labour movements happening to our west. Black civil rights movement and black power movements in America started an earthquake of empowerment felt in Bermuda in a way that was completely unprecedented. This influence is ongoing, as will be discussed later in this thesis regarding the influence of the #BlackLivesMatter movement on Bermudian discourse around race and society. Bermuda has been shaped by the heterogenous cultures that have built it, and American and Caribbean influence on Bermudian culture, discourse and political movements need not be read as an erasure of Bermudian identity but a part of it.

Race unmistakably shapes Bermudian society and politics, despite the pervasive unwillingness of many[3] Bermudians to engage in critical race discourse. Each aspect of Bermudian society discussed thus far has involved race in some way. Premdas (1996: 38) discussed the global perception of Creole or Afro-Caribbeans as a dominant Caribbean identity, commenting that '(i)t was in decolonization that nonwhites became visible and dignified within a socio-racial category and attained

[3] (particularly white)

status as full citizens.' He comments that '(i)n the triadic structure on which Caribbean society has been established—imperialism/colonialism, plantations, and slavery—the African is one of the constitutive ingredients in the making of the post-indigenous Caribbean' (ibid.), but that also it is difficult to look at race and Caribbean identity because of both historical and present immigration contributing to its ever-evolving heterogeneity. Premdas looks instead to creolization (ibid.: 41) – pointing out that 'the racial types have become sociocultural amalgams which are the real repositories of identity', giving the example of white inhabitants of the Caribbean having a Creole identity, rather than a European identity. An example of this can be found in the poetry of Derek Walcott, particularly *Prelude* and *A Far Cry from Africa.* Breslin (2001: 59) points to how Prelude mimics T.S Eliot's *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,* in that the speaker 'fears being defined by another's gaze.' In *A Far Cry from Africa* and the *Schooner Flight,* Walcott confronts tensions between colonial, Caribbean and African identities. In *A Far Cry from Africa* he asks '*How can I turn from Africa and live?'* (Walcott 2007) – questioning whether he can both love aspects of culture influenced by colonialism (such as the English language) without betraying his African roots. In *The Schooner Flight* (Figure 13) he addresses the identity crisis faced by Caribbean inhabitants – a collection of homogenous peoples who do not belong to their ancestral countries, but yet do not have a collective identity of their own. He writes:

Figure 13

I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
I had a sound colonial education,
I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation,

(Walcott 1990)

This can be seen to a great extent in Bermuda, and it must be noted that as Bermuda is not a postcolonial society, many colonial structures of control which are now less prevalent in postcolonial Caribbean countries are still highly relevant in Bermuda. The Governor, representative of the Queen, has limited political power yet lives on a grand estate on the North Shore, adjacent to many very poor areas. The diversity of accents in Bermuda follows lines of race and class. Race, class and privilege are huge issues in Bermudian society, yet there is still a taboo around publicly addressing these topics. Tensions in society can evolve from something as simple as a name. There are a number of 'old white' families in Bermuda known as the 'Forty Thieves' – families descending from the original white settlers who essentially controlled Bermudian business, politics, and with that, segregation. Many Black Bermudians are descendants from slaves. When freed, they would either take the whole or part of their owner's name. Therefore Black Bermudian families with the names Ming and Ingham could see a white person named Trimingham and know that at some point in history, their ancestors were owned by Triminghams. Similarly, a Black Outerbridge would know that their family was once owned by the White Outerbridges. Names in Bermuda stand as present day reminders of past injustices.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined key moments in Bermuda's history that shape the ways in which Bermudians relate to each other today and in turn shape conceptions of what it means to be Bermudian. An understanding of Bermudian history and the conflicted nature of Bermudian identity is necessary in order to assess whether crime talk has the power to change what has been constant for centuries. Race underlines all

aspects of Bermudian history, and indeed, present day Bermuda. Knowledge of Bermudian history is not universal and, where there is knowledge, there is often debate regarding the legacies of our past. The following chapters will reveal how gaps in knowledge and enduring disparities in lived experience constrict the potential for crime talk to be socially transformative.

Chapter Five

Conceptions of Community in Crime Talk

When ‘community’ is utilised in Bermudian discourse, it is inextricably tied to the past. A common question upon first meeting another Bermudian is ‘who’s your people?’ or ‘what’s your title?’. What initially appears as a request for a surname is really an attempt to place around three or four generations of a family tree. Names have historical significance on the island. Family names are associated with a homestead parish. Additionally, names can reveal the length of a family’s history on an island and connections between families through slavery. More often than not, when Bermudian families of different races share a surname this points to a history where the white family owned the black family as slaves, and the black family took on the white surname upon being freed. This is a conversational device that black Bermudians can utilise to place white Bermudians - not only as individuals but in relation to black communities. This carries on into crime talk, which calls to both present and past conceptions of community. Crime is perceived as a threat and a moral decline and, as a result, community has thematic persistence in conversations about what crime has done to a place.

‘Community’ means different things to different people. To settle on a universal definition of community would hinder rather than help analysis. Instead, I must decipher what discussants mean when they use the term ‘community’ within crime talk. Community in these conversations can refer to groups as broad as the entire population of the island or as localised as people who live on a particular street.

Although many of the example conversations here take place in online communities, the focus remains on the outside world.

This chapter has arranged the presence of community in crime talk into five 'sub-themes'. The first sub-theme is grief for a lost past: the assertion that Bermuda has changed and that gang violence is symptomatic of this change from the safe and peaceful 'Old Bermuda' to the uncertain and violent 'New Bermuda.' The second theme is geographies of violence - where neighbourhood membership and knowledge of community boundaries become central to whether a discussant can participate in conversations about gang violence and indeed the degree to whether a discussant can claim to be a 'true Bermudian'. Crime talk frequently involves lay theories around the causes of crime, and within this discussion of neighbourhood and gangs is the popular lay theory that 'mega schools' have fuelled the violence on the island. The third theme centres around how religion and Christianity are invoked in conversations about gang violence and in community membership. The fourth recurring theme is the need for community cohesion, a sense that Bermudian communities have become fractious and must unite against gang violence. The final theme is the assertion that the source of the violence lies beyond Bermuda's borders, whether this be accusing the gang members or their families of having foreign citizenship or claiming that the gang violence is an emulation of overseas cultures.

These trends illuminate that when Bermudians talk about changes in violence, community and identity, they reveal instead the *absence* of change in Bermudian social relations and structure - a repetition of the same divisions and discourse around community and identity over the last century of Bermudian history. As a result, when looking at Bermudian crime talk through the frame of community, it is clear that

crime talk does not disrupt Bermudian conceptions of identity but instead reinforces them.

Mourning Old Bermuda

News travels fast in Bermuda. Moments after the murder of Idris, Bernews posted on Facebook that a shooting had taken place in Southampton. People flocked to the comment threads.

> ***Adrienne J. Conyers*** *Not again…enough is enough! What is Bermuda coming to??*
>
> (F, Bermudian, white, C)

> ***Kenya Gordon*** *No sympathy from me ! karma is a B*TCH! If ur surprised, more fool you. When you have killed soooo many ppl he must have known his day was coming!!!! Now his victims can truly RIP*
>
> (F, Bermudian, black, B)

> ***Tanaya Darrell*** *No. This news should have been no surprise to anybody. When I was messaged (Did I hear about Idris) I automatically knew (He's Dead).*
>
> (F, Bermudian, black, B)

On the article itself, anonymous commenters expressed their disbelief at the news of yet another shooting and bemoaned the growing desensitisation of the Bermudian public to the murders.

> ***Not again*** *says:*
> *When will all this stop. I heard like 6 shots fired and knew it wasn't the*

regiment. Then you heard bikes speeding across the house. I hope no one got hurt…but hearing all these sirens I don't know what to think.

***Not surprised** says:*
Don't even blink at these stories anymore. Depressing on many levels.

Bermudian conversations about crime frequently express shock and surprise that such violence could take place on the island, along with an assertion that Bermuda has changed - the community networks that protected Old Bermuda have disintegrated, allowing an uncertain, unsafe and disconnected New Bermuda to take root. Although crime is not the only topic of conversation that can communicate discomfort with changing community landscapes, it is arguably one that targets this anxiety most sharply. Crime changes relationships with space and with others and often triggers speakers to search for explanations for this shift. The explanation for rising violence often takes the form of decrying the changing nature of communities and disintegrating community relationships. Unlike one of the findings of Girling et al. in Macclesfield (2000: 53), where blame for local crime was frequently pinpointed to rogue local youth or even known individuals, the discussion here is more frequently intangible, speaking to a shift in the ways in which Bermudians relate to one another and to place on the island.

Sabrina, a black Bermudian drug abuse prevention and gang diversion programme coordinator, stressed the changing nature of relationships between community institutions, leaders and their youth. Her analysis suggests a disintegration of positive community identity which was being usurped by gangs as a place-based identity.

'Community disorganisation is the highest operating risk factor. Young people don't feel connected to the community. They don't feel the community allows them a voice for pro-social activity. Quite different from when I came up, when there was substantial community pride. You knew then if you did something wrong in the community you could get sanctioned by the community…We're in an era of rebranding what community means, what neighbourhood means for young people really…Right now the young people are finding connection to the community through the identity of the gangs.'

A persistent thread through community based conversations about gang violence is the idea that we are currently experiencing a 'New Bermuda' that is more dangerous and disconnected than the 'Old Bermuda'. Many commentators described an erosion of community relationships in recent years. Roman, a young black Bermudian cab driver, told me emphatically:

'Bermuda's not what it used to be. Because no family reunions and none of that stuff no more. People don't really know their family like once upon a time, when everyone'd know their whole family. Things happen, people have to be reminded like - hey, that's your family. 'Oh hell, I never knew that' and you know. Things kinda die out.'

The absence of violence is revealed through crime talk to be a key feature of 'Bermudianness', and something that has historically set Bermuda apart from other island nations. This harkens back to the political push by the white oligarchy at the turn of the 20th century to encourage Bermudians to feel superior to people from the Caribbean, to diminish the potential radicalisation of Bermudian workers by their Caribbean counterparts. Violence forces commentators to reconsider their conception of Bermuda - both in how it compares to other countries and with the

Bermuda of the past. Recalling the violence in the late 2000s, when 'it was at full throttle', black Bermudian educator and activist Solomon spoke of how:

'(P)eople were at a loss…it was so brand new for Bermuda. For a lot of folks we couldn't even believe that Bermuda got to this place. I remember when I first went off to school, in the late 90s, it almost became a kind of bragging point if you will, like, 'yeah in Bermuda we don't have gangs, nobody shoots anybody, you can walk anyplace you want and feel free' but I can't go there and say that now.'

Old Bermuda was defined by safety and security, friendliness and familiarity between community members and outsiders - values claimed to be lost or lacking in the New Bermuda. Conversations like the March 2011 Facebook discussion below are exemplary of the trend of how white commentators are more likely to mourn gang violence and the loss of Old Bermuda through the frame of potential effects on the tourism industry and the economy, whereas black commentators were more likely to mourn Old Bermuda through the frame of the erosion of community values and decline of solid community relationships.

> ***Jameka Wade*** *My lil country, gone to the dogs* 😞 *I want the Bermuda of my childhood back…pure ignorance is killin our sons and fathers! I miss the Bermuda I grew up in…you could leave your windows wide open, your door unlocked, your bike unlocked, your car unlocked, everything open and you wouldn't have to worry. Gangsta wannabes are ruining this island for everyone. #BringBacktheOldBermuda*
>
> (F, Bermudian, black, C)

> ***James Jones*** *this is getting ridiculous. bermuda is too small to have so many shootings. if something doesn't change soon the tourists will stop coming...and that would be bad for everyone. condolences to the family*
>
> (M, Bermudian, white, A)

Karyn Hollis *Looking at the comments it appears we all miss the Bermuda we grew up in and loved so dearly. We are too small a community for this. You're right James, tourists will stop coming - they already have! And the government expects people to invest in and visit Bermuda in these troubled times? We need a change.*

(F, Bermudian, white, D)

Angel Somner *As someone who grew up in Bermuda during the 70s, 80s and 90s I can remember what it was like to leave your house with the doors unlocked and not have to worry about burglars and thieves. Back in those days locals invited tourists home for dinner, made them feel like part of the family not just a money maker. Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean have a well funded Tourism industry so they can project themselves to the outside world as they'd like…perhaps we should return to the times when we were known as a friendly people. I hope there are still people of think of tourists as I do, as an extended part of my own family…*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

There are a number of potential reasons for this racial disparity. One is the cultural differences between white and black Bermudian communities. Another theory is that, as white Bermudians are unlikely to reside in the neighbourhoods affected by gang violence and unlikely to be personally threatened by the violence, they are more likely to focus on the economic rather than the emotional impact. This indifference and separation from the realities of gang violence creates interracial conflict within discussions of violence. This is nothing new - Bermuda's long history of segregation has created an experiential disparity between white and black Bermudians, and tourism had been used to justify segregation in the 20s and 30s (High 2009).

Alongside declarations of disbelief, there is evident disagreement over who has the right to speak out on crime in Bermuda, and on Bermudian issues more generally. Take, for example, this exchange on Facebook from September 2010:

> ***Carys Botelho*** *I don't recognise the island I grew up on anymore…what is wrong with people?!!*
>
> (F, Bermudian, white, C)

> ***Craig Johnson*** *Come visit Bermuda…beautiful pink beaches, turquoise blue waters…and BLOOD ALL OVER THE STREETS! The gangsta's paradise! Typical ignorant Bermuda*
>
> (M, Canadian, white, C)

> ***Moneeka Dill*** *all I have to say to you Craig is if ya not bermudian or if you don't live here, go ya ass back to your country cuz it sounds like you've had too many bad experiences in Bermuda*
>
> (F, Bermudian, black, B)

> ***Cameron Michaels*** *You are not 'native' to Bermuda. Nobody is. Your bloodline started in another country, so did everyone else's. You can't tell anyone to go back to their own country.*
>
> (M, Bermudian, white, B)

Conversations such as this one reveal the racialised divergence in perception of ownership of Bermudian identity and the right to discuss issues that affect Bermudians, particularly an issue such as gang violence that arguably exclusively affects black Bermudians.

Virtual communities make visible Bermudian affairs to potential visitors - and the potential implications of this are made real to Bermudians. Though debate may take place on who has the right to speak on Bermudian issues, the ubiquity of the virtual news cycle creates the opportunity for potential visitors to view and engage in discussion on crime in Bermuda. Awareness of this lays the foundation for concerns expressed about how the rise in violence could damage Bermuda's reputation. A September 2014 conversation on a shooting that had taken place near a popular reflects the concerns raised over violence and tourism, concerns that are predominantly voiced by white speakers:

> ***Harry Marshall*** *Do these assholes even realise how they're ruining the reputation of our beautiful island?? The little bastards are out of control!*
>
> (M, Bermudian, white, D)

> ***Alexandria Coello*** *Outside the biggest hotel on the island too, what better place*
>
> (F, Bermudian, white, A)

> ***Victoria Burrell*** *Well that's a whole bunch of tourists who won't come back* 😕
>
> (F, British, black, C)

> ***Paula Rogers*** *Clean up your act Bermuda!! The violence over the last few years have not helped the image of the wonderful place I lived in in the 90s*
>
> (F, British, white, C)

Reputation and identity are closely intertwined - identity is self defined while reputation is externally defined. Reputation can be influenced by expressions of

identity. Although Bermudian speakers reject violence as an expression of Bermudian identity, their fears of the effect of violence on reputation reveal the threat that violence poses to their conception of Bermuda as a beautiful and desirable place. That being said, there is a disconnect here between the 'Bermudian identity' and the 'Bermuda brand' used in the global tourism marketplace. Conflating the Bermuda brand with Bermudian identity is a point of contention in crime talk, particularly between black and white speakers - where the perception is that white speakers overwhelmingly prioritise the Bermuda brand (what the artist NOBODY terms the 'Pink Dollar') while remaining disconnected from what black speakers consider authentic Bermudian culture and identity. Many black interviewees and commentators were keen to stress to me that Bermuda was not just pink sand and turquoise water, while many white speakers characterised violence as a blot on Bermuda's beauty. White speakers generally connected identity with image and thus had more concerns over violence and its effect on reputation, whereas black speakers were more likely to connect Bermudian identity with culture and were less likely to voice concerns about and participate in conversations regarding violence and reputation.

Crime talk in relation to change in the community also centred around community desensitisation to news of violence. As news of shootings became more frequent, so too did proclamations that commentators were becoming increasingly accustomed to violence as commonplace. Desensitisation to violence is framed as harmful to the community as it is perceived as a solidification of unwelcome change along with an erosion of ability to end violent confrontations between gangs. The racialised asymmetry of fear of violence is additionally reflected through degrees of desensitisation. White Bermudians are unlikely to know and even less likely to be related to gang members. One commentator, 'Dawnita Burch' (F, Bermudian, black,

C) wrote in March 2011 how she couldn't 'be fully numb to' the violence, 'because it's probably your son, neighbour, relative or friend.'

Some commentators speculate that the culture of international business and wealth accumulation have poisoned Bermudian moral boundaries. 'Gary Hunt' (M, Bermudian, black, B) wrote in August 2010 that 'Bermuda chartered our own course of destruction when we became more interested in the accumulation of personal wealth at all costs, at the expense of family values. We have become too affluent for our own good.' Similarly Mark Frith (M, Bermudian, white, C) writes in December 2014 that 'we have fetishised wealth and power across our society. Even the 'poor' kids want it.'

Discussion of community change in Bermuda reveals long held perceptions of what has defined Bermuda - safety, fellowship and wealth. Concerns about the ways in which violence threatens the reputation of Bermuda reveal not only the racialised differences in responses to gang violence but also how gang violence threatens local and visitor perceptions of the island. Additionally, crime talk reveals a divide in white and black definitions of what it means to be Bermudian and debate around the right to speak on Bermudian issues. In mourning the loss of an 'Old Bermuda', speakers reveal their opinions about what Bermuda should be - opinions which diverge across lines of race and class. These divisions are not new to Bermuda, having been cemented over centuries of Bermudian history - the different worlds of white and black Bermudians, the fear of Bermuda's reputation being poisoned by outsider influence, and the conflation of the 'Bermuda brand' with Bermudian identity. On the surface, the 'New Bermuda' conversation is a conversation about how crime has changed Bermuda. Submerged within this talk of change, however, is all that remains

unchanged in the ways Bermudians relate to one another. Although crime talk can be *about* change, it is not changing Bermudian relationships or identities.

The Geography of Gang Violence

Neighbourhoods and the geography of violence are a key feature of crime talk - experiences and understanding of crime vary widely depending on where you come from and where you live. Neighbourhoods are the boundaries of a specific types of Bermudian community, and knowledge of these boundaries are seen as touchstones of being a 'True Bermudian.' There is a contrast in the ways in which neighbourhoods feature in crime talk - on the one hand, the small size of the island and the interconnectedness between residents is seen as preventative for the escalation of violence, on the other it is seen as a protective network that sustains violence through the silence of witnesses. Additionally, the size and physical boundedness of the island means that for many gang members, the way out of the 'gang life' is to leave Bermuda entirely.

Atara spoke of how her brother Idris' gang membership impacted not only her own freedom to move around the island but also her ownership over her own identity.

'Especially Somerset area, Woody's…I mean, especially when he was alive I was scared to go to those areas. We look so alike. I guess now that's he's gone I think people have…I wouldn't say forgotten, they'll never forget…but I think it's like, more okay now. I worked so hard to define myself as somebody different, I didn't want to just be his sister. I worked too hard for that.'

D, a community outreach worker and youth pastor who described his childhood home in Somerset as 'the neighbourhood crackhouse', grew up in close proximity to gang violence, with both friends and family 'caught up'. I asked whether D's work with the Gang Violence Reduction Team has affected how he moves throughout the island. D agreed that he moves cautiously outside of Somerset, but denied that this was connected to work. He described how he has risked association with gangs through his family connections and his 'coming from a community that was riddled with it'.

'I'm a west side boy. I grew up in Somerset my whole life. As much as I wasn't involved in nothing, I still had the caution. People were trying to roll on me because I stay Somerset. So out of that narrative, I pick and choose where I go and where I don't go. It's a safety thing because it's not my neighbourhood, and again, unfortunately, being guilty by association is a real thing. So me, personally, I wouldn't say work has made me cautious, it's just life, period. That's just what it's been like for me, period. Like from high school days. And that's when stuff was heavy like, people were beefing heavy and I've got to look over my shoulder cuz I don't know if you're gonna try to sneak me too. I had a few incidents, like…trying to use the bathroom and someone's come in, like, oh okay. This is what I'm about to do today. Fortunately, it didn't make it no further but it's just that. I'm been walking from school and it's just like yo, where you from. I've been at a job and had about seven people roll on the job and try to act crazy. Life has done that to me, I wouldn't say work.'

Knowledge of neighbourhoods and communities is not universally shared amongst Bermudians and island residents. Knowledge of space up to the most subtle distinctions between adjacent micro-communities awards greater ownership of Bermudian identity. Your knowledge defines you, and your ability to participate in conversations about space signifies your inclusion. The size of the island and the kinship of the community also holds relevance for how people understand each other

and how they understand violence. John, a white British police intelligence officer, shared his perspective as a foreign national:

'As an expat it's very different. Bermuda can be very welcoming. But also underneath the surface, you know in the day you are temporary, you know this is not your home. There's certain places I wouldn't go. Not because I would be afraid to go but just…I don't fit there. It doesn't mean I don't want to understand Bermudians and just keep in an expat clique. But I would ask this question - would it look normal if I walked into, on my own, Western Stars? Or if Captain's Lounge or Woody's? As you know, I live in the neighbourhood, but would I go there? On my own? Probably not. Would I feel intimidated? I wouldn't say that, it's just…why? There's other places I would go to. I would look out of place. You don't know people there. It's just one of those things. There's certain places that are frequented by people, communities, social networks which you're not part of.'

Maya, a Black British forensic psychologist, considering her experiences working with the Bermuda prison population as an expatriate worker, noted how community can shape how people on the island relate to one another.

'I guess because I'm not really from the community it's not a challenge for me. There's advantages and disadvantages and I think the advantages are really more for the offenders than they are for me - in as much as I don't have all the historical knowledge of them beyond what's on paper, whereas some of my colleagues know the victims of some of the offenders, know the offenders, know them from the community or maybe even went to school with them. I don't have that bias.'

Roman felt the severity of the violence on the island had been exaggerated, claiming as many do that the containment of confrontation is maintained by community connection.

'I mean, they might say a few words, curse 'em off or something but ain't no witnesses being shot. Ain't no witnesses being killed. It's not gonna happen. Bermuda's not that type of place. I'll tell you what, violence in Bermuda could only escalate so highly. And then families will step in. In Bermuda, everybody's connected. One way or another, you're related. So when it comes to a point where it's like 'hey, that's your cousin you're fighting against' you'll see things kinda tend to die out.'

The interconnectedness of the Bermudian population is both framed as a preventative and permissive force in gang violence. The police officers I interviewed all reflected on the challenges of policing in a small community. Imani, a black Bermudian police officer, recalled a personal experience working on the Gang Targeting Unit.

'We had this information that someone was selling drugs and when the information came up of who it was…I grew up with this boy. I watched him grow up, his sister was my best friend in high school, I was her son's godmother and we're going to do this warrant on her brother and I was just like…I need to remove myself from this.'

Conversations and comment threads online can get heated due to discussants' personal connections with the men in the news stories. Take for example this conversation from April 2011, where 'Warren James' (M, Bermudian, white, D) responded to news of a murder.

> ***Warren James*** *Send them to China! They'll just get off in court here. Take away the funding for lawyers for these loitering wall sitting losers. Taxpayers shouldn't pay for the freedom of dumb thugs!*

Duke Burt *YOU NEED TO SHUT THE FUCK UP!! this youth didn't hang on no walls he WORKED EVERY DAY WITH HIS FATHER! HE OWNED PART OF A BUSINESS! dats my pals u talking about MOTHERFUCKER!!!!!*

(M, Bermudian, black, D)

Constance, a black Bermudian prison education coordinator, was clear in her opinion that as long as community ties were prioritised over reporting crime, the violence would only worsen.

'We have these peaks and these lulls, it's quiet and it escalates again and it's not going away. It's not going to go away until we deal with what is fuelling it. It's simple. It should be easy because the community is small, but then the challenges are because 'everybody knows everybody' - people want to be careful about what they say and who they're talking about because you know you don't want to step on this person's toes…we have to be able to move past that.'

This presents an interesting perspective - when mourning the degradation of Bermudian communities, many commentators lament the deterioration of community ties and point to this disorganisation as a cause of the violence. However, when discussing challenges regarding crime control in Bermuda and the size of the island, many commentators point to community identity and connections as an originator and sustainer of violence.

The 'mega schools' are frequently causally attributed to the rise in gang violence. These are public secondary schools that accept pupils from all over the island regardless of parish, whereas the public primary school system is based in a home parish and accepts pupils from that parish. Cedarbridge Academy and the Berkeley Institute are most commonly referred to as the mega schools. Although the

Berkeley Institute existed long before Cedarbridge as the first racially integrated secondary school on island (est. 1897), in the late 1990s Cedarbridge was established and Berkeley restructured in an effort by the then UBP government to restructure public secondary education. This massively inflated the student population at Berkeley, and Cedarbridge was built to support a thousand students. The plan, which included the introduction of large middle schools by converting parish high schools across the island, was criticised at the time by persons on both sides of the political divide. Facebook commentator 'Rakai Lister' (M, Bermudian, black, B) wrote in February 2013 of his own experiences in the Bermuda public school system.

'I was a part of the mega school system and witnessed first hand how it destroyed the social fabric of my peers. People who once went to school together, played together and competed together regardless of which side of the island we came from began to fight against each other. We were pushed into a system that forced us to choose sides based on where we lived. Before you could live in town and attend school in the west if you chose to and you were not treated differently because of such. The mega school system changed that.'

Peter, a white British police officer who had held a significant leadership role with Bermuda Police, confirmed witnessing community sectarianism in his police work in schools.

'What we would see when we went into the schools was self segregation by very young people to different areas of the school based on the geographical area of where they lived. We'd see gang graffiti on books, on walls, etched into desks and the teachers were oblivious to it. We warned against what we called Version 2.0 Gangsters emerging, where all of the old gang leaders from 2009, 2010 are now dead or in prison or have emigrated to England, but nevertheless we are now seeing

a resurgence of interest by very young people in gang life and gang culture. We see on social media how they taunt each other, how they talk about their aspirations to kill people. We talk about their approach to what they call money and bitches. It's just… it's unbelievable. It's like a hydra, you cut the head off and another one grows.'

Davis, a Jamaican-Bermudian cab driver, felt that better integration among school age children from different parts of the island could prevent conflict later down the line. He felt that parish schools only served to fuel the perception of difference and conflict between island neighbourhoods.

'You see, it's all gotta do with schools. It's not integrated enough. You've gotta get al.l the island, all the parishes to be integrated. You've gotta get the people from Somerset to be able to go to the school in St. George's. A person from St George's should be able to go to school in Somerset. And then they could interact. You know, I come from Sandys, and I go to do sports in say a Central area, like in the city. The group has got to stick together, because we are from West and then it causes friction with the guys we don't know and won't trust. Say we're from West, we're sticking together. So now we're gonna go attack those guys from East. But if we already knew them, if we didn't care about East and West, would we do that? People aren't different. They become different. People definitely try to create a division.'

Geographically determined identities are attached to individuals. Neighbourhood and identity become inextricably intertwined. Where you live affects how others perceive you on the island, both historically and presently. The mega schools and the political support behind them are awarded responsibility for gang violence by crime talkers because they bring together young Bermudians from different neighbourhoods into a confined space, fostering tribalism. Roy, a community outreach worker and pastor with a leadership role in the PLP Government's Gang Violence Reduction Team, was dismissive of attributing causal significance to the mega schools - describing them only as the 'battlefield' for conflicts with a systemic

origin. In this framing, the mega-schools are an accelerant rather than a source of conflict. That being said, the ubiquity of connecting mega-schools with the origins of the violence in crime talk reflects the persistent significance of space and neighbourhood in the construction of Bermudian identities.

The segregated nature of Bermudian neighbourhoods and the identities attributed to those spaces lead many to identify racialised disparities in concern for and fear of gang confrontations. In July 2010, responding to news on Facebook of another shooting, 'Jamari Trott' noted 'it took 20 minutes for the police to arrive…but they're less than 2 minutes away. Ask yourself - would that have happened if someone heard gunshots in Fairylands? I think we all know the answer to that' (M, Bermudian, black, C).

Conversations about the relationship between race and space are frequent when discussing gang violence. Take for example this September 2012 conversation on environmental racism from a political discussion Facebook group. 'Jerome Durham' (M, Bermudian, black, D), growing frustrated with the discussion, asked the thread:

'Who here grew up in Middletown? A better question - who would trade where they live now for Middletown? Or Curving Avenue? Or St. Monica's Road? Who do you think SHOULD live in these areas? What makes them so different from Tuckers Town? From Fairylands? Why is St. Michael's Road so different from St. Monica's Road? What machine is producing this environment?'

'Loretta Scott' (F, Bermudian, black, E) replied, 'they can't hear you, Jerome. White privilege allows you to look away.'

Many conversations around the size of the community develop into discussion around the difficulties in leaving gangs. 'Even if they are trying to turn their lives around, their life still follows them,' The Gang Targeting Unit Officer Jacob told me, 'where they still can't go East or West or Town or whatever it is and the only hope they have is going overseas. Even if they genuinely want to get out of that game. It's just impossible. No matter how much they try.'

Gang members looking to turn their lives around are challenged by the hyper-visibility of the Bermudian community. In her work as a gang diversion coordinator, Sabrina faced many challenges securing employment for former gang members.

'I can't open up jobs nationally or programming nationally. I have to open up programming based on neighbourhood or small communities. Because the Somerset guys can't travel to town, town guys can't travel to Somerset, so the type of jobs, you know, if I look at a construction company, if a construction company that's hired guys from town go to the west, then the town guy's out of work. I also look at, you know we've had guys placed at hotels but as people frequent those hotels they get identified. There've been jobs that've come up for guys in the restaurant area but they are hesitant to take it because it's a public place and people can see.'

If gangland geography is considered insurmountable in specific cases, the remaining option is to travel overseas. This is not a simple endeavour however, as the airport is in the far eastern end of the island, with access requiring travel through gang territory. 'We don't like to do this, but part of our programming is what we call an airlift,' Angie told me. Angie is a white woman, with dual American and Bermudian citizenship - at the time she was a parole officer. 'I've driven guys to court, to the

airport, to parole meetings lying on the floor of my car. Because they can't risk being seen.'

There is a tension inherent in discussion of violence and neighbourhood. The violence is attributed to potent neighbourhood identities and the divisions they foster yet the lack of a solution is attributed to a dilution of neighbourhood identity and community connection. Interpersonal connections are framed as both a potential solution and a roadblock to tackling gang violence. The size of Bermuda makes it difficult for former gang members to move on with their lives - whether their movement is restricted for fear of rival gang members or employers can't see past their criminal histories. The very nature of being a physically bounded island adds another layer of complication, where the only way to truly leave a gang is to also leave Bermuda. The ways in which space is conceptualised in Bermudian crime talk reveals the specificity of experiencing crime on an island, particularly gang crime - where the only way out is to 'get off the rock.' The history of space in Bermuda, the ways in which space has been politically controlled and symbolised has fed into the modern potency of neighbourhood in Bermudian identity and discourse. Crime talk about place and space is inextricably tied up in the history of those places and spaces, and as a result much of the talk involves recounting that history rather than fundamentally changing the relationship with that space.

Religion and Violence

Religion has a strong cultural resonance in Bermuda, and this frequently filters into the public response to crime. The church, particularly the Christian church, has historically been an influential community institution and still wields significant power

over community life and policy making (for example, over the legalisation of same sex marriage as seen by the back and forth between the government and the courts from 2017 to present). When religion is incorporated into crime talk, it is often closely associated with community morality - loss of faith is attributed to the rise in violence, whilst reacquainting the community with religion is proposed as a solution. Take for example, the following Bernews comments on stories of Idris:

> ***thisday*** *says:*
> *One of the most evil guys I have ever met*
>
> ***Plz*** *says:*
> *You can claim that you and he are alike but I know one thing for sure this dark creature from hell is not like me!*
>
> [January 2014]

> ***GPS*** *says:*
> *HOORAY! HE NEEDS MORE TIME THOUGH!!! only thing left now is GOD FOR THIS EVIL SPIRIT!*
>
> ***Dee*** *says:*
> *Idris, I don't know you - but I pray that God will have mercy and forgiveness upon your soul. It is time to make a change and make a positive difference. Apparently you have a gift to lead. No matter how far wrong you go, turn back! May God be your guide!*
>
> [March 2011]

Church congregations in Bermuda can be as racially segregated as neighbourhoods, and differ in influence within white and black communities. 'In the black community, one of the strongest mediums of support is the black church', Elijah told me. Elijah is a Black Bermudian activist, and at the time was a journalist. He and

his brother Michael (the former MP and prosecutor) were very involved in their local church. Explaining why it was so significant for his community, he said:

'It's where people get social disciplines, social graces, it's where they learned how to treat each other, it's where they learned that there was something or someone greater than themselves. So even an atheist, who does not believe, what they cannot argue with is the discipline church brings in an ordered society.'

Religion is a common feature on political, anti-gang and news organisation Facebook groups from 2008 to 2021, with some anti-gang groups consisting entirely of people sharing news of violence and persons only replying 'Amen' multiple times over the comment thread. Facebook and social media are both places to come together in prayer and solidarity and to question and critique the dominance of religion in Bermudian culture and society. Prayer is often suggested as something the community can do in response to the violence, and in turn is criticised for being too passive a response. Take, for example, a conversation in August 2010 after news of a shooting:

> ***Cindy Simons*** *Trust Him and allow Him to light your path! The Creator of All Things, God who will judge all men, Jehovah Jirah, Jehovah Rophe, Elohim, Adonai, El, El Shaddai, Jehovah Nissi, Father, Shepherd, Kadosh, Branch, Our Example, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the one who is the same today, yesterday and forever....*
>
> ***Noah Steede*** *I can literally cut and paste this exact conversation the next time a shooting happens. Someone starts with a statement about God, someone quotes a bible verse, someone tries to discredit God, someone says some madness, someone says this isn't the Bermuda I grew up in, there's an argument about solutions, some disagree, some agree, nothing happens nothing happens nothing happens*

another shooting
rewind, replay

(M, Bermudian, black, A)

In addition to being a member of the Gang Violence Reduction Team, D is a youth pastor. He believed that religion and faith can help steer young people away from joining a gang, crediting his own abstention to the strength of God.

'I do strongly believe that religion gives people hope when you see no hope. It gives you something to stand on when you have nothing left to stand on. So I think it is and can be for most people a great tool to navigate life. It's reality. People always want to say they don't believe, and that's completely their prerogative. I'm not knocking it. However, I've seen my faith do things for me that I know I couldn't do on my own. And for the others around me. I know for a fact. I credit even being able to avoid not getting caught up as a credit to God. It's not…I couldn't have done that on my own strength. I grew up in a crackhouse, I grew up in a neighbourhood riddled with gang violence. I have friends who were deeply involved in those things. So to avoid all of that, I don't do that on my own strength. I can't say that I do that on my own strength. Can it play a role in my work? Yeah, because faith also gives you a moral conscience. Religion, and even Christianity at its purest state, without all the fluff that some people associate with it, at its purest state it does provide a moral compass. What you should and shouldn't do. But out of love. Not out of correction or force.'

Gang membership is often constructed as the antithesis of Bermudian Christian culture. Gang members are said to practise Satanism and Occultism, and Devil's Isle imagery is frequently referenced when condemning the violence. I had heard rumours of Idris practising Satanism, but had assumed this was an urban legend. Roy, speaking from his experience as a pastor supporting families affected by gang violence, assured me that it was true:

'There's an element of people who actually do satanic rituals. You have people sacrificing pigeons. At one stage it was cats. Idris learned how to practise witchcraft from an older guy in prison. And that guy learned it when he was locked up away. It evokes power in an individual where they feel untouchable. People are afraid to get into areas dealing with the spirit realm. It also desensitised them to the norms. Antisocial behaviours become rewards instead of something that is socially unacceptable. Many churches in Bermuda need to be doing more in terms of those areas. People can't imagine how it could happen but it is. It's not an urban legend.'

Whether or not it is true, the fact that there is a myth that gang members practise satanic rituals indicates the degree to which these men are othered and ostracised from the Christian moral majority. Roy's assertion that someone from overseas was sharing these practices with Bermudians connects with a later theme of community crime talk - that the negative influences on the island's culture are not Bermudian but of elsewhere. Religion is a core element of Bermudian identity and communities - even the Bermudian coat of arms 'Quo Fata Ferunt' ('whatever the fates may bring') implies a surrender to the supernatural. The rise in violence has caused some religious Bermudians to question the effectiveness of religious institutions and the power of prayer, whereas others double down on their religious convictions and urge communities to turn towards the church for answers. Religion is used as a litmus test for membership of the community, and used to denounce the deviant as unholy, and therefore, unBermudian. In this way, crime talk affirms the salience of religion in Bermudian life and identity rather than meaningfully questioning it.

Community Responsibility for Gang Violence

April 2010 saw a wave of emotional responses to gang violence - on Good Friday Kimwandae Walker was shot multiple times at the kite flying celebration at Victor Scott school, in front of his children. Conversations around this time were particularly angry and despairing. 'Freddie Lambert' (M, Bermudian, black, E) wrote of how he 'went to visit someone at the hospital and found it on lockdown with armed police on guard.' 'Is this Bermuda?' he asked. 'Ella Decouto's' (F, Bermuudian, white, B) reply to his comment is a prime example of the relationship between Bermudian identity and violence, which is to distance the perpetrators from any claim to Bermudian identity. She writes that 'We as a people need to say NO MORE!!! This is our island, not theirs. This is not how Bermudians treat each other.' Ella's assertion that violence is 'the people's problem' reflects a persistent notion within Bermudian crime talk that resistance to violence can only be sourced from the community coming together.

Reports on Idris triggered the usual blog discussion points. On Bernews in April 2011, in an article regarding his recent arrest, 'I'm Just Saying' wrote that 'We need to wise up as a nation and get serious to the matter or many more will die!'. Commenting on another article about Idris, 'We the People (1st!!!)' wrote of how

'The community needs to step up. Get involved in Big Brothers and Sisters, Mirrors, or some mentoring programs, help direct struggling youth in the right direction, so they don't eventually get caught up in this. It's easy to blame the parents, blame the police, and tonight we go to sleep, wake up tomorrow, comment, and cry on business as usual. It's harder to ask ourselves, how can I help?'

'The community' is almost exclusively mentioned in vague terms, with no real directness concerning its boundaries and membership. Although many discussants

decry merely witnessing the violence from the sidelines without actively participating in solutions, the degree to which discussants put their words into action is unclear. The responsibility lies externally - within 'the community' - but vague enough to absolve speakers of responsibility.

Esther, speaking from her decades of experience in supporting children in crisis, spoke of the challenges in uniting the Bermudian community as that community 'tends to be divided by economics and class', resulting in 'one sector of the community kind of ignores [the violence] or is always aghast that it could possibly be happening and the other is simply struggling.' She continues emphasising the need for community unity against gangs as 'when it comes to gang involvement, when young people see that the entire community is behind the effort it makes it easier to address the issues that they're having, that have sent them to the gang involvement in the first place.'

Online commentary was generally in agreement with the sentiment that community engagement is key in formulating solutions to gang violence, to the degree that local policy makers will post to stimulate community involvement. 'Michael Keane' (M, Bermudian, black, C), a local politician, wrote on Facebook in August 2017 of actions taken by the Ministry of National Security to counter recent incidents of violence but took care to remind readers that:

'We hold the police accountable, the minister accountable but we must also hold these men - our sons, brothers, boyfriends, ace boys, nephews, godsons, husbands - accountable! This is a community problem and we must hold each other accountable for this MESS, and it's a mess that can only be cleaned up if we tackle it

together and dig deep. When this happens I believe that we will evolve into a more loving and caring community!'

Here, the speaker is illuminating another common thread in discussions around violence in Bermuda - the silence of those close to the men involved in gangs as a contributing factor to their survival. The shaming of silent witnesses is a common thread in Bermuda discussions of crime, both in formal and informal media. A February 2012 Royal Gazette article was provocatively entitled 'Does Bermuda need a gun court, or should witnesses have the courage of their convictions?', which prompted comments questioning the value of the headline, as it's fair to say witnesses can be justified in their fear.

Indeed, as an anecdotal aside, I sympathise with the fear of witnesses. My experiences as a juror in a gang related murder trial illuminated the vulnerability of jurors and witnesses in Bermuda's small community. The trial was open for any member of the public to attend and give support to the defendant or witnesses. The jury liaison officer spoke to us shortly before deliberation.

'If at any point you feel intimidated by anyone please let us know.'
'When do we do that?' asked a fellow juror, 'Before or after the case?'
'Hopefully before they kill you,' laughed the officer before leaving the room.

After the guilty verdict was given and we left the courtroom, a clerk ran in.

'Run!' he said urgently, 'Grab all your stuff and run! They're leading him out soon, the press are there, his family are there, his buddies are there, run!'

We gathered up our things in a panic and sprinted out of the court. I didn't have a car and ran across the street to get away from the courthouse, much to the anger of an oncoming motorcyclist. We received an apology for the court clerk's behaviour from the jury liaison officer later on that day, but it reflected the real fear felt by members of the public who find themselves involved in gang related issues. That being said, witnesses who do step forward, such as the fellow interviewed in the December 2011 Royal Gazette article 'Shooting witness: I have no regrets' are praised for their bravery. Commenting on the web article, Derek A. G. Jones wrote how 'Watching Bermuda from afar, I am deeply saddened that there are not more people who are stepping up and doing the right thing when they witness such acts. This man is neither an informer nor a snitch. He is someone who put his country first.'

In response to 'Michael Keane's' post pleading for community involvement, 'Ama'ri Brangman' (M, Bermudian, black, A) expressed his disappointment with what he saw as

'The same ol' talk - more police and the old community needs to step up argument. I'm not the only one who finds it frustrating when politicians say that the community is not doing their part because that's just not true. The community has been crying out since the middle and mega-schools were established - the government just hasn't been listening. People have called out the culprits. The police even come out and say they know who the murderers are - how is that supposed to make the community feel? The community is unarmed, what do you want from them against guys who have killed over thirty plus people? At some point people will lose confidence in the police and choose to protect themselves and we shouldn't judge them for it. Every time the cops say 'we know who did it' and no one is arrested it just reopens the wound.'

This post prompted a number of responses condemning and supporting Ama'ri's perspective, discussing where responsibility lies in combatting anti-social and violent criminal behaviour.

> ***Randy Roberts*** *What do you want to see happen young man? Young black men are dying: this isn't the time to complain, this is the time to come together.*
>
> (M, Bermudian, black, E)

> ***Roger Simmons*** *I agree and disagree with your points Ama'ri. The community isn't playing its part. Some of us are. Someone this morning told me not to waste my time trying to help people who aren't interested in doing better. It takes a village, and that's what I told them. Families, churches, community groups, police, regiment…they all need to uphold their role in raising our country's children. In this day and age if people aren't filming the violence they're talking about it. Violence is tossed out for public consumption…but when the public is asked for help. Crickets. We need to take ownership of the issues that our children are presented with.*
>
> (M, Bermudian, black, D)

> ***Ama'ri Brangman*** *This is just an excuse to attack the black community IMO and not the system that created most of the social ills facing the black community. We're being brainwashed to believe it's our fault, even tho nearly all the murders solved came as a direct result of working with ppl in the black community. We're still told we're not doing enough. Even tho many people from the black community work in education and mentoring and youth and job creation programmes we're still told we're not doing enough. Read between the lines and you'll see the message is that the black community created this problem - even tho the majority of black Bermudians do not engage in anti-social behaviour, even tho the majority of black Bermudians are working with troubled youth it's still our fault. Not the police, not the politicians, not the system, it's those nasty black Bermudians. It's not true and we need to stop talking like it is*

Ama'ri presents an intriguing analysis of crime talk and accountability here. In placing responsibility on community members for violence and managing violence, blame is transferred from the wider systemic factors which contribute to it - and equally from keeping the small number of individuals committing the violence accountable for their own actions. He asserts that the underlying message is one of racial condemnation - the communities asked to step up to the plate are not the wealthy white circles but the black neighbourhoods. In this case, rather than change, this can be framed as 'more of the same' - white and wealthy communities can remain unaffected by violence while black communities are put under increasing pressure. Discussion of the loss of community cohesion and the potential solutions and risks associated with uniting communities against gang violence reaffirm the importance of community in Bermudian culture - crime talk mourns community's disintegration, upholds its value and fears its oppressive familiarity.

Imported Violence

Another common theme in discussions of violent crime is the labelling of such actions as UnBermudian - violence is dismissed as an attempt to emulate gang culture from other countries. Gang violence is blamed on outsiders and perceived as evidence of foreign corruption of Bermudian morality. The Bermudian expression of gang violence is delegitimised in comparison to elsewhere, and gang violence in Bermudian is even outright blamed on Afro Caribbean influence on Bermudian families.

Gang violence is seen as an erosion of Bermudian values in place of the values of foreign countries (discussions and statements about 'turning into Jamaica'

are common among Bermudian and non-Bermudian discussants alike) and thus the use of the term 'gangs' in a Bermudian context is ridiculed. A discussion on Bernews about Idris in March 2011 reflected these attitudes:

> ***BOO** says:*
> *ITS SO FUNNY TO SEE YALL BERMUDIANS GET IN A FRENZY OVER IDRIS AND ANY SO- CALLED TYPE "GANGSTAS" ON THIS SPOILED ISLAND. LOOK AT THE ATTENTION ALL OF YOU GIVING THIS GUY… PRAISING HIM LIKE A GOD…HYPING THE ISSH OUTTA HIM WHEN HE IS A NOBODY… YALLL BOOST HIS EGO CAUSE YOU BERMUDIANS HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO THAN TO WATCH EACH OTHER WITH YOUR HYPOCRITICAL EYES…HE IS JUST ANOTHER BLACK MAN WALKING THIS EARTH AND KILL YA OWN!!! SOO SAD…YOU PRAISE HIM LIKE AN IDOL,YOU BERMUDIANS LOVE DRAMA!! YOU THINK HE IS SOMEONE IN THE STATES OR ANYWHERE FOREIGN HE WOULD BE LOOKED AT THE JUST ANOTHER NICCA ON THE STREET… I BLAME THE PUBLIC (BERMUDIANS) FOR GIVING HIS NAME POWER! YOU THINK YOU CAN SHOUT IM PARKSIDE TO A REAL GUN MAN AWAY IN PLACES LIKE JAMAICA??? OR ANY OF THOSE SERIOUS ISLANDS?? BERMUDA IS A JOKE AND OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM IS A JOKE*

> ***Aaron** says:*
> *Idris is where he needs to be regardless of the sentence. He deserves to be in jail, but 2 years was the maximum for this kind offence. It's correct to say that once we compare these people to 'gangers' abroad they are just little boys*

This gang denialism is littered across conversations about the violence on the island, and was a feature of the conversation I had with Elliott, a young Black Bermudian entrepreneur, and Jones, an older Black Bermudian craftsman:

***Elliott**: A lot of it really does come down to the fact that basically everybody knows each other. Someone could end up robbing some distant family member or something like that. Like you don't even know. Some of these gang members…*

***Jones**: They're not gang members. They're not gang members.*

***Elliott**: Well, whatever they are…*

***Jones**: They're not gang members. They wish they was!*

***Elliott**: Well, they're in a gang. They have a gang mentality. So they're kind of in that category. It's a lifestyle. And a lot of them are against each other but in most cases a lot of them are related. I'm not in a gang, but apparently I'm from Ord Road so I'm from….and then I've got cousins who live up 42nd street. And we're cousins, we hang out, but you know, it's just…It's one of those things where there's more robberies than it is gang violence now. Armed robberies. It's seems like it's going around like a style now, it's going around like a style. We're going from gangs or whatever you want to call it to robberies now. And then there's like deaths. It just changes around, like people…*

Roman the cab driver was also sceptical of the legitimacy of Bermudian gangs when compared to international crime. According to Roman, the affluence of Bermuda made it impossible to foster the real 'gang mentality.'

''There ain't no gangs in Bermuda. Like, I grew up, my first 8 years of my life in Jamaica. And when people say Bermuda's got gangs, and I know about life in Jamaica, it's like, no. Bermuda has a couple of shootings. They don't have a gang. There's no gangs here. If you wanna see gangs, you wanna go to Jamaica. Then go America. Yo, when people leave Jamaica and go to America they take right over. Cuz Americans call themselves gangs and thugs…pshh. Jamaicans go over there and rule them places. Like, what? You call this poverty? What? You got heat? You got air conditioning? You call this ghetto? This is sweet! In Jamaica they're still living in a tin, they're bathing outside, using the bathroom outside. They go America and they're

saying 'this is ghetto? this is sweet life!' And it's just different. Normally the poorer the individual is, the more dangerous they are. Absolutely. Bermudians don't realise how good they have it.'

Another trend in gang violence conversation is blaming outsiders for the violence. Roy, a pastor and gang violence reduction coordinator, was just one of the many commentators who connected community disunity with community diversity, claiming that influence from other countries introduced 'different philosophical belief systems, different ideologies and idiosyncrasies' which fuelled a culture of gang violence. Idris' father was Jamaican, and this is not allowed to be forgotten in conversations with those who know his heritage. Speaking of Idris, Roy said the following:

'I went to school with his Daddy. Again, his father was Jamaican. His granny was Jamaican. And so you can start to understand where the cultural values come. Certain people bring up their people different. Certain things they accept within a culture. Parkside has Jamaican roots.'

Michael also referenced the influx of Caribbean migration in the 20th century in attempting to explain the rise in violence and community disorder on the island.

'Fast forward to the 80s, these guys are now working in Bermuda. They're still living in Jamaica, they have families in Jamaica, they're sending all their money back to Jamaica. However they need some relief just like the men in the gold rush. They start to find solace with the women in Bermuda and start procreating with the Bermudian women and they are in the central Pembroke area and they start getting the girls pregnant in Bermuda in the 90s. Then these guys start going back to Jamaica but guess what they've created? They have created the young men where their mamas are working class Bermudians, they're not focused on education, they're at the lower end of the totem poles, working working working for Jamaican men who

are not concerned with them, they actually have families in Jamaica, and that…cuz you know where Parkside came from? Parkside, one of Bermuda's leading and most aggressive gangs, Parkside originally are the sons of the Jamaican men that came to Bermuda.'

A comment from April 2011 by 'Angel Somner' (M, Bermudian, black, C), speaks to the history of internalised anti-Afro Caribbean prejudice amongst both black and white Bermudians, writing that 'we are becoming exactly what we don't want to be: a stereotype! Silly people from the islands who know nothing of the world, have nothing to contribute to the world and will only be seen as a joke!'

The framing of Bermuda as developed, wealthy, safe and the assertion that these qualities are antithetical to Caribbeanness has roots in centuries of culturally separatist rhetoric between Bermuda and other islands (Heritage 1978). Discussions of crime and safety are connected to claims that Bermuda is culturally separate from the Caribbean. Changes to the status quo are seen to threaten Bermuda's identity as culturally separate from Caribbean and North American countries and intuitively morally superior.

There were several comments online supporting the narrative that violence in Bermuda has a foreign source. Take for example this one from a Royal Gazette article in April 2013.

> ***Whiskey Tango Foxtrot •***
> *One other thing has been bothering me....some of these fellows are first generation islanders correct me if I'm wrong but wasn't that a southern island accent I heard from de momma outside court the other day, they are far more violent than we are....their kind of like africanised honey bees. Any way this*

sort of violence has no place in our island...and I'm going to tell you why…we are and always have been a more civilised culture, subtle and there were no gangs…

[Royal Gazette comment, April 2013]

The demonisation of black Caribbean citizens targets them for blame for the violence, which is considered to be fundamentally UnBermudian. Conversely, positive news stories are hailed as truly Bermudian. Take for example this Facebook conversation from September 2010, on a news article about a group of women who had painted over gang graffiti on a Hamilton school wall.

Neekz Jones *That is the REAL Bermudian thing do! I love my country and it's REAL PEOPLE!*

(F, Bermudian, black, A)

Benji Pearman *Too bad for those wannabe gangsters! Real Bermudians have saved the day*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

Another theme in Bermuda gang talk is the idea the gang members wouldn't last a day in 'the real world' off the island and should be sent abroad to learn the error of their ways. Harold, a biracial Bermudian taxi driver, was firm in his convictions about the island's criminal justice system after his own unhappy experience in jury duty.

'Let's say someone who's up for murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, they're doing time. Take those three categories and ship them over to Mexico. Ship them to Panama. Costa Rica. Puerto Rico. Quito, Ecuador. Chile. Argentina. Put 'em in jail over there. Let 'em go, Mexico. Pay the Mexican government and send ten of

our bastards down there. A guy gets locked up in Quito, Ecuador...he got pretty little eyes? Nice and green? He's gonna be somebody's sweetheart. He'll be crying for his mama. They're all tough you know. When you got 'em as a group. If you break 'em up, they're like little babies. In the Middle East, they kill you. What's wrong with that? It might be inhumane but the guy doesn't get to do it again.'

'Joey Arthur' (M, American, black, B) posted similar sentiments in an anti-gang discussion group on Facebook in June 2011, saying that 'we shouldn't lock them up in Bermy, contact an American supermax or send them to a jail in the third world where the choices they make in Bermy would cost them their lives! Then they'll really learn what it means to live in the hood. Send them to the projects in Philly or New York, then they'll be begging to come home to their mommas.'

Overseas commentators expressed their concern at the signs that violent crime was becoming a more frequent occurrence in Bermuda. 'Lynette Philpott' (F, Bermudian, black, E) wrote in December 2011:

'As a Bermudian living in the States I am very much concerned! We have enough gang violence over here why are they killing? Why are they doing this? Why are they trying to be like the States??'

This is but one of many comments from Bermuda residents and overseas commenters alike, theorising that the men in Bermudian gangs were trying to emulate places like Atlanta, Detroit, and even Juarez, Mexico.

Central to this argument is the idea that to be Bermudian is not to be violent. The trouble makers must come from outside - and if they are born Bermudians, their parents must be outsiders, or they are trying to emulate the culture of another

country. In this respect violence attacks a central value of Bermudian identity, so much so that community ownership of the criminals is rejected completely and utterly. There is a markedly anti-Afro Caribbean rhetoric implicit within this rejection, rhetoric that has been present in Bermudian discourse since the early 20th century. In this way, crime talk reveals not only the moral boundaries of membership in Bermudian society, but also the legacy of a centuries-old cultural script promoting protectionism of the superiority of Bermudian citizens over the outside world.

Conclusion

Conversations about crime and community not only outline geographical borders, but the borders of Bermudian identity. These conversations are a requiem for an idealised past, a scramble for blame and a call to arms to restore what was lost. On the surface these conversations orbit around questions of change, yet upon deeper inspection they reveal what has remained persistent in Bermudian discourse for centuries. Instead of internalising reflection of what about Bermudian society has fostered violence, blame is shifted outwards. Foreign influence is vilified - particularly in relation to Caribbean countries - and violence itself is conceived as alien to Bermudian identity and culture.

There are tensions inherent in conversations around community and crime. Nostalgia for a lost peaceful past is juxtaposed with references to the historical origins of today's conflicts. The loss of community identity and the associated relationships is proposed as the cause of violence, while simultaneously the violence is attributed to the persistent power of geographical identities. The specificity of the experience of crime on an island are revealed in the challenges faced by the public,

police and gang members in trying to escape violence within geographically and culturally claustrophobic space. Conversations about the community needing to 'step up' are in conflict with an overwhelming notion that the threat has come from the outside world. The rise in gang violence has triggered existential uncertainty in its audience regarding the impermeability of the community to outside influence and the strength of the community in responding to conflict. As a response to this, there is a de-Bermudianisation of gang members through religion or family heritage, as well as a condemnation of fellow crime talkers' own community membership based on race and neighbourhood.

When community is mobilised in crime talk, crime talk is tethered to the past. As a result, even when the subject of conversation is explicitly about change, the participants cannot escape enduring patterns of communication. Additionally, there is a pervasive sense that the past is better and that there needs to be a return to old community structures - despite protestations that the violence is a product of the past. Crime talk affirms rather than contests moral boundaries and traditional conceptions of what it means to be Bermudian, so much so that gang violence does not trigger re-evaluation but instead is dismissed as being unBermudian, of or imitating another place. Talk of change does not create change. Crime talk does not transform or destroy Bermudian conceptions of community or identity, it reinforces them.

Chapter Six

Conceptions of Race in Crime Talk

Race is a constant presence in Bermudian life and discourse. It bears immense impact on how one is received, words are perceived and relationships with others. Where community-focused crime talk disguises continuity as talk about change, race-focused crime talk debates whether change has taken place at all. This debate reveals an enduring divergence of experience and knowledge between white and black Bermudians. When Bermudians talk about gang violence through the frame of race, it illuminates longstanding inequalities and conflicts.

Crime talk reveals how Bermudians relate to race. Racialised crime talk uncovers tensions in speculating the causes of and allotting responsibility for gang violence. These tensions play out differently across generation and class, often in the form of selective self-censorship. The ways in which people talk about race, crime and responsibility change depending on speaker, audience and forum.

This chapter examines these discursive tensions through four sub-themes that emerge when Bermudians talk about race and violent crime. The first of these sub-themes is the 'Two Bermudas' theory - that economic inequality disproportionately affects black Bermudians, causes crime and intensifies the divide between black and white Bermudians. A second sub-theme is the presence of competing historical narratives within crime talk, where the lack of common knowledge of the history of Bermudian race relations creates debate around what happened and the legacy. The third sub-theme is the political philosophy of black separatism and calls to revitalise

Black community institutions. The final theme discussed is the assertion that gang violence is a 'Black Problem' that exclusively affects the Black Bermudian community, and the debate that emerges regarding the place of white voices within crime talk.

For every digital conversation on display here, there are countless others held privately. What is made visible is whatever the posters intend to be visible - and with a sensitive topic such as race, it is fair to expect much is discussed privately or offline. The picture is not complete and cannot ever be expected to be. That being said, examining crime talk across multiple forums and between multiple speakers begins to clear the water to view the body of the iceberg below. The reasons why a speaker may censor themselves uncovers something beyond their own individual anxieties, a glimpse again into the unchanged nature of social relations on the island - the contemporary expression of historic race relations in Bermuda. The debates that are triggered when race is mobilised within crime talk reflect what remains unchanged in Bermudian social relationships.

Inequality and Violence

The Two Bermudas narrative features heavily in discussions around racial inequality and gang violence, along with the sense that there is a duality of Bermudian identities - rich and poor, white and black. Not all speakers subscribe to this narrative, and on first impression of Bermudian crime talk it appears that there is a racial binary in structuralist and individualist narratives of responsibility for the rise of gang violence in Bermuda. On closer examination, however, we can see that the extent to which speakers subscribe to a narrative cannot be prescribed only according to race, and instead varies according to class, gender and audience.

‘Bermuda has been a very politely segregated society,’ Elijah the activist/ journalist told me, ‘Because Bermudians have always been polite and respectful we never spoke about the critical differences in the economic reality and the opportunistic reality in Bermuda. In most cases white men vastly out-earn black men and women. And that’s not including expats. But it’s not viewed as inequality here.’

Racial inequality is a consistent feature in discussions about gang violence and the differences between Bermudian communities. Elijah expanded on how inequality filters into all aspects of Bermudian society:

‘Let’s look at education. Most of our public schools are, I’m not sure of the numbers but just by looking they’re typically about 80-90% black. So that simply means the people who go to our private schools are not the smartest, they’re the ones who can actually afford to do so. So we have an environment of haves and have nots. Our private schools have the well-to-do, and blacks whose parents have the money and most whites, and some of them actually send their kids away, and this just perpetuates the inequality. Psychologically, everything that happens in Bermuda is done around race. 90% of our white people and conservative blacks vote for the OBA or conservative parties. Most black people support the PLP. We could argue why it’s done but you cannot deny the fact that one of the critical factors in politics in Bermuda is race. If you look at neighbourhoods, our neighbourhoods are usually segregated by race. It’s something that we don’t talk about but you’re not going to find too many white people living in 42nd street, you’re not going to find too many of them living in bakatawn.’

This assertion that the compound of economic inequality and racism explain the existence of gangs filters throughout Bermudian crime talk. Crime talkers who adopt this perspective on gang membership outline inequality as so pervasive in Bermudian society that it is in itself a definitive feature of Bermudian identity and

experience. Inequality is a part of who we are, an expected product of the unfettered capitalism of Bermuda's international business-driven economy - but equally an historic reality that predates the influx of global capital to the island, where white wealth was protected and enshrined in law. Bermuda's story from the moment of settlement has been one of racial inequality, and the perpetuation of this state of affairs has bled into national identity. 'Bermuda is about economics,' Lloyd, a Black Bermudian educator, told me. He continued:

'As a colonised, capitalist society, it's about money. When we talk about who controls the economy - numerically, we have a majority black population but blacks control nothing economically. Absolutely nothing. All of your major institutions are white owned institutions…Those are facts.Those are realities in Bermuda. Economics, Emily. It's economics. Research shows when young black males are employed and working, there's less violence. When black men are employed, are able to make a living, sustain themselves, there's less intent to be engaged and involved in criminal activity. Or gang activity.'

George, a black Bermudian political columnist, pointed out that White Bermuda emerged out of the recession of the late 2000s relatively unscathed, where 'mostly black people who are losing their homes, mostly black people who are losing their jobs, it's mostly black people who are suffering'. Racial harmony is presented in this narrative as a facade resting on white comfort, the arrogance of which feeds into resentment and cynicism.

An oft repeated phrase on the island is that in Bermuda it's who you know, not what you know. Opportunity in the Bermudian economy is predicated on connection. George presented me with a scenario to exemplify how racialised networks sustain inequality on the island, further marginalising disenfranchised black Bermudian men.

'Even when you're equally academically qualified, you're gonna most likely get a job, not simply because you're white, but because you've been in that network. Oh, that's John Ross' daughter! Who's this girl? Oh, that's uh…Tanika Smith? Oh, I don't know her. Tanika? She went Berkeley. I didn't go to school with her. So already people are going to open the door for you, not because they hate the black girl but because Emily's one of us. It's the familiarity, right?'

Not all discussants felt that inequality played as important a role in explaining the violence. Much of the scepticism of this frame came from white crime talkers. Drawing from his experiences as a police officer and as a politician, Adam acknowledged the racial disparity in experiences of gang violence, but disagreed with assertions that resolving inequality would resolve gang violence.

'People aren't assaulting people on Front Street because there's money in it. They're doing it because it's a respect thing. It's all about beefs, it's not about 'jeez, I've fallen into a life of gangs and I kill people because the government just didn't give me a job.' I can totally understand why someone would feel marginalised or they are marginalised, they were given a crappy education and they felt to themselves that they had no other options, viable options. I can appreciate that you're not going to drop out of Cedarbridge at the age of 14 and then be a rocket scientist who graduates from Princeton. But you cannot tell me that simply because they don't have a job or they don't have a good job and can't pay the rent that they're then going to decide to go outside and kill people. And frankly, that's disrespectful in the extreme to the many, many, many people who come from areas of Middletown and found relative success. Who come from areas like Cambridge Road who drive to work every morning and come home every night and feed their families. It's just disrespectful to the very people who have to deal with this day in and day out to suggest that…it's like, everybody who's unemployed is just going to take up arms and kill people? It's just complete garbage. It's easy, it's sticky rhetoric.'

Thomas, a white (Portuguese) local entrepreneur and former MP, was exasperated at the mention of racial inequality and gang violence.

'You know what this stuff is, Emily? It's to be cool. I get so sick and tired when I hear people in the House of Assembly. I went to the meeting up at Southampton Rangers when the boy was killed right at the door, I went right up to that meeting and I challenged them all, cuz they all want to say 'oh those boys want jobs.' That's bullshit! They don't want jobs! They don't want that life because there are pure little girls going up with the gang guys, because gang bies can buy all the bling they want, they buy the Prada bags and Coach bags and trips, and pay for the bikes and cars and the apartments. I see these boys in town with shopping bags and shit, you know they're not working. You see them. And people think it's stereotyping but when you're street smart like me, it's not stereotyping. Because you know what goes on…I mean, it's sick, Emily. And they have no fear of dying right, which is scary. But I don't know how we bred that. But it is about being cool.'

White speakers like Adam and Thomas were far more likely to support and provide individualist explanations for gang violence rather than institutional or systemic explanations. Isaiah, a black Bermudian academic specialising in critical race theory, noted similar trends in conversations about race, inequality and crime in the States.

'Individual choices are made in the context of larger variables. We don't just make individual choices alone, we make individual choices based on our access, based on our information, based on what the other person says is right, based on what we've seen. And of course, the tendency for whites to suggest that it's strictly down to individual choices and the police just need to do their job…that's not unique to Bermuda, nor is the more historically sensitive approach of people of colour to suggest that there's a bigger picture.'

Racial differences in Bermudian perspectives on the relationship between inequality and gang violence can be partially explained by social identity theory, where 'the position of one's in-group in the social structure is an important influence on attitudes toward inequality' (Schmitt et al. 2003: 162). According to this theory, hierarchy legitimising myths (i.e. around meritocratic realities) are advanced by privileged groups, in this case white Bermudians talking about the relationship between inequality and violent crime. Tajfel and Turner (2004: 277) make a distinction between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour, where interactions between people are a result of a combination of the two, where '(a)t one extreme (which most probably is found in its pure form only rarely in real life) is the interaction between two or more individuals that is fully determined by their interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics…(t)he other extreme consists of interactions between two or more individuals (or groups of individuals) that are fully determined by their respective memberships in various social groups or categories'. According to Tajfel and Turner, when groups are in conflict, the intensity of the conflict directly correlates with the behaviour of individual members of opposing groups towards each other, whereby the individuals will be more likely to respond 'as a function of their respective group memberships, rather than in terms of their individual characteristics or inter individual relationships' (ibid.).

Discussions around racial inequality on the island as it relates to crime and violence put white Bermudians in an uncomfortable position, feeling the need to defend their socio-economic position as a result of meritocracy rather than historic racist privilege in order to absolve themselves of implication in violence reproduced by an implicitly racist social structure. 'Race makes people uncomfortable', writes Michelle Alexander, 'some whites are so loath to talk about race and so fearful of

violating racial etiquette that they indicate a preference for avoiding all contact with black people' (2012: 238). The Two Bermudas argument is perceived as an attack on the social identity of white Bermudians, and as a result many white discussants react defensively to the suggestion that racism may fuel their sustained privilege and safety in climates of violence.

George spoke to me of his experiences being outspoken about race online and in his political writing. He wondered about those who didn't respond to his posts - whether his message resonated with them or whether they discarded it. Sometimes, the answer was found in face to face discussions in the community. Sometimes, conversations play out in more private corners of the digital realm.

'I've been kind of reactive on Facebook over the last five years leading up to the election, post-election. And what I found interesting is that the majority of people that will inbox me will be white people. Not so much that they don't want to put it out in public, but they're more interested in furthering the discussion one on one. They didn't inbox me to say 'look, I agree with you.' They're like, look I have my views but I'd like to meet up with you. No offence, but it seems that 90% of white people I've met has been through Facebook. The point I'm getting at is after four years, I've not gone out of my way to meet white people, but they've contacted me. We've met face to face or talked on Whatsapp and developed a friendship.'

I was particularly interested in the public/private nature of George's conversations about race, and intrigued by his assertion that white Facebook users were more likely to contact him by a private Facebook message rather than respond to a public post. This reluctance to post unpopular opinions or display ignorance of aspects of historical and contemporary race relations reveals a form of self-censorship among white participants on the subject of race. In turn, there seems to

be an urge on the part of white people to talk to black people about race, whether that be to affirm to the person they are speaking to that they are 'one of the good white people' or convince the person of their point of view in a less public space.

Participation by white Bermudians in conversations about racial inequality and violence on the island is further dictated by whether or not that white Bermudian is willing to acknowledge (or even has knowledge of) how Bermuda's history of racism impacts Bermuda's present social inequality. Over the course of carrying out this research, I found that very few white Bermudians were willing to do so or had a comprehensive enough knowledge of the history to think critically of the ways in which privilege connects to violent crime. Those few that did apply structuralist narratives when discussing violent crime were almost entirely from the 'millennial' generation or younger, and generally voice their opinions as counterpoints to individualist or historically ignorant perspectives offered by other white discussants. For example, a discussion started by 'Adrian DeSilva' (M, Bermudian, white, A) in a local political forum asked why racism still bore such salience in modern Bermudian political consciousness. This was met with several responses by young white discussants like the following:

> ***Wren Nichols*** *Research is key! You should read the History of Mary Prince and contact the Centre for Uprooting Racism in Bermuda (CURB). Their community conversations really help in gaining a better understanding of how racism affects people today.*
>
> (F, Bermudian, white, A)

> ***Carolina Roger*** *If you're serious about getting educated about Bermuda and race I suggest joining CURB rather than demanding the emotional labour of black Bermudians in educating you.You describe yourself as a 'pretty average*

white guy' and as a result you may not be aware that your question comes across as offensive and insensitive. White privilege shelters you of the realities of racism because it doesn't affect you, if anything, it benefits you. You have no need to be aware of your privilege and can accept a censored history as truth. Just because you have black friends doesn't mean you aren't racist. You need to take the time to educate yourself on race in Bermuda. I suggest reading A History of Mary Prince or Chained on the Rock by Cyril Packwood to gain some insight into the realities of slavery in Bermuda and learn that it was far from 'moderate.' Segregation didn't end in Bermuda until the 70s. Feel free to message me if you want some more resources - but asking to be educated on racism whilst simultaneously dismissing real people's lived experiences of racism is not the place to start.

(F, Bermudian, white, A)

Interestingly, it is mostly young white women who vocally espouse more structuralist and critical analyses of race relations in Bermuda in public forums. Intersectionality may explain this - a framework developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to understand how social identities like race, class, gender and sexual orientation 'intersect' or combine, resulting in differing individual experiences of privilege and oppression. As women, we have some personal experience of discrimination and moving through a world that is not designed for your success whereas as white people, we have access to a privilege denied to others. Private conversations with millennial white men revealed a greater diversity of perspective, with many denouncing the individualist 'colour-blind' explanations for violence and inequality but feeling it is not their place to participate in public conversations about discrimination due to white male occupation of a dominant sphere of privilege. Here there is a conscious self-censorship when it comes to racialised talk in a public sphere.

'Who wants to hear another white man's opinion? And honestly, I'll probably embarrass myself and say the wrong thing. You're good at this. We don't have the practice. I'm not being funny! I accidentally said 'coloured' instead of black the other day. It just happened. Where the fuck did that come from? I felt so bad. It was awful. Excruciating. And I was talking about white privilege at the time too! I was trying to be the good guy! I feel like it totally backfired because I misspoke. I want to support, but I don't think lending my voice is always the best way to do that. Better to leave it to the people who actually know what they're doing.'

(with permission - from an informal conversation with Ron, M, Bermudian, white, A)

Talk around crime and inequality in Bermuda is on its surface a story of binaries, a duality of concurrent experience emerging from entrenched history. In this talk, Bermudian identity is connected to its economy - where parallel to and product of the economic success of some is the hardship of many. The Two Bermudas narrative is a racialised narrative, in which white Bermuda represents the 'haves' and black Bermuda represents the 'have nots' - where upper and middle class black families are erased of their blackness and lower income whites are politically invisible. On first impression, it appears that the individualist and structuralist explanatory camps can be drawn along racial lines, but closer examination of the different spheres of crime talk reveals a much greater diversity of opinion. Acts of self-censorship in certain public forums and the knowledge of the audience obscures this. As a result, public racialised crime talk has far less meaningfully transformative potential than crime talk in private.

Incomplete Histories

Many conversations about race and crime on the island recall the history of race relations in Bermuda. There is a disconnect between common knowledge of

Bermudian history and the lived experience of its legacy. As a result, when Bermudian history enters into crime talk, it is often for the purpose of education and explanation, with the intention to structurally link the past to present experiences. When the pressure to educate is removed from the conversation, more diverse narratives appear among black discussants, particularly along lines of class and political affiliation.

Counter-narratives to the taught, accepted and 'official' histories of Bermuda are typically dismissed when they appear in crime talk. Sarah, a white British anti-racist activist, spoke of the gaps in education around Bermudian history:

'There are parts of Bermudian history that are taught in schools, and parts that are commonly not. When you ask what do you know about Bermuda history, the usual response is Sir George Somers, the cahows, same old same old. And it's really shocking when you ask Bermudians what their history is they don't know. And the histories we tell do not speak to the resilience, courage, resourcefulness, hard work, pride and sheer determination of black Bermudians.'

Remy, a Black Bermudian educator who works with Sarah giving presentations on Bermudian history, considered generational differences between black Bermudians and trust in white governance:

'Those who've lived through it before the 60s and all of that don't have that trust. My generation, we don't have the trust. The younger people are more forgiving - but they don't have the frame of reference! When we do the structural racism seminar it's amazing the number of people, black or white, who tell us we weren't taught this in school. And we teach it because some of the stories weren't taught or were taught a different way.'

The history of slave ownership and the oppression of black Bermudians coupled with censorship of history casts an uneven shadow over white and black relations on the island. As discussed previously, freed slaves were often give all or part of their master's surnames. The educator Lloyd said to me:

'You're from Bermuda. You're from the East Shore. Now I look at the name Emily Ross, I can make a whole lot of assumptions and connections. Ah, a white Emily Ross. What is her connection to Dr. Ross, the black Veronica Ross who also lives in Somerset? I know the assumptions I would make.'

I found myself often using my status as a second generation Bermudian as a defence against accusations of white privilege, which I have whether or not my family owned slaves on Bermudian soil. I felt incredibly uncomfortable at what was unspoken when introducing myself to black Bermudians who would tell me they only knew of the black Ross family. On the one hand, I feel a need to defend my identity as a Bermudian despite only being second generation and not '400 years off the boat'. On the other, I cling to the immigrant status of my paternal grandparents as protection against the legacies of white slave ownership on the island. These self-protection strategies are immaterial - white people in Bermuda, whether old Bermudian, new Bermudian or expat - cannot move through and participate in Bermudian discourse unaffected by the legacies of slavery on the island. White 'discomfort' is a benign product of Bermuda's racist history.

I wondered whether all of my black Bermudian interviewees subscribed fully to structuralist explanations of gang violence or whether they felt the need to lean upon these explanations *because* of who I am, because I am white and they assume that I do not have the same understanding of Bermudian history that they do. If black

Bermudians did not have to spend so much time explaining the history of racism in Bermuda to white Bermudians, would the landscape of crime talk look different? The shape of crime talk shifts based on the race of speaker and audience.

It is important to acknowledge the Portuguese Bermudian perspective when examining historical awareness and Bermudian crime talk, as Portuguese Bermudians navigate unique discursive territory - neither white nor black. Thomas, a Portuguese politician, reflected on the extent to which the Portuguese are considered 'white':

'I get off the plane in London, Toronto or New York and I'm a honky. A white boy. I get off the plane at LF Wade and I'm a portagee. And it's so silly because my mother is American. Blonde haired, blue eyed, American. My father is Bermudian of Portuguese descent and obviously the Azores are European. But the bottom line is my last name is Portuguese. Back in the 60s my mother went out to Riddell's Bay with a friend and the members said don't bring that girl here any more, she's married to a portagee. Or even on my wife's side, my wife's family goes back to the Sea Venture. Her sister also married a portagee and back in that era there were family members who wouldn't go to the wedding. Marrying a portagee was one step away from marrying a black. And of course blacks and portuguese have always been connected because, as I tell my black brothers and sisters, just as with you when your fathers couldn't play on the golf course was the same with my people. Like now, if I go to Riddells Bay I'm treated with respect but we have to be real. My father, grandfather and great grandfather - the only way they were getting on Riddells Bay was to cut the grass in a caddy. And that's the truth. So times have changed. But I still say to this day, it's funny, even in the House, the whites don't really think I'm white and the blacks don't think I'm white. It has assisted me with being in politics because I'm more welcome in people's homes. It's a funny thing. It really is. It's a strange thing, that black, white and Portuguese. I literally do feel I'm in that beige category.'

This October 2017 post on a political Facebook group by Portuguese Bermudian 'Adrian DeSilva' (M, Bermudian, white, A) triggered discussion about incomplete history, white ignorance of racism and the dynamics between black, white and Portuguese communities in Bermuda.

> ***Adrian DeSilva*** *I'm looking to be educated on racism. I don't understand why it's so relevant in Bermuda today. I'm an average white guy, I have black friends. In Bermuda black people are the majority and when I was at Saltus I felt racism as there were only a handful of black students. When I walked to my Mom's job after school the black students would tease me and ask me for a dollar. I don't get why anyone would treat a black person differently or why I feel black people treat me differently. Bermuda was a place that never truly supported slavery and many white people came here and set their slaves free. So many did this and so many slaves did well for themselves that an act was passed (that horrifies me to this day!) banning freed slaves from owning land to prevent black people from having a vote. Many horrific and evil laws were passed to wipe out the good intentions of many white people. I understand that people do get treated differently based on their appearance. But how is racism relevant in a majority black country? I feel like much of this is passed on from the American media where blacks are a minority group. We never had slavery quite as grand like the antebellum south. We need personal solutions to issues of race in Bermuda not copied crap from people in America. We even imported their gangsta lifestyle. That is not Bermudian. But what do black people want when they bring up issues of race? We can't go back in time and fix it. Even I have to accept that the people that moved to Bermuda first have the largest lots of land and often the most money. I can't begrudge them for it.*
>
> ***Bermy Sharrieff*** *yeeeeah I stopped reading when he said that most white people came here and set their slaves free*
>
> (M, Bermudian, black, B)

George Talbot *bro what kind of revisionist history is this? this guy's first example of racism is black people asking him for a dollar? really? They freed their slaves? Not willingly and even after compensation they were still not satisfied. What Bermuda does he live in?*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

Christopher Rankin *lol you didn't become an average white guy until the 60s bro…*

(M, Bermudian, biracial, A)

Adrian never replied to the many hundreds of comments on his post. His post and non-reply sparked anger among black Bermudians at the complete denial of their historical and present experiences. For several individuals this anger shapes their perspective of whites generally.

In October 2015, news of another murder reached the Bernews Facebook page.

Aoife Kennedy *why is it always young black men? Why always the same demographic? Why the self-hatred?*

(F, Irish, white, B)

Mia Wells *it was taught over centuries…Wanna guess by whom?*

(F, Bermudian, black, C)

Debate over historical fact is a key part of discussions of gang violence, as is white ignorance of Bermuda's civil rights history and modern racial inequalities. These reflect wider issues around the privileging of dominant narratives and

censoring of uncomfortable histories in Bermuda. White ignorance of history and resulting denial of racism versus black hyper-awareness of racism and racist history is a known phenomenon in critical race theory (Brown et al. 2003, Nelson et al. 2012), referred by some as the 'Marley hypothesis' in reference to lyrics from Bob Marley's 1983 song Buffalo soldier:

If you know your history
Then you will know where you're coming from
And you wouldn't have to ask me
Who the heck do I think I am

The Marley hypothesis posits that 'group differences in perception of current racism reflect group differences in attunement to documented historical knowledge' (Nelson et al. 2012: 215). Nelson et al. (ibid.) found in their signal detection study of black and white American university students that historical knowledge is 'a normative standard for attunement to consensual reality' with results indicating 'that better attunement to this standard is associated with greater perception of racism rather than with greater denial of racism'.

Writing of white ignorance, Charles Mills (2007: 13, italics in original) asked readers to '(i)magine an ignorance that resists…presenting itself unblushingly as *knowledge'*. Mills here is referring to the ignorance of privilege rather than biology, urging readers and academics to cautiously proceed with sociological generalisations while bearing in mind variation across class, religion, nationality and gender, etc. The generalisations made in this chapter must in turn be made cautiously and consciously, where white ignorance is 'best thought of as a cognitive tendency - an inclination, a doxastic disposition - which is not insuperable' (ibid.: 23). In this

'epistemologies of ignorance' framework, white Bermudians tend to display an historical ignorance in crime talk that frustrates black Bermudians.

Black Bermudians are hardly monolithic, and the results of this study revealed the same narrative tension in explanations for violence and the role of race as observed in inter-racial conversations. This comment by 'Reginald Somner-Golding' (M, Bermudian, black, A) is reflective of this perspective. Reginald was criticised in the comments by other black Bermudians for being 'uppity' and too upper-middle class to understand what it really meant to be black and Bermudians.

> ***Reginald Somner-Golding*** *What about working hard? Sometimes I feel like we Bermudians forget that. I'm not alone in thinking we have a problem with a culture of entitlement on this island. Bermudians feel like everything should be handed to them on a plate. People tell me I'm lucky to have had opportunities here and overseas and I remind them that luck has nothing to do with it - it's about hard work and passion. If you put in the effort your race doesn't matter - nothing is unattainable. Black Bermudians need to let go of this race thing. Stop holding all white Bermudians accountable for the past. We can acknowledge it happened - but it's past time to let go. Otherwise we'll never move forward - as a country or as a people.*

This is reminiscent of Forman's writing of the black middle class buy-in to 'colour-blind rhetoric'. Forman (2017:4) writes of the perspective of middle class and elite blacks that '(l)ife is not easy for African Americans today, but it's better than it was, and you best stop being a thug and start taking advantage of the opportunities that others fought so hard for'. In other words, black people who succeed in white supremacist capitalism become examples to other black people of 'the power of hard work', and may absorb some of the pervasive 'post-racial' individualist rhetoric that is adopted by many white people. Alexander writes that 'the relatively privileged black

elite turned against the black urban poor, condemning them and distancing themselves, while at the same time presenting themselves as legitimate spokespeople for the disadvantaged' (2012: 213). That is, in adopting white individualist rhetoric, black individual power can serve to undermine the black collective. The tension that exists in crime talk reflects class divisions in perceptions on the effects of racism on the range of individual agency without consideration of how race may constrict access to upward mobility. Although Reginald's perspective represents the minority of crime talkers and the minority of black crime talkers generally, class power in Bermuda upholds his view as the 'correct' perspective - it aligns with a capitalist, 'colour-blind' framing of the order of things.

There is another perspective on black individualist viewpoints - that rather than subscribing to a white ideology, these discussants are simply espousing black conservatism. Conservative ideology is not alien to black communities - from Booker T Washington to Bill Cosby, black conservative thought has been characterised by emphasis on self-reliance, accountability and self-actualisation. Radio personalities in Bermuda represent the poles of black political thought, particularly the Sherri J show (seen as a leftist, pro-PLP show, frequently accused of hyperbole and propaganda) and the Shirley Dill show (seen as a centrist, pro-OBA show, she has been publicly accused by PLP supporters of being paid by the OBA) - both hosts are black women, and the majority of the listeners and call-ins are black Bermudians. The many black Bermudian callers who state they agree with and appreciate Shirley Dill are proof that she is not an island of black conservative thought.

It could be argued that Bermuda's most prominent black conservative figure is Sir John Swan, Bermuda's first black premier. A successful entrepreneur, Swan is

often outspoken on economic issues, attracting controversy in April 2019 for sharing his view that Bermuda needs to attract white foreign investment to reinvigorate the economy. Although socially conservative perspectives are quite popular among Bermuda's black community, most likely due to the cultural power of black religious institutions, economically conservative perspectives are shared less frequently in public fora. Sir John has been characterised by some as a race traitor, sold out to white capitalism. He wrote in the Royal Gazette in 2012 about the need to prioritise on attracting investment to avoid a 'culture of dependency' in times of economic uncertainty, stating that '(s)ome of the unemployed see themselves as having been victimised and they turn this victimisation into a culture of grievance, entitlement and dependency' (Swan 2012). Responses on the article and on social media at the time were not homogenous - black support for this perspective and for Sir John Swan certainly exists. Indeed, I've witnessed this viewpoint shared in conversation by black Bermudians of all class brackets. The characterisation of black individualist perspectives as being anti-black or co-opting a white agenda may account for this perspective being more or less confined to private conversations. Additionally, aligning to a figure such as Sir John Swan can also be perceived as a betrayal of the collective black struggle. The preponderance of black structuralist explanations for gang violence may also be exaggerated in this study as many black discussants feel the need to explain structural inequality to white Bermudians (such as my interviewees did to me) due to the lack of Bermudian historical knowledge in the white community. Here we see how crime talk shapeshifts, and discussants align with different explanatory frames depending on audience and forum.

Fading Institutions

While white discussants may self-censor because of self-consciousness, fear of conflict or a sense of a lack of a deserved place in discussion around gang violence, black discussants share more diverse opinions without white participation. Some conversations around resolving violence spoke to such quintessentially black cultural experiences with which white discussants rarely engaged. One such thematic trend is the call to revitalise historically black institutions, such as black sport and social clubs. White Bermudians are absent from discussions around black clubs in public forums, as they do not typically frequent these clubs and are generally unaware of their history and significance for black community and neighbourhoods.

The decline of black sport and social clubs in Bermuda is often linked by discussants to the rise in gang activity. ‘The clubs were a manifestation of the strength of those communities,’ Freddy, a black Bermudian politician, told me. ’Places where they could congregate, celebrate, educate. They have deteriorated in the past 20, 30 years. And what kept them together has somewhat fragmented, and now many of those clubs are surviving off of a group of loose sort of traditional loyalists but economically those clubs aren’t as strong, and they don’t necessarily have the draw that brings those communities together.’

An April 2015 post in a political Facebook group referenced how white Bermudians take umbrage with the phrase ‘black clubs.’

> ***Loretta Scott*** *I am not surprised some people were offended by my use of the term black clubs, but black clubs were at one time the mainstay of Bermuda. They provided Bermudians with sporting, educational and cultural activities. Many black Bermudians were educated because of the assistance of Black*

clubs. They played such an important role in Bermuda. When the clubs were strongest, Bermuda saw none of the gang activity we are experiencing today.

(F, Bermudian, black, E)

Cindy Adderley *We must rebuild and restrengthen our communities. Otherwise we will continue to fall victim to this idea that we must live in and buy a culture that is not ours. Black people are always having to accept other cultures and no one accepts or embraces ours. If people get offended by the term black clubs well that just shows that racism is still alive and well*

(F, Bermudian, black, E)

The rise of gang violence above is seen as a result of the decline of the black clubs, whereas others theorise that it is a cause of their atrophy. Within this discussion of where responsibility lies to the decline of black clubs and the rise of gangs is yet another example of the tensions within the black community when approaching the issue of violent crime - a push and pull between the structural and the individualist only revealed when white discussants are absent from the conversation. Lerman and Weaver point to the cultural dominance of the individual narrative, yet emphasise that it was rare for blacks to subscribe exclusively to one side or another, 'struggling for fluency in one consistent narrative' (2014: 161). They conclude that 'these dual narratives emerged from the conflicting messages of the criminal justice system, institutions that obscure the role of race even as they regularly display inequality and engage in race-laden practices. The racial socialisation of the criminal justice system holds little potential for resistance because it regularly conveys to its wards that their fates were due to their choices alone' (ibid.: 198). This racial socialisation is not exclusive to the criminal justice system, but to any liberal capitalist society like Bermuda's in which the idealistic colour-blind image

is hammered home that one can achieve whatever they wish no matter their circumstance.

The decline of black clubs on the island relates to a wider decline of space exclusively for black Bermudians. Community networks, the 'extended family', has been critically important in Bermuda and overseas in the decision making 'which underlaid Black political struggles and socioeconomic innovations' (Shimkin et al. 1978: 27). Gangs and 'the streets' are said to fill the void in the absence of positive institutions of socialisation (Oliver 2006, Perkins 1975, Anderson 1999). Alexander writes of 'the paradox and predicament of young black men labeled criminals' - having been marginalised by racist institutions and targeted by criminal justice surveillance, 'many fathers are in prison…They are often unable to provide for, or meaningfully contribute to, a family. Any wonder then, that many youth embrace their stigmatised identity as a means of survival in this new caste system? Should we be shocked when they turn to gangs or fellow inmates for support when no viable family support structure exists?' (2012: 172). In this analysis, Alexander does not entirely rob black men of their agency as structuralist narratives are wont to do, yet she does not identify them as entirely free as their personal choices are restricted by a racist system not designed for their success. The decline of positive black spaces, particularly positive black male spaces, pushes poor black Bermudian men further to the margins of an island that is running out of room for them.

George felt very strongly that the black Bermudians needed to make more effort to support black community institutions and businesses.

'If you take your mind back…when I was growing up Portuguese persons were viewed as equal to or less than Black Bermudians. Oh, they're just a bunch of dumb

Portagees. White people would say that, black people would say that. Oh they smell funny. Every stereotype that white people in America would say about Mexicans, that's what they would say about the Portuguese people here. They were for all intents and purposes, oppressed persons. Verbally oppressed, economically oppressed. They stood together. Not in no march. Not in no blogging on Facebook. They pooled their resources. They helped each other build homes. They started their own businesses. They supported each others businesses. Fast forward a generation, the majority of young Portuguese children are either working in a family business, starting their own business or graduating from university. The unemployment rate amongst Portuguese young males is probably zero. Probably equal to what it is in the white community. Look at the black community, we got an under 20 rate of 30% amongst our young people. Whether they're educated or not. So yes, there's this white power structure that put these things in place to benefit white people but if the Portuguese people in the last generation and a half have been able to put themselves in a situation of self-empowerment, why aren't we doing that? When a black person speaks about self-empowerment, they're looked at as the odd one out or they're the rebel. 'What's this black empowerment you're talking about? So does black empowerment mean displacing white people?' You want to empower the people that you're related to, you want to make sure your children's generation ain't going through what you're going through. And my grandchildren are gonna be sitting down saying 'I wonder which Johnny's gonna be shot today.' Cuz that's where we're at now. That's the state where we're at now, where my sons are sitting around wondering if 'I wonder if one of my friends is gonna get shot. I wonder if one day I might be sitting in the wrong place at the wrong time."

White parents may fear for the safety of their children, but they will not experience the chronic anxiety experienced by black parents such as George. This reveals a branch of black conservatism separate from that espoused by Sir John Swan - rather than attempting to succeed in historically white dominated spaces, the establishment of black industry, business and spaces will be key to black Bermudian economic success and healthy communities. Just as George and other commenters argue for the revitalisation of black clubs and question critics of black pride

movements, many other participants in discussions of Bermudian gang violence feel that white people have little to contribute to these conversations, as the effects of the violence are felt most acutely by black families. In this way, crime talk reveals the extent to which white and black worlds in Bermuda remain as segregated as they have always been. The inability of white discussants to meaningfully participate in conversations around the history and decline of black institutions speaks to the discrepancy between white and black realities.

A Black Problem

With such a disconnect in understanding and lived experience, the question of the place white discussants have in conversations about gang violence frequently arises within crime talk. This is uncomfortably balanced with how white voices are often privileged over black voices, even when they are conveying the same message. This furthers the impression that white voices are privileged over firsthand experience. George told me about how he reacts to news of a shooting.

'I have three sons - 15, 20 and 25. And any given day that I hear or get a WhatsApp message 'somebody just got shot' I have to immediately call the 25 year old. 'Hey, you cool man?' Or WhatsApp, if it the ticks don't turn blue in five minutes I'm starting to go into panic mode. So as a father, every time I hear about a black man getting shot - and it's never been a white victim - every time I hear about a young black man getting shot I have to go into panic mode. You have this almost anxiety attack, a controlled anxiety attack. 'Son, you alright?' Four minutes gone by, it ain't gone blue. 'Hey, is your brother home?' 'Yeah, he's asleep, or he's watching a football game.' Oh, thank god, it ain't my son. So you've gone from panic to relief. But it's a selfish relief. Somebody's son is dead but it ain't mine. Woo! Then a realisation that…who is the person who got killed? Do I know him? Do I know their parents? And that's usually the case. It's this continuous cycle that as a father, or most parents of

black sons are going through. And part of your mind says, when is the day somebody's going to tell you 'Well, it is your son. He got shot just because he's in the wrong place at the wrong time.' A guy I worked with, his son got stabbed a couple years ago and died. One guy got shot and survived two weeks ago. The guy who got shot and survived, he's my son's cousin. The guy who got shot and died, his father and I used to play rugby together in school. Immediately when I saw Mello, like there's only so many black Mellos in this country. I didn't know which one was his father, but I know most of the Mellos. So you see all that, these are your initial reaction that you have to deal with. And after you deal with all these initial emotive reactions, that's when you start to do the analysis, peeling apart the layers of the onion to try to study what's the psychology behind all these shootings.'

The #BlackLivesMatter political movement was started to protest the profiling and murder of black Americans by police officers. Social media was vital in the dissemination of the message of this movement, and the influence leaked into discourse around race relations overseas. Technology became an equalising platform for discourse across age, race and gender, where '(s)ocial media serves as a public sphere where youth of color are particularly skilled and well equipped to gain some amount of power over public discourse to express their experiences and viewpoints' (Carney 2016: 196). Where #BlackLivesMatter does seem to enter into Bermudian crime discourse is in relation to white indifference towards black Bermudian deaths as a result of gang violence. I asked George, from his perspective as a commentator on Bermudian race relations, if he thought the #BlackLivesMatter Movement in America had influenced political consciousness in Bermuda.

'Well, yes and no. It's not like blacks are getting killed by police in Bermuda and you can say 'see? It's not just us!' So there's no parallel on that level. We would be the first ones to say 'Well that's happening in America, that ain't happening here.' I was in New York in June. I'm sitting down in my car right in Manhattan. I heard all this shouting, first I didn't pay it no mind. Then I look in my mirror, I see all these people

walking down the street. I'm like oh wow, what's this? So I walk down there and I hear 'Black Lives Matter!' 'Black Lives Matter!' I'm like wow! A protest! Just up my alley! I had my camera with me. And what shocked me, cuz this was just after Philando Castile got killed, what shocked me was that, looking at the people protesting, I was like, damn. This is mostly white people. That's something I would never see here. Never in a million years going to see that here. You might get one or two whites. But 70% of the people protesting were white? No. That's why I say there's no parallel here.'

From observing crime discourse it is clear there is a debate among some discussants whether white people have a place participating in discussions about gang violence at all, when it could be argued this issue almost solely affects black Bermudians. As 'Angela Furbert' (F, Bermudian, black, D) put it on the Minister for National Security's Facebook post in 2017:

> *100% of the men shot and murdered are black*
> *100% of those serving life for these crimes are black*
> *100% of the fatherless children left behind are black*
> *100% of the families mourning the deaths of their son's are black!*

The homogeneity of the victims of the violence provokes discussions focused towards the black Bermudian community.[4] A September 2016 Royal Gazette article interviewing a driving mother sparked such a discussion.

> ***mutual Respect •***
> *I couldn't agree more that this is ALL our problem. There are those who are stuck in their rut of white privilege, or this is only a black problem caused by whites rhetoric, but we all live here together and it's together we need to fix this*

[4] It should be noted that Joshua Rowse has since been regarded as the first white victim of gang violence, after his death by stabbing in June 2020.

JAMOT •

It's a Black problem!! Right now it's NOT a Bermuda problem! IB is chugging along. So is Tourism. So is AC. So is white Bermuda.
It will become a BERMUDA problem when this directly affects the WHITE community as well and in a real financial way!! This applies to other places overseas. It only happens in black neighbourhoods. White suburbia turns a blind eye and are immune.
*Were you there at the forum last night? Where are your people mR in attending these forums, creating grass roots organizations and the like if it is a BERMUDA problem? Is it Black Lives Matter or All Lives Matter? Which is it?? Cut the cr*p….*

The notion that white Bermuda and business Bermuda do not care about gang violence is echoed in multiple conversations about violence. A June 2016 Royal Gazette article - 'Gun Crime, do we care enough?' accumulated several comments on this very topic, some of which are detailed below:

whiteskinnedblackman •

Ain't my problem, its your problem!

Bermuda Gal •

No Bermuda doesn't care. As long as young, black males are being killed in predominantly black neighborhoods, then Bermuda won't care much. The police might get lucky and catch somebody, they might not. The government authorities will extend their condolences, then forget al.l about it. They will go home and lay their heads on their pillows and have a good night's sleep. Safe.

What has to happen for Bermuda to care is for a shooting to happen to a white person, or in a white neighborhood, or in a wealthy one like Fairylands or Tuckers Town. It has to happen somewhere other than in "the hood." It has to

happen to someone "important" or high ranking for Bermuda to care. Other than that, Bermuda doesn't care.

Archibald •

Sorry, is Bermuda as an entity white? How can "Bermuda" not care as long as it is only young, black males. What a lot of nonsense!

The idea that until there is a white victim of gun violence or until the activity spreads to white neighbourhoods that nothing will be done is a common theme in discussions of gang violence. D, community activist and youth pastor, echoed these sentiments, saying that the disregard for black victims of crime 'are ingrained into our culture. Today, if some rich white person was affected or got killed then I strongly believe that we would see a different response. But again. It don't knock on their doors.'

The localised nature of violence in Bermuda acts to confine concern within communities. 'The only time you will hear white people scream out about gang violence is when it affects them. The unwritten rule is 'they're killing each other, let them kill each other', Michael, the former MP and prosecutor, said. 'We have such a large expatriate population, and the expats are not committed to any social justice or social change in Bermuda.'

The feeling that white Bermuda does not care about gang violence has persisted despite the protestations of many white bloggers. There is a conception of the white person, rich person or tourist as the 'ideal victims' to elicit state response.

***Kyle Durham** what do u think will happen to Bermuda's pretty little economy if a tourist gets shot or a CEO of a major company??*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

[May 2011]

Additionally, despite white people who are outspoken on gang issues and express concern, a number adopt a callous approach to incidents of violence.

> ***Anita Roberts*** *If I hear ONE MORE white person say they are only killing themselves I am going to SCREAM! We need to do better!*
>
> (F, Bermudian, white, D)
>
> [December 2016]

> ***Marco Jackson*** *what's the problem? just gang bangers killing other gang bangers. I say they're doing us all a favour*
>
> (M, British, white, B)
>
> [December 2015]

The Bermudian translation of #BlackLivesMatter is not a protest of state sanctioned violence but rather a protest of white apathy in response to gang violence as demonstrated in crime discourse. Victims of gang violence are deemed by unsympathetic crime talkers to be imperfect, their lives devalued in comparison to white lives (Hawkins 1987). In this sort of society, 'Black on White crime, especially violent crime, will be viewed as the move serious type of harm and punished the most severely because it violates both the social norms designating White power and privilege over Blacks and the prevailing legal norms against crime and violence more generally' (Jennings et al. 2014: 385). White responses (and lack of) to gang violence

in crime talk reflect the power structure of Bermudian society and the subsequent value given to marginalised black men in the wider Bermudian community.

White apathy regarding gang violence and white adherence to individualist narratives to explain it speaks ultimately to white anxiety about race. Some have a desperate reflexive need to prove 'I'm not one of the bad whites' by performative and public displays of knowledge of black Bermudian history and institutional racism to prove how 'woke' and 'not racist' they are. Others cling to the colour-blind narrative where racism is an extinct concept defined by conscious intent. These vastly different responses to crime achieve the same result - alleviating anxiety about being 'the racist' and being in some way responsible for the chaos on the streets. White Bermudians have no fear of dying in the street, but are deeply unsettled at the prospect of being attacked regarding their privilege. It is more comfortable to retreat into 'post-racial' discourse, making visible discrimination invisible and resting on 'a powerful vocabulary of personal responsibility' (Lerman and Weaver 2014: 167).

Scepticism of white 'concern' often evolves into condemnation of white involvement in anti-gang policy making, particularly when this involves the recruitment of overseas experts. As Bermuda is a British territory, occasionally in discussions of gang violence there is mention of the possibility of recruiting help from the UK. 'Akil Swan' wrote in February 2011 that 'assistance from the UK is not gonna happen. It would signal defeat in the eyes of the PLP to go knocking at the colonial door.' Bermuda's contested colonial status politicises receipt of British assistance; assistance from other countries, however, is not necessarily preferable. Take for example, this conversation regarding a policy consultation visit from David Kennedy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in April 2013:

Malik Minors *David Kennedy's advice: 'The first thing we all need to face is that white folks don't live this way.' And my tax dollars are helping to pay for this?*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

George Talbot *did we really need to pay a guy to tell us most white folks don't suffer? They lost me as soon as they said money wasn't the issue*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

Alana Darrell *I mean, where's the lie? I think he's right. White folks don't like in fear of their children being gunned down or neighbourhoods shot up. We've heard it said the response to the violence in Bermy would be different if the victims and communities were white. I don't see where he disagrees with this…*

(F, Bermudian, biracial, B)

Remy Furbert *He talked about gangs typically forming in communities of 'historically damaged, deeply disenfranchised' ethnic minorities, with African-American neighbourhoods the worst affected in the American context. Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda (CURB) had a forum in 2010 looking at the causes of gang violence, linked the activity to our history and we were accused of playing the race card.*

(M, Bermudian, black, D)

The point of this conversation is not to disprove Kennedy's assertions about race, inequality and violence but rather to highlight the ways in which black Bermudians are silenced when they make the very same observations. Race is at the very core of Bermudian life. With power comes validity - both in the telling of history

and the labelling of ‘experts’. In this way, crime talk reveals again the absence of change - not only in the topics of discourse, but in the empowering of white speakers.

Conclusion

When talk about crime meets talk about race, emotions run high. Speakers can be defensive, cautious about causing offence and anxious about being judged. The consistencies in Bermudian identity and discourse, rather than change, are stark when Bermudians utilise the frame of race to address gang violence. Crime talk maps group knowledge of Bermudian history and experience of violence, reproducing the persistence of separate white and black Bermudian worlds. Crime talk reveals internal and external tensions within the white community regarding where responsibility lies for crime and where white voices belong in discussions of black marginalisation and victimisation. Likewise, though black Bermudians have greater literacy in the ways in which racism suppressed black power in the past and continues to do so in the present, crime talk with whites is dominated by explaining and outlining the history, obscuring the degree to which black Bermudians genuinely subscribe to structuralist narratives. There is evidence that black Bermudians do endorse narratives of personal responsibility in relation to crime, but are loath to do so publicly for fear of being perceived to be endorsing white supremacist dogma. Racialised crime discourse illustrates the divisions inherent in being Bermudian, divisions which existed long before the emergence of gang violence on the island and continue to affect the ways in which Bermudians communicate with one another. However, the presence and absence of self-censorship across different forums is not all doom and gloom - there is a hint of potential that there is space for transformation in private crime talk.

Chapter Seven

Conceptions of Gender in Crime Talk

When race and community are mobilised in crime talk, they are connected by a concept of change. Community-focused crime talk masks old continuities with a surface-level discussion of change. Race-focused crime talk debates the extent to which societal change has taken place. The concept of change, even the absence of change, rarely appears when crime talk focuses on gender. Orthodox gender roles are almost unanimously affirmed, without the debate or masking. Crime talk has not triggered a revision of masculinity and gender norms on the island, but underlines their persistence.

The vast majority of shooting victims have been black men. There has only been one woman murdered by a firearm: Garrina Cann in 2020. As a result, when gender appears in talk about gun violence in Bermuda, the focus is usually on black Bermudian men and masculinity. There is a difference between being masculine and simply being male - whereas the latter is a matter of physiological biology, masculinity is a status to be attained and not predetermined by body alone. Just as race straddles the gap between biology and culture, masculinity is intertwined in both, yet ultimately is culturally reinforced and reproduced. Newell (2009: 247) expresses this more concisely: defining masculinity as 'simultaneously carnal and cultural.' An investigation of Bermudian constructions of gender in crime talk illuminates the dominant frames of successful masculinity on the island - the expectations placed on Bermudian men, on black Bermudian men, and the ways in which Bermudian male identity is affixed to white patriarchal values. Hidden within these explicit statements

of ‘real’ manhood are implicit expectations of womanhood. Within Bermudian crime talk, both black men and black women are criticised for failing to embody white orthodox gender roles.

Gendered crime-talk operates similarly to race- and community-focused crime talk in attempting to make sense of the causes of gang violence. Much of this discussion echoes the conversations that take place in racialised crime talk. This makes sense, as the vast majority of gang members and shooting victims in Bermuda are black men - the ways in which their masculinity is shaped and later interrogated cannot be considered in isolation from their race. Talk about gang violence in Bermuda is talk about black men in Bermuda. As a result, it is difficult to approach gender in isolation from race regarding this topic. There is not a debate about structural inequality or individual responsibility when gender is introduced into conversations around race and crime. A possible reason for this is the notable absence of white voices when conversations focus specifically on black masculinity. The data collected suggest that white discussants are more willing to undermine the masculinity of gang members generally and are less willing to engage with their blackness. This is possibly self-censorship for similar reasons as in discussions about race and crime. However, there was no indication in the data collected that there is a more nuanced discussion of gender and gang violence by white discussants in private settings, as can happen when race is considered in isolation from gender.

This chapter examines what happens when Bermudians talk about gender and crime under four sub-themes. The first sub-theme is how crime talk is subversively utilised by speakers to emasculate gang members. Gang membership is

the ultimate expression of hyper-masculinity, and emasculating crime talk taunts gang members by accusing them of being precisely what they fear. The second sub-theme is how structural inequality has influenced the development of a pathological black Bermudian masculinity. The third sub-theme is the perception that gang violence is caused by the decline of the black nuclear family. The final thematic thread is apportioning blame to women for male criminality. These themes point to how gendered crime talk reveals deeply ingrained, historically conditioned attitudes about Bermudian gender roles. Bermudian society is a white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy - white male power, capitalist success and heterosexuality have socio-political dominance. Patriarchy is not defined or used in this chapter to reflect a binary system of gender oppression, it also encompasses intersections of oppression along the lines of race, class and sexuality. Crime has not triggered a critique but an adamant re-emphasis of existing normative ideals about gender. The nature and content of Bermudian conversations about crime and gender leave no space for reconception or transformation of gendered Bermudian identities.

Emasculation in Crime Talk

A great deal of gendered talk around gang violence in Bermuda seeks to emasculate those involved in gangs, whether they be denounced as ‘gay’ or just ‘little boys playing hard men.’ News of Idris’ imprisonment in March 2011 prompted a slew of comments on Bernews intimating that he would be the target of unwanted homosexual attention when in Westgate.

> ***BOO*** *says:*
> *I MISS MY BABY!!*

Love my island! *says:*

LOL he will be someone else's baby in Westgate now!

YOUR ACTIONS WILL BE JUDGED *says:*

I'M QUITE HAPPY THAT SCUM BAG GOT A LITTLE TIME..DON'T DROP THE SOAP!

A Facebook conversation about a July 2017 Royal Gazette article saw 'gay' being utilised as an insult to emasculate the men involved in the reported shooting.

Jared Alvarez *I am fresh out of compassion for shit like this. Live by the sword, die by the sword. Maybe all the social justice warriors out there feel like starting a petition. I mean y'all love to protest for the gays*

(M, Bermudian, biracial, C)

Aaron Emery *wtf are the police gonna do? stand guard over all the gay thugs on the island*

(M, Bermudian, black, B)

Bala Patel *what exactly is a gay thug?*

(F, Canadian, south asian, B)

Aaron Emery *you can go to jail to live a gay life*

Roxanne James *okay not everybody that goes to prison is gay or becomes gay… let's comment with solutions not judgement*

(F, Bermudian, black, C)

These sorts of jokes are not unusual upon news that a gang member has been imprisoned, and are reflective of the underlying culture of homophobia in

Bermudian society. The comment by 'Roxanne' introduces a level of contention, but notably it isn't a critique of gay being used as an insult, but instead a critique of a generalisation that all prisoners are gay or 'turned gay' in prison. Roxanne's use of the word judgement additionally suggests that being gay is something that someone can be judged for.

Why is homosexuality considered emasculating? Connell (1995) refers to the 'patriarchal dividend' of images and discourse that connect masculinity with power and femininity with weakness, with homosexuality associated with femininity (Jarvis 2006, Pronger 1990, Channon and Matthews 2015). This symbolic discourse, as Channon and Matthews put it, 'has long been seen to support the power relations at work in a gender order that privileges heterosexual men at the expense of homosexuals and women' (2015: 938). Emasculating discourse seeks to further delegitimise gang members' illegitimate pursuit of hegemonic masculinity - denouncing them as gay or little boys publicly undermines violence as a feature of orthodox masculinity. Jacob, former member of the Bermuda Police Service's Gang Targeting Unit, had no respect to spare for the gunmen, and used feminised insults to convey this:

'Back in the day all it was was knives. Before that it was helmets….It's a very personal crime, to thrust a knife into somebody. Whereas with a gun well, unless you're doing an execution style shooting there's distance there. Maybe that's the reason? And they're a bunch of pussies. They will just shoot into a crowd. It's so much easier. It's the cowardly way to do it. If you have a beef with somebody, you either go up and fight them one on one or you try to kill them. It sounds awful coming from a policeman but if you have a beef with somebody then just go up and shoot them in the head. So nobody else gets hurt. There's no collateral damage. They're cowards. They're all cowards. The way they do business.'

His use of ‘pussies’ serves to feminise the men involved. This is similar to a March 2010 post in an anti-gang group, which used both feminising and infantilising language to denounce gang members.

> ***Shauntae Bean*** *UNMANLY BOYS WHO ARE BREAKING DOWN OUR COMMUNITY! Bermuda is turning into Atlanta*
>
> (F, Bermudian, black, B)

> ***Shawn Williams*** *all of us need to stop calling these groups of students Gangs! It just feeds their ego. Just call them groups of boys and girls! Men are in gangs and these little boys sure ain’t men!*
>
> *(M, Bermudian, black, D)*

> ***Thomas Mello*** *These guys have lost sight of what it means to be men. Too many are babying the young men on this island!*
>
> *(M, Bermudian, white, D)*

Crime talk is utilised here to disempower men who commit violent crimes and reject their masculinity, and more specifically their Bermudian masculinity. Masculinity is attached to place, and there is a sense that this might be what men overseas do, but it’s not reflective of how Bermudian men should behave. Despite the gang members overtly displaying characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, the criminal connection undermines this in the eyes of the Bermudian public. Contrastingly, positive news about young black men is greeted with declarations of ‘real manhood’. A young man in 2014 released a song about stopping the violence, and when the Royal Gazette shared an article about this on Facebook, ‘Helen Mary’ (F, Bermudian, white, C) responded quickly to say that ‘This is the face of a REAL man!! THANK YOU on behalf of our kids, thank you.’

There is very little evidence in the conversations observed of meaningful engagement with the connection between gang violence and toxic masculinity. 'Peter Michaels' (M, Canadian, white, D) wrote in a September 2015 Facebook discussion that 'Gang culture is a macho culture. Now he has respect.' 'Felicity Hayward' (F, Bermudian, black E) replied on how 'Our young men must learn that the gang is not a rite of passage into manhood!' Gang violence is paradoxically the height of 'macho' masculinity, yet it is rejected as being representative of or an extreme iteration of Bermudian masculinity. bell hooks (1982: 104) writes of how patriarchal culture 'condones violence in men as a positive expression of masculinity' so that 'the ability to use force against another person - i.e, oppress them - may be less an expression of self hatred than a rewarding, fulfilling act'. She adds that '(c)arrying a gun and being prepared to use it are the ways [black men] publicly assert their 'masculine' strength" (ibid.). Beyond the occasional acknowledgement of the machismo of gang culture and the sense of power that gang members can feel, there is almost no critical engagement in Bermudian crime talk of the social conditioning that has created a connection between personal power and the capacity to oppress others. An outlier amongst other crime talkers, D told me of how he works to counter toxic masculinity in his gang diversion work with young school children:

'Especially in the lower ages, it's about letting boys know that it's okay to express your emotions. It is taught ubiquitously that men don't cry. 'Real men'. If you excuse the expression, I don't mean this to be offensive, but again, growing up in certain houses, it would be like - oh you're gay? Like, 'that's some pussy stuff'. Like, 'stop being a faggot'. So you have boys who have real emotions, who feel certain things but you're taught to bottle them. And we know it, like, if you shake up a soda enough, by the time the cap comes off, whether it's intentional or not, it's going to explode, right? So that's what we see happening with toxic masculinity, it's like

having a soda that you're just shaking up, shaking up, and all it takes is one drop and everything explodes everywhere. So we need to implore boys, implore men - 'be in touch with your emotions'. It's okay. It doesn't make you less of a man. You're actually more of a man when you are able to healthily express yourself. Cry, it's okay. The human body was made to do it. It's what your body does. It's a release.'

Crime talk shapes membership to social groups, and in this respect it marks the boundaries of qualification for Bermudian masculinity. Homophobic slurs are not directed solely at gay targets, but are utilised in discourse to separate from the normative (Cameron 1997, Duncan 1999). This style of discourse is so widespread it can be compared to euphemistic naming, and in this respect it outlines how identities of the observers (those engaging in crime talk) are collectively constructed against the subjects of crime talk in an act of what Valentine (1998) terms 'contrastive identification.' Emasculating language assigns emasculated identities upon the recipients of such language, as 'Defining the (O)ther implicitly characterises the (S)elf' (ibid.: 38). This reinforces the boundaries of accepted and rejected identities, and the boundaries between the speaker and the subject of conversation. Homophobic language labels homosexuality as deviant and distances homosexuality from masculinity, while at the same time shielding the speaker from similar labels. In this way, homophobic language can be utilised to simultaneously attack the subject and protect the speaker from the same accusations. Explicitly homophobic slurs against gang members were only observed to come from male speakers and writers. Herek (1986: 563) looks at hierarchies of masculinities in American society which are strikingly similar to the Bermudian context, where 'to be 'a man' in contemporary American society is to be homophobic - that is, to be hostile toward homosexual persons in general and gay men in particular.'

Why is Bermudian masculinity so tenaciously 'hetero'? The cultural influence of the Christian church in Bermuda has significantly contributed to a predominance of homophobic thought and attitudes, even reflected in legislation. 'Sodomy' was illegal in Bermuda until the passing of the Stubbs Bill in 1994, and the Human Rights Act was amended to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in 2013. The legal age of consent was higher for gay male sex than for heterosexual or lesbian sex up until 2019. Anti-gay attitudes are pervasive and longstanding, and seep into crime talk when being gay, to be 'like a woman', is deemed an insult. In turn, the person hurling the insult attempts to place themselves as far away as possible from the condemned identities. Crime talk asserts not only the masculinity of the speaker but collective structures of acceptable societal masculinity - to not be gay, to not be effeminate, to not be criminal. Crime talk is utilised to belittle and emasculate the hypermasculine gang members, but there is no critical inspection of the origins of this hypermasculinity or reflection on the potential societal harms that can emerge from rigid gender boundaries.

Marginalised Men

Gendered crime talk intersects with racialised talk in that it revolves around the assertion that young black men are being left behind by society and institutions. This involves a particular construction of the 'marginalised black man' that arguably serves to further marginalise the targets of this construction. Additionally, crime talk reveals the extent to which successful Bermudian masculinity is tied to success within a capitalist framework, and the challenges of reconciling this conception of masculinity with an acknowledgement of structural inequality.

Responses to gang violence reflect the power and influence of heteropatriarchal normative thinking in Bermudian society. This in turn shapes the Bermudian masculine *habitus.* Baird writes how Bourdieu's *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977, 1989, 1990) is a useful tool in understanding the reproduction of what Cloward and Ohlin (1960: 48) describe as a 'deep-seated' urge for manhood, 'whilst structural constraints and opportunities shape how masculinity plays out in practice the social world' (Baird 2012: 182). In order to explain delinquent male behaviour, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) formed their 'Illegitimate Opportunities' theory. Drawing on the Durkheimian concept of anomie and Merton's (1938) strain theory, they focus on the disparity between aspiration and opportunity available to working class adolescents.

'Adolescents who form delinquent subcultures, we suggest, have internalised an emphasis on conventional goals. Faced with limitations on legitimate avenues of access to these goals, and unable to revise their aspirations downward, they experience intense frustrations; the exploration of nonconformist alternatives may be the result.'

Cloward and Ohlin (1960: 86)

As a result, writes Baird (2012: 182), 'the reproduction of masculinity can be linked to the reproduction of urban violence in contexts of socio-economic exclusion.' If structural inequality limits a man's ability to be successful legitimately, then he will attempt to find the same power and economic status through illegitimate means.

Crime talk maps the structural inequalities in Bermudian society, with many discussants positing explanations for black male gang membership similar to Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) illegitimate pursuit of successful manhood. The cultural tribalism that circulates through Bermudian society is not confined to race and

community groups - it is equally exhibited in spheres of masculinity. Walking through the central business district of Hamilton, you can witness the conformist nature of Bermudian male behaviour, watching groups of men in the predominantly white sphere of corporate business travelling in packs, the younger ones eager to imitate and impress the elders, from mannerisms to style of dress. These symbols of 'successful masculinity' (i.e. signifiers attributed to economic success in international business) are pervasive in the city and have influence beyond its borders. You are a member of this world, or you aren't - and if you aren't, what world do you belong to?

D spoke of the ways in which disenfranchising young men can be a risk factor for gang involvement, and how he witnesses this play out in his outreach work in schools.

'You're disenfranchised, so it's a case of, I'm not got nothing going on for myself at home, but I'm gonna have something going on for myself up here. Or you grow up in households where your power and your voice was taken from you. I couldn't have a voice here, but I'm gonna be heard and respected here. Or you have complete institutional distrust, which is a real thing as well. Which sometimes begins with the institution, other times begins at home. Like 'my momma and my daddy left me, so any type of authority figure I rebel against, period, because they don't really care - nobody loves me.' Those types of things we deal with daily.'

Freddy, an influential black Bermudian politician, was careful with his words on this subject.

'Where we are now in Bermuda, we're still not quite…there with those young men. We have this gap where our young black men are really not getting as much attention, a gap that we're not addressing, of young people when they get out of school. Not everybody's gonna be university material, some are going to be…they have potential! But there's no avenue for them to find where they can focus

themselves. So they're left. When you look at the demographic of young men in gangs, it's really just a particular age group. You're not finding grey haired men sitting in Parkside or 42.'

George, the political opinion columnist, trod equally carefully, stressing the importance of steering clear of generalisations on the backgrounds of the young men who had joined gangs.

'Even children from the best of homes can be seduced into doing these sorts of things or applauding these sorts of things. And all of this has roots in racism obviously because if you look at who the victims are, at who the perpetrators are, there's no whites, no Filipino. It's all black. So why, coincidentally, is it all black people getting involved in this sort of thing? White males have got as much testosterone, hormones as the rest of us. Why aren't they longing to hold a gun?'

George's point on the absence of white male gang members parallels Cloward and Ohlin's illegitimate opportunities theory against the contextual backdrop of Bermudian racial inequality. If gang membership and murder represent the most illegitimate of criminally attained masculinity, then black men represent the most marginalised Bermudian social group, the 'consequence of a set of exploitative social relations endemic to racial capitalism' (Gordon 1997: 37). Gordon warns that socioeconomic context must be explicitly understand through the 'operative influence' of oppression, else 'the Black male response to structural constraint, almost by definition, is understood as unconscious, illogical, and/or pathological, and passively disintegrative, rather than internally coherent, resistant, and/or constitutive' (ibid.: 39).

hooks is sceptical about connecting masculinity with the attainment of 'success', connecting this with an internalisation of white patriarchy and male competition. She writes that the 'expressions of rage' by black men who espouse this

theory of economic emasculation 'are less a critique of the white male patriarchal social order and more a reaction against the fact that they have not been allowed full participation in the power game' (1982: 94). The prominence of this theory in Bermudian discourse reflects the cultural power of white middle class patriarchal values and the extent to which these have infiltrated black middle class consciousness in Bermuda. Solomon, a black Bermudian educator and activist, focused on the need for positive images of black masculinity:

'They are being caught up by the society that is subconsciously showing them negative images of what black males are supposed to be, tied into those ideas where being smart means that you're acting white. When you're talking about racial dynamics and the racial structure of Bermuda and connecting it to gang violence a lot of it is because some of these young black males feel they don't necessarily have a place in the formal society, in the formal world. They're not necessarily going to get a job in the reinsurance company downtown and so they find their way to survive, like 'that is what the whites control and this is our market', this is where we can make our money.'

Solomon's reflection on the disenfranchisement of young black Bermudian men coupled with a deluge of negative images of black manhood in popular media is much like the point made by Jackson (2006: 2), writing of 'the negative inscriptions associated with the Black masculine body as criminal, angry and incapacitated… exacerbated by popular cultural portrayals of Black males, which make it almost impossible to retrieve custody of the meanings associated with blackness and Black males.' Crime talk, whether supporting or challenging this imagery, is involved in its reproduction - the frequency in which the paradigm of young black men having no stake in Bermudian society's success reflects not only the demography of the membership of 'successful' Bermudian communities but also the intense power of the

marginalisation as it filters through Bermudian discourse. As Gause (2005: 28) writes about the American experience, 'the stigmatisation of African American males has been embraced not only by European Americans, but by African Americans as well' - similarly, this discursive stigmatisation has filtered into general Bermudian consciousness.

Nathan, a biracial Bermudian former Commissioner of Corrections, pointed to the intrinsic need to belong as being one of many explanations for why gang life might be attractive for young black Bermudian men.

'Out on the street they find camaraderie, companionship, a sense of security, money, you know, selling drugs, whatever hustling they do. They can get girls, they can get plenty of drugs, alcohol. Sex, drugs and rock and roll. They'll find in a gang. To use a cliché. But the gang fulfils a void in some of these young men's lives. I see it now and then in young men who are going to high school and not doing well for a number of reasons. And they seem to be sucked into this vortex where gangs provide a sense of security and acceptance. And they survive. They survive these streets. They become disenfranchised from the pretty picture we paint of Bermuda, as being so successful and well off, but we leave behind these young men.'

Elijah, who focused his activism in particular on empowering black men, felt that a lack of male role models combined created over-feminised environments, contributing to a disenfranchisement and cultural emasculation of young black Bermudian men.

'They do not feel they have an adequate place in society. They are in a very over feminised environment where most of these guys are in home where women are dominant, they go to school where there are over dominant females, and then they go into church where there are old church ladies, it feeds into this over feminised

environment where their masculinity is misinterpreted as being destructive or negative. Every time they try to do anything it's 'you're making too much noise, you're moving' and so you find that the energy of the young males will always be misinterpreted and suppressed. The gang is satisfying a need to belong.'

This framing of joining a gang as an escape from a feminised to a masculinised environment was not exclusive to Elijah's analysis. This Moynihanian (1965) approach to a deficiency in male authority figures and an over-feminised environment on having a detrimental effect on the development of healthy black masculinities is another common thread in Bermudian crime talk discourse. The connection between feminised environments and hyper-masculine behaviour points to the perception that powerful Bermudian women disempower Bermudian men - and the masculine pursuit of power supersedes moral conscience. The pursuit of power described in this case is a direct response to the experience of being disempowered - whether through emasculation in female controlled environments or structural disenfranchisement.

White speakers like Thomas were more likely to focus on what fellow former politician Adam called the 'pull towards gang lifestyle' - where the masculine pursuits of power and status can be attained through gang violence. Adam explained how this affected his decisions in policy making when he was in politics:

'When a 10 year old says to you, 'I want to be an actuary, or a gang member' and you ask them why, and they say 'because they both get the good looking girls and cool cars', you understand that attraction. And if this is going to be an attractive job or career for someone, you're not ever going to arrest your way out of this.'

Thomas was firm in his stance:

'It's all about power. I mean, these guys have got jet skis, like MOB have jet skis and boats because they're on the water, whereas guys in town are landlocked. I was having lunch with a couple government ministers. And I said look, one of my constituents got knocked off his bike in broad daylight in front of Swizzle Inn. And then one of the ministers said I was there, he saw this! And that the young man was punching the 70 year old driver in the face and stuff, and the poor guy's trying to protect his chain. And the minister said I've been meaning to talk to you, that's your good friend's son. We're sure it's her son. He's the number one suspect. And I told her that and she was in total denial. It's always 'Not my boy, my boy's a good little boy.' And your boy's not a good little boy. [Adam] told me the other day he violently resisted arrest. These boys are not good little boys. And you see how these boys carry themselves. 'Not my Johnny, he's a nice little boy.' Your Johnny was a rat! Your Johnny was a rat, sweetheart.'

White speakers are more likely to focus on general qualities of masculinity that might attract young men to gang violence, or denounce gang member masculinity as toxic, without engaging with the race of gang members or the structural inequality that has led to their disenfranchisement. Interestingly, when race appears in crime talk there is frequently a debate about individual and collective responsibility for gang violence. When gender appears alongside race, these debates do not appear. This may be a self-censorship on the part of white speakers, a chasm of experience too wide to comfortably participate in public conversation. That being said, there was no indication in the data collected that white speakers were more comfortable talking about black masculinity gang violence in private than in public, as indicated with racial inequality and gang violence.

Generally, female discussants focused on the emotional wellbeing of young black men and the need for supportive rather than punitive approaches, though this

analysis is at odds with the focus on emasculation and pursuit of power that many of the male discussants proposed. Non-profit coordinators Sabrina and Esther identified unresolved trauma as a significant issue faced by young at-risk men and boys. Esther, a black Bermudian non-profit coordinator who has advised the government on community responses to gang violence, put it this way:

'We haven't done a good enough job with those kids who have experienced trauma. We're working with a young kid right now, well I say young kid, he's 21 and he has had a horrific past and therefore the miracle is that he hasn't been drawn to gangs, he's just been looking for love but he's smart enough to know that he's not going to find it there in a positive way. But he's had a horrific past, and the system has failed him to a certain degree. He's been overseas in programs but they yanked him back when the government lost money and all sorts. So the things that fuel gang involvement as most of us know, not everybody on the planet knows these days, is that children that lack love and nurturance and sense of self-worth, they go to find it somewhere because it is a basic need and so the key with programs is starting by mentoring children, you know, providing them with an environment of care and nurturance, empowering them to find a sense of self-worth.'

Sabrina estimated that around 98% of her clients are black, and that explicit and institutional racism affects their ability to follow legitimate pursuits of masculinity.

'There is a stigma when it comes to talking about this issue on the island. We can't have open dialogue about how racism has impacted this generation, and how it's still impacting them in the institutional racism that's occurring. So it's something that needs to be talked about because they experience it every day, they experience it when we place them in employment.'

The 'left behind' paradigm in Bermudian crime talk illuminates cultural scripts of black masculinity that run through Bermudian society. These cultural scripts are

informed by white imagination and reproduced in racialised and gendered crime discourse. These scripts are dangerous in that 'discourses about black men's bodies produce the political environment for symbolic, structural and physical violence not only against black men, but against the entire black community' (Alves 2014: 319). In this respect, representations of black masculinity relate to the empowerment of black communities which is reproduced in 'geographies of violence' (ibid.: 320) as seen on the island. Bermuda's historical anti-blackness has shaped discourse around the abilities of young black Bermudian men to achieve hegemonic white masculine success. The financial power of white Bermuda coup[led with the cultural power of white patriarchy has shaped the Bermudian conception of what it means to be a successful man. Bermudian history has been written as a story of white success and black subordination, and crime talk reveals the legacy of this history on Bermudian gender roles. Although, as evidenced here, much of gendered crime talk is black speakers drawing attention to the impact of marginalising imagery and perspectives around working class black masculinities, without meaningful participation from white speakers the spark of dialogue is snuffed out. Again, the transformative potential of crime talk is stifled.

Viljoen (2008: 313) writes that 'masculinity, like culture, is an ongoing multifaceted project that involves constant interaction between the individual and society'. In this way, crime talk can reveal the state of Bermudian masculinity, and attitudes towards black masculinity. The discussion about who a young black man should be orbits around the reality of moving through Bermuda as a black man. The cultural script of hegemonic Bermudian masculinity is relatively unchallenged in Bermudian crime talk, in contrast to discussions relating to community and race which are often platforms for debate. There is a noticeable lack of engagement from

white speakers in conversations around race, gender and violence, preferring to talk about masculinity more generally and stay away from the subject of race. Even if white speakers disagree with statements about structural racism and inequality, they do not debate and dissent in the same way that they do when race is mobilised in crime talk independent of gender. When gender is introduced in Bermudian crime talk, it leaves even less space to transform opinion and relationships, due to the hesitance of speakers to enter conversations and the 'patriarchal pedestal' upon which white hegemonic masculine ideals are placed.

Family Breakdown and Male Criminality

Many of the interviewees and certainly many of the social media and news commentators focused on family breakdown and lack of male role models as a contributing factor in gang violence, pointing to absent fathers as a contributing factor to black boys being raised in over-feminised environments. Solomon was hesitant to be so prescriptive, however:

'I think that by all means it's important to have a strong black male role model for young black men, but I wouldn't be one to necessarily say that 'female-led' households are part of the problem, or a core problem so to speak, because I think that outside the immediate family, young men have access to males within the community that can still serve as these positive male role models. In a small, close-knit community like Bermuda we have access to male role models, in our community, in our sports clubs, in our schools. I don't necessarily see it as a young man being raised by a lady and now all of a sudden he's in this bubble apart from other men. They're there.'

Lucas, a Black Bermudian educator and writer, wasn't so sure of this.

'So they're [black boys] *going from this environment of female teachers. To home where there's a female matriarch. To them turning on the TV where they'll definitely see white male images and probably less but still white female images. And the only images then they'll see of black males will probably be athletes and some sort of entertainment industry personality. And hence they'll form their mental picture of what it's meant to be as a black male from those images.'*

The black family as a centre of discussion around dysfunctionality and criminality in black communities is not an uncommon feature of crime talk and in turn reveals a great deal about structures of oppression in communities. Collins (1998: 27) wrote of how '(b)lack family organisation can be seen as shaped by the intersections of multiple systems of oppression as well as location where such systems are reproduced' reflecting 'multiple, synergistic and contradictory relations of how systems of oppression converge.' The relationship between the Bermudian discursive public with the subject of young black masculinity is a result of the convergence of a segregated history, longstanding racial inequality and the unchallenged reverence for capitalist hegemonic masculinity in Bermudian culture.

Comments about absent father figures are a frequent feature on threads about gang violence. The prevalence of this theory reflects Bermuda's strong heteropatriarchal Christian culture and a common perception of an ongoing erosion of Christian values. Take for example the following Facebook conversation from November 2014:

> ***Ruth Richardson*** *with the breakdown of the nuclear family, politicians are now the major role models in our community. We cannot excuse the poor behaviour of our leaders and then complain when the general population*

doesn't act right. As a pastor I must live above common behaviours. We need to ask more of the leaders of our country!

(F, Bermudian, black, D)

Elmore Gibbons *maybe the breakdown of the nuclear family has less to do with moral decay and more to do with the fact that is isn't and never has been reflective of human nature! It's a product of religious dogma. Maybe if we take away the shame from non-nuclear families we'll see children growing up with healthier minds. Let's not be surprised that a model that no longer works is being cast aside*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

Frazier (1939) theorised that the history of slavery and contemporary oppression and disenfranchisement 'birthed cultural pathos that displaced the patriarchal family system' (Hunter and Davis 1994: 22). According to this theory, female-led households interrupted black male socialisation, which caught black men in a cycle of perpetual boyhood (Bowman 1989, Moynihan 1965, Rainwater 1970). This theory, however, neglects the cultural power of white hegemonic patriarchy and the systemic constraints under which black men are able to achieve white masculine ideals and participate in white supremacist society. These systemic forces affect the development and 'appropriate expression of manhood' in low income black men, rendering them simultaneously 'victims and participants in their own destruction' (Hunter and Davis 1994: 23). This emasculation theory is 'based on the assumption that men find their identity through work and are personally fulfilled by acting as breadwinners' (hooks 1982: 93), without critiquing the realities of legitimate employment in a racist capitalist system. As Brenton points out, the 'breadwinner role' cannot successfully confirm manliness, as work itself is frequently 'fraught with de-humanizing - i.e, unmanning - influence' (1966: 199-200).

Imani, a black Bermudian police officer, didn't think absent father figures necessarily contributed to gang involvement.

'There're many factors that cause youth to join gangs. And a lot of people would say it's because of absent fathers, absent parents. You can say that, but it depends on that individual or how strong they are mentally because we have had gang members who've come from dual parent households that have money, are influential in the community but they've made that choice because that's just something they want to do…there's this kind of brotherhood love that they get from gangs that they don't get from their family members at home because they don't have a strong, positive role model, male or female, in their life. I think another factor that causes people to get in gangs is that parenting has changed, different from before where you had like the mother at home, making sure that the children were doing what they had to, packing their lunch. Where both parents have to work two jobs, or even if it's a single family where the mother's always working…there's no guidance for those children so they're out doing idle things, sitting on the wall, getting easily influenced to get involved in gangs.'

Family in this sense is both tied to cultural conceptions of positive manhood (i.e. the male head of the household) and the development of positive masculinity in boys. Crime talk here outlines the powerful symbolic ideal of nuclear families in Bermudian society, and in doing so neglects that patriarchy is not undermined by female-led households and that there are male role models to be found outside of the immediate family unit. Many feminist writers have dismissed this conception of black matriarchies as a myth which erases the oppression of black women (Bond and Peery 1970, Davis 1972). 'The term matriarch implies the existence of a social order in which women exercise social and political power,' writes hooks, 'a state which in no way resembles the condition of black women or all women in American society' (1982: 72).

Discussions of the breakdown of the nuclear family are infiltrated by discussions about racial inequality and white denialism. Again, white speakers are notably absent in discussions around racial inequality in relation to gender or family structure. Commenting on a 2016 Royal Gazette article, 'Aaron Madeiros', after appealing for men in the community to step up as role models for children around them, outlined the influence of structural inequality rather than familial breakdown in the landscape of crime in Bermuda:

> ***Aaron Madeiros •***
> *These problems aren't unique to the black community but let's stop kidding ourselves and recognize that it is exacerbated largely due to what has happened in the past. This is not to say personal choices don't play some factor in some cases - but there is nothing inherently different about black people than white people. So white people need to stop pretending we live in this perfect meritocracy.*

This idea of 'pretense' on the part of white Bermudians is interesting considering the lack of commentary in white crime talk about the structural origins of Bermudian gang masculinity. Isaiah, speaking to his academic studies of black Bermudian masculinity, urged for a deeper inspection of the state of black Bermudian manhood and the ways in which it has been shaped by centuries of economic inequality within an aggressively capitalist, individualist social framework.

'A lot of these men are hurt. A lot of these men are now grandfathers and were fathers who didn't communicate effectively with their children and struggled to share their love in ways beyond what you see on the table or a roof over your head. I think women in many ways have sought to fill that void….So more than role modelling, I think that there needs to be perhaps a reevaluation of what healthy black Bermudian

masculinity looks like, creating space for men to heal and to acknowledge the pain that they have experienced. They've done the best that they could and they've had to be strong and they've had to be hard because their lives haven't been easy but I think in the interim there's been some imbalance in as it relates to how they've communicated their love or lack thereof. This is not just a black family thing but the difference is, for many of our white families, when you have economic security there are things you don't have to worry about. You know what I mean? And so it's not just a black family issue but it does play out differently.'

Isaiah highlights the effect of structural inequality on the development of toxic or unhealthy masculinity. This form of crime talk accentuates the need for a general interrogation of contemporary Bermudian masculinity, which is modelled on capitalist success without a dismantling of structures of privilege. White toxic masculinity inflicts violence on others in perhaps more insidious ways than the overt toxic masculinity of gang violence - yet both emanate from the same harmful conceptions of what it means to be a Bermudian man.

Many of these conversations highlight the highly traditional conceptions of gender roles in Bermudian society and the relative inflexibility of Bermuda's communities towards unorthodox expressions of gender and familial structure. Eddie Campbell (M, Bermudian, black, B) wrote on Facebook in June 2011:

'My two kids will be in a gang from young. I'm preparing them for the gang life already, even though they are just 4 and 3. The gang leaders are me and their mother. The rest of the posse are the aunties, uncles, teachers, trusted friends that will surround them as they grow. I am the male lion of my pride, my wife is the mother lion but all the women in our family are the lionesses of our pride. We do not all have the same tasks but we all have the same responsibility: to protect the pride. The males ensure the area is safe, the females ensure the young are fed. Maybe that's traditional but that's why it works. The male has his role, the female has hers and

they carry those roles out daily. The woman of the house has to be wise, strong but still desirous to support her man. And be intelligent enough to take his direction and stop him in his path and suggest a better option when required.'

Several commentators questioned why so much responsibility was placed on male role models for societal ills, reflecting the immense pressure placed on (and the demonisation of) women in Bermudian society. A particularly exemplary exchange was found in the comment thread of a 2013 Royal Gazette article entitled 'As society falters, gangs fill the void' (Wilson 2013):

> ***Headphone Puma •***
> *Why does the blame automatically fall squarely on the men when a family unit is supposed to be headed by both man -and- wife? Women leave their men just as often (if not moreso) than men leave their women. In fact, the woman has more of an incentive to leave the man since she can just take him to court, demand child support (through a system which is already rigged to rule in her favor anyway). As a result, she can live off his payments while he gets to be her personal slave for the rest of his life. All without having to deal with the hardships of an actual relationship....Still think men are solely to blame for the broken home? I wouldn't be so quick to point fingers if I were you. Let's not play the blame-the-gender game. That's the easy way out.*
>
> ***Raymond J. C. Ray •***
> *I agree. My grandmother, (of 14 children) had said this, 'it is far-more easier for a girl to run with her skirt in the air than it is for a boy to run with his pants down pass the knees.*

Constance, an educator who has worked extensively in the Bermuda Corrections System, felt that 'dysfunctionality within families, mainly, absent fathers' served to displace young men. She was critical of women in these scenarios.

'Now we focus a lot on the males when it comes to gang violence. But you know, females are very much getting caught up in it as well. In fact some would argue that some of the issues that we presently see with gang violence, that there are females behind it. So, we can't just turn a blind eye and think that there is one issue to be tackled, one issue that's going to solve all our issues, it's a number of things and we have to really get behind these things and tackle them steadfastly. We've reached a crisis mode as far as I'm concerned. And it's going to get worse. We keep hearing people saying 'it's going to get worse, it's going to get worse, it's going to get worse.' And it is. It's going to get worse as long as we continue to operate like we're operating. We're going to see what we see and we're going to get what we get.'

Crime talk centred around the 'breakdown' of black families as a risk factor for gang criminality reveal the consequences of unchecked economic inequality in a culture which places pressure on men to achieve a specific vision of white hegemonic masculinity in business and family. Though this is a theme that appears when crime talk grapples with gender, again, there is no debate and little engagement with the subject from white speakers. Women are scapegoated for the issues that arise from toxically masculine environments, diagnosed as emerging from the hyper-feminine space left in the absence of male role models. Frequently the victims of sexual violence and psycho-physical oppression at the hands of men, the finger is pointed at women for their failure as carers of men rather than at the perpetrators of such violence. The absence of debate around presentations of traditional gender roles in Bermuda crime talk again limits its transformative potential.

Blaming Women

Constance's position of blaming women for male behaviour is not unusual in the landscape of Bermudian crime discourse. Heidensohn's (1989) principle of 'double deviance' is certainly applicable to a Bermudian context. If a woman is involved in

crime, it is doubly shocking and doubly condemnable compared to male criminal behaviour because women are not only transgressing legal boundaries but cultural boundaries that define acceptable female behaviour. There is considerable demonisation in discourse around women who may somehow be connected to men in gangs. Imani, drawing from her experiences as an officer in the Gang Targeting Unit, described the roles women can play in gang culture:

I've had incidences where girlfriends or mothers of gang members have held firearms, bullets, drugs, money, they're a place of safety, they provide alibis, they're snitches, they would go to a club and spy on rival gangs and notify them of the whereabouts of the person they're looking for and notify them for that person to be attacked or worst case scenario, murdered.'

Jacob described the lack of support available for women who were caught up in gang life:

'We don't have any support systems for women involved in gangs. There's nothing that we have for them. If a female has been wronged by a criminal or a gang member they're usually a very good source of information for the police. I'm not saying we prey on them but it's an angle that we can utilise. But one of the things I hate though is when these females have a child and they're just linked for life. No matter what route they want to take in their life they're linked to that person. It's unfortunate. And I hate seeing that, and I've seen that many times.'

Angie the American-Bermudian parole officer reflected on her experiences and the de facto mothering role she had undertaken with the men she supervised on parole.

'My husband worries about me. So do a lot of people. They think I'm crazy. But a lot of people can't connect with them. I don't know why I can. I'm white. I'm a paper Bermudian. Which is different and maybe that's why. I'm different. They can trust me

where they may not trust a Bermudian. Who knows. I think a lot of them see me as a nurturer for them. They come here around Christmastime and they want me to help them pick out cards for their mothers and their girlfriends and what should I get them for Christmas? You know. So they're regular. They just also, unfortunately, are dangerous. I don't judge them. I think that's a big thing. I had a mother ask me on Sunday, because I was in Somerset Sunday morning, does your husband know how these guys feel about you? Like does he really know? And I was like, well I don't know how they feel about me. And she said they look up to you, they see me as someone they can trust and that's someone that's gonna help them. And both groups have that and that's what you need to be a good street worker. That's the street credibility. '

Mothers seem to be a particular point of contention among both criminal justice workers and lay commenters. White speakers are less hesitant to weigh in on the role of black mothers and women in gang violence. 'Yesterday I was down at the house of one of the guys,' Angie told me, 'the mother of the other guy that went up who got remanded yesterday was there like effin' this and effin' that. A lot of times you'll see the mothers have enabled these guys. It's crazy.' Similarly, a comment on a September 2016 Royal Gazette article was critical of mothers:

> ***Bermuda Gal •***
> *Some of these mothers need to lay the blame where it belongs, at their own feet. When their kids are young, they consider them a burden and are out chasing men and having fun. Boys growing up with umpteen "daddies" in and out of their lives. Yes, the biological fathers bare responsibility as well, but truth be told, some of these women are straight up irresponsible. And before anybody jumps on me, who raised a lot of these young men? Their grandmothers!!*

This mother-blaming emerges from a legacy of sexism in Bermudian society. Women are expected to mother, to be carers and nurturers just as men are expected

to be providers. With this expectation comes the perception that 'mothering as a linear process in which child behaviour is a direct outcome of maternal behaviour alone' (Sommerfeld 1989:15). As carers, and particularly as sole carers in female-headed households, mothers are subject to scrutiny that fathers are not when it comes to the behaviour of their children. Referencing LeBlanc's 'Naked Motherhood: Shattering Illusions and Sharing Truths', Jackson and Mannix (2004: 151) write of the pressures on and vilification of single mothers, where 'single motherhood effectively complicates the already-complicated experience of motherhood with such factors as over-responsibility, loneliness, the relentless and often unsupported nature of the mothering experience and guilt at the perception they have somehow condemned their children to a life of stigma and poverty.' This public resentment is palpable in discourse around gang violence in Bermuda.

A November 2012 Royal Gazette article about a mother fearing gang members stalking her home looking for her son was met with little sympathy.

> ***watchful eyes •***
> *Come on mothers get tough, take off the kiddie gloves. But if children have not been given a way to decipher these kinds of things growing up you sure can't instil it in them as men! The horse is out d stable.'*
>
> ***Bermuda male •***
> *For the nth time, my son is a good boy and he's not in a gang. He only has 'grievous bodily harm', bladed weapon, serious assault on police officer, public drinking, traffic offences, stealing from people, regular assault, expelled from school etc HE"S NOT A GOOD BOY!! GANG MEMBER?' 'they are people he associates with and care for him and help him out' actually that WAS your job, now HE"S IN A GANG!!'*

Bermy Byrd Too •

I feel bad for this mother - yet I can't help but think - how did you raise your son?…Mother - ask yourself why? I'm sorry but I put all responsibility on this mother. She's afraid now - she should have thought about giving her son a better life when raising him.

In their 2011 study of the effects of children's criminality on mothers of offenders, Sturges and Hanrahan examine how child deviance is publicly connected to women's parenting. Just as in the case of gang violence in Bermuda, Sturges and Hanrahan found that 'mothers have been blamed for being either overly protective or overly permissive…Both neglectful and overly protective mothers have been accused of causing their children's juvenile delinquency' (2011: 987). Mothers are stigmatised and judged not only for being deficient mothers but additionally deficient women, for the paradigm of traditional gender roles is so pervasive in Bermudian society that woman and mother are inseparable - the child is an extension of the woman's self. Isaiah urged compassion in these cases.

'We have to remember that many of these women who are mothers were also daughters of men who did not affirm them. They are also partners or spouses or baby mamas or wives to men who have emerged out of a framework that has its own challenges. So you're also talking about broken women, many of them. So in the effort to compensate or overcompensate for some of the absences or the tensions that exist in a father son relationship, it can create imbalance. And mothers want to protect their sons and they'll do what it takes in trying to protect their sons. But sometimes in trying to protect their sons sometimes they're unwilling to address some things that may need to be. I think both fathers and mothers have a role to play in the healthy development of a young person and you'll see many of us have emerged out of situations where you haven't had the ideal and that's fine, There's a give and take, and one of the beauties of the black family is that we've always taken what's less or sometimes what's meant to cause harm or what was maybe considered scraps and we've always made great things out of less. We are resilient

people certainly. And yet, and still, if we are going to continue to move forward in healthy ways we are going to have to consider what it took to survive the realities of being a person of colour in colonial spaces.'

It is important to note that there have been instances of women being harmed in gang conflicts, and one woman, Garrina Cann, was murdered by firearm in 2020, eleven years after the murder of her brother, Gary Cann. Unexpectedly, the gender of the victim had no influence on the crime talk brought on by the murder. In fact, in reviewing 152 Facebook comments over 6 public posts about her murder, there was only one comment specifically referencing her gender:

> ***Sally Bryant*** *Disgusting. What kind of cowardly scumbag would target a defenceless woman?*
>
> (F, British, white, D)

The other discussion threads emerging from Garrina's murder, in Facebook and on two Bernews articles and two Royal Gazette articles on the murder and subsequent arrest all followed the same trends as crime talk responding to murders of men. There was markedly more focus on the age of the alleged perpetrator of the murderer (he was 19 when he was arrested) than on the gender of the victim. This lack of attention to Garrina's gender is notable. It highlights the degree to which the victims of gun violence are not fully humanised, seen for all their intersectional complexities. Many comments allude to these murder victims not being 'entirely innocent'. Take for example, the following on a post from TNN Bermuda in October 2020:

> ***Jerome Brown*** *It would be interesting to know something about his motive, but our justice system is never transparent about that.*

(M, Bermudian, black, C)

Lois Coelho *I'm sure she was no angel, but whatever the reason no one deserves to be shot like an animal! This is a new low for Bermuda*

(F, Bermudian, white, C)

Tamisha Symonds *I don't know either of them…I understand the pain of her friends n family but this mentality don't come from nowhere…don't violence beget violence….our kids witness n experience mental physical sexual abuse, the community do nothin except celebrate them when they turn into killers on the streets. half of u are dating these bies*

(F, Bermudian, black, C)

Public outrage about murder with a gun does not take a different form if the victim is a woman. This may be due to a suspicious punitive public gaze about the victim's proximity to gangs of Bermuda, particularly as it was publicly reported that Garrina's brother was also a victim of gang violence. Additionally, Garrina was a black woman, and the public unwillingness to view her purely as a victim could speak to what Phipps (2021: 90) describes as the 'the illegibility of women of colour, and Black women especially, as victims'. This illegibility is a product of a historical narrative pitting black femininity against white femininity and a 'devaluation of black womanhood' originating from 'the sexual exploitation of black women during slavery that has not altered in the course of hundreds of years' (hooks 1982: 53). The devaluation of black womanhood post-slavery is now institutionalised in patriarchal society. Bermuda's history of slavery has not only impacted public perceptions of black men and their masculinity, but additionally public conceptions of black women and the value of their lives.

Placing blame and responsibility on women for the actions of men is a symptom of Bermuda's social relationship with gender. In diagnosing the behaviour of young black men, crime talkers point to the role of black women raising them in 'emasculating' environments. White speakers are not as hesitant to criticise black women as they are with black men. The additional diversity of voices on this topic does not foster debate, however, it instead highlights a consensus around acceptable performances of gender on the island and the public imagination of black womanhood. Just as expectations of hegemonic masculinity have a detrimental effect on Bermudian men, so do the pressures of orthodox femininity. The loyalty to the orthodox in the context of a racist society where many women must adapt and embody non-traditional familial roles to survive (and many do more than survive, they thrive) leaves them vulnerable to the punitive public gaze. The distinct lack of empathy towards black women in Bermudian crime talk reflects the extent to which gang violence has not changed but instead reinforces Bermudian conceptions of gender and race.

Conclusion

When analysing spoken and written crime talk, we are witness to a contemporary account of Bermudian conceptions of gender and acceptable performances of it. Crime talk does not appear to trigger debate around gender and Bermudian society. Rather, it reinforces the enduring and dominant patriarchal narratives, taunting the masculinity of gang members and blaming women for coddling them. This occurs without the contestation that arises with race- and community-focused crime talk. Gang violence has not triggered meaningful reconception of the role of gender in Bermudian society - the discourse that has emerged in response to the violence

predominantly reaffirms rather than dismantles the orthodox. This in turn becomes a way for people to feel as if they are proactively responding to gang violence while tapping into much older scripts about gender and race - as it is clear that gang culture is an expression of hyper-masculinity, the discursive emasculation of gang members is an act of public ridicule to undermine their efforts at machismo. White speakers are notably absent when gender is included in racialised crime talk, unless the focus is turned to women, when much of the critical hesitancy is lifted. When voices are not absent from gendered crime talk, they instead join a consensus reflecting acceptable performances of gender. Without a critical reckoning with the historical origins of Bermudian conceptions of masculinity and femininity and an understanding of how racist patriarchy has embedded these conceptions in public consciousness, there is no space for transformation of Bermudian attitudes towards gender in crime talk.

Conclusions

By triggering debate and doubt around Bermudian communities and racial inequalities, and in turn a notable absence of debate on the subject of gender, Bermudian responses to gang violence expose the tenacity of historically entrenched white supremacy and patriarchy in modern Bermudian life. The crime talk observed is repetitive - many discussants share the same opinions and hold the same debates over the course of the decade observed. Despite the presence of debate in crime talk, this has not produced notable shifts in group behaviour or opinion.

This thesis has contributed to the body of literature on social responses to crime and crime talk by expanding its scope beyond urban and suburban locations in the Global North. It has posed a similar set of questions in a different place: a colonial setting with its own particular history and hierarchies. The Bermudian grapevine reproduces existing social hierarchies, despite surface level talk about change. Crime talk has not transformed Bermudian conceptions of identity, but has instead affirmed the status quo. This is not a new discovery about crime talk - the existing literature exemplifies how talk about crime gravitates towards boundary maintenance and distancing the speaker from acts of deviance (Girling et al. 2000, Sasson 1995, Erikson 1966, Durkheim 1984). However, as this study demonstrates, upon closer examination of how people both participate and self-censor in talk about crime, we can see windows of opportunity for transformative crime talk. The lessons from contemporary Bermudian discourse about crime can be harnessed towards creating an environment that produces transformative crime talk: discourse that challenges existing social hierarchies and has the potential to unsettle the status quo.

Embarking on this research, I expected to find evidence in crime talk that gang violence has reshaped Bermudian identity. I had this feeling as a Bermudian myself, shocked by the increasing incidence of gun violence. Everyone was talking about how the island had changed, and I felt it too. The murder of Colford Ferguson in 2011 occurred only a few metres from my family home. Colford was not a gang member: he was shot in a case of mistaken identity. There was a sense of trespass, that the violence had crossed a border. You didn't have to be in a gang to be at risk, the violence was no longer confined to ignorable 'other' corners of the island. What had seemed so distant was suddenly, uncomfortably, close.

The subject of crime intuitively inspires inspection of the nature and identity of a society. Within talk about gang violence in Bermuda, there are outward declarations of social change. It appears that Bermudians are grappling with and reconsidering their identity and sense of place. Only upon deeper examination of talk about violence did I uncover, contrary to my expectations, that gang violence has triggered little if any conceptual shift in Bermudian identity and social relations. The declarations of change are not internalised to Bermudian identity and community, but are instead broadly conceptualised as an attack from outside. Talk of change is superficial and surface level, masking discursive continuities. As with many case study researchers before me (see Campbell 1975; Wieviorka 1992; Ragin 1992; Flyvbjerg 1998, 2001), this study challenged my preconceived notions about how Bermudians respond to gang violence and forced me to consider a secondary research question - can crime talk be transformative talk? How can Bermudians break a decades - arguably, centuries - old discursive cycle?

Underneath the surface talk of change is a story of what has remained stable in Bermudian society for a long time. Even if there is ‘debate', the conversations are circular, repetitive and familiar. A shooting in 2021 triggers an almost identical conversation to a shooting from 2011. From an epistemological perspective, postcolonial analysis can be a useful tool in understanding the persistence of various social groups’ positions within Bermudian crime talk - the historical socio-political power relationships that have created the foundation for today’s discourse. The enduring impact of colonisation and slavery are well documented in postcolonial analysis of violence and discourse in the Western World and the case of Bermuda is no different: historical, racialised violence is perpetuated in present day socio-economic inequalities, of which violence and crime are a consequence. The Bermudian state is not yet formally postcolonial - there is an ongoing colonial-like relationship with Britain that undermines Bermudian sovereignty and leaves the island’s identity and discourse in limbo.

Crime talk focuses anxieties around the past, present and future of Bermuda, but it does not resolve them. There is an overwhelming sense that Bermudians are treading water when we talk about crime. It’s not all doom and gloom, however. We can find the reasons for this stagnation within crime talk, but also small but promising signs of transformative potential. This chapter will summarise the findings from the empirical chapters, identify some barriers to transformative talk about crime and propose solutions to overcoming these barriers. It must be noted that these conclusions are the product of generalisations - all discussants are individuals in their own right with much greater nuance of opinion and identity than the snapshots reflected within this research. Although some detail is necessarily eroded in the quest

for thematic trends, this research has revealed the embeddedness of these trends in Bermudian crime talk, regardless of speaker or forum, for over a decade.

Community and Crime Talk

The first empirical chapter examined conceptions of community in crime talk. Community is a primary organising category of social life in Bermuda. Understanding of community and heritage are often initial points of conversation, establishing how speakers will relate to each other going forward. Community sets the conversation in space. The island is organised by neighbourhood communities and micro-localities, which are not universally known and understood. The micro-localities may be side by side, yet the resident of one may not be aware of the existence of the other. Knowledge of community is frequently underscored by race, where communities are organised and defined by racial heritage and composition. 'Community' itself is evocative rhetoric - it eludes concrete definition and it means different things to different people.

Conversations about crime and community often begin with an expression of disbelief that such violence could take place in Bermuda. This shock naturally evolves into the assertion that the concept of community in Bermuda has fundamentally changed. 'Old Bermuda', as it is so nostalgically remembered, was protected by community networks which are declared to have disintegrated, allowing for the emergence of an altogether inferior and unsafe 'New Bermuda'. Comparisons between Old and New Bermuda unearth long held perceptions of what has defined the island - chiefly safety, fellowship and wealth. Those who do not subscribe to this binary likewise assert that 'Old Bermuda' was never truly as idyllic as it is colloquially presented. Black Bermudian speakers are less likely to express shock and surprise

at the violence, seeing it as a natural consequence of a racist and unequal society. Concerns about how the violence could affect Bermuda's global reputation as a tourist destination reflect the racialised disparity in experience of and response to gang violence. Despite the differing responses of black and white speakers to news of violence and the differing relationships with and definitions of community, speakers share a grief for a lost sense of safety and fellowship.

A tension is inherent in discussions of the causes of violence in communities. Potent neighbourhood identities are targeted as the root cause of gang violence, yet simultaneously a dilution of neighbourhood identity is posited as the reason for the escalation of the violence. Crime talk reveals the power of geography in Bermudian communities - as exemplified by the connection between the establishment of the mega schools and the evolution of Bermudian gangs. White discussants are for the most part absent from discussions on collective accountability for the development of gangs, which speaks to the white disconnect from the communities victimised by violence, but additionally to the tensions inherent in black crime talk in identifying the locus of control - whether than be external systems or internal relationships.

Talk of crime and community is also oriented around seeking solutions. This leads to debate over the power of religion in Bermudian society, with some speakers bemoaning the declining significance of Christianity in the lives of Bermudians and entreating others to turn to Christ in order to heal the moral failings of the nation. Others respond to these suggestions with exasperation - pointing out that Bermuda has and continues to have a high density of churches and churchgoers, and shootings continue nonetheless. Some question the power of prayer, others double down on their convictions. Discussions of religion frequently evolve into discussions

of doubt - whether it be doubt in the efficacy of prayer or in the institutional framework of the modern Bermudian church. Rumours spread about gang members practising Satanism and Occultism, the most extreme rejection of Bermudian Christian culture. Despite the debate, when religion enters into discussions of violence it reveals the abiding strength of the Church in Bermudian society, to the extent that a rejection of God is translated by some as a rejection of Bermuda.

Another solution frequently presented is the plea for 'the community' to come together to counter the violence. Again, there is a tension inherent in these conversations regarding locus of control - with some arguing that in placing the burden of solution on the community, accountability is taken away from the institutions and systems of power in Bermuda, as well as from the small number of individuals carrying out the violence. Discussions of race and power naturally evolve from these propositions, entreating commentators not to rest on the easy rhetoric of community.

There was a recurrent 'de-Bermudianising' of gang members - a pattern of assertions that the perpetrators were from overseas, had foreign heritage or were imitating gang members from America or the Caribbean. This is despite the fact that the vast majority of gang members are Bermuda-born and raised. The rejection rests on a fundamental belief that gang membership is diametric to Bermudianness, and that a core feature of Bermudian identity is peacefulness and non-violence. This is not a new response to those who do not adhere to idealised Bermudian qualities, and can be traced back to the banishment acts of the 1700s and anti-Caribbean rhetoric that has persisted since the early 20th century.

Community-focused crime talk masks continuity with talk of change. The subject of gang violence makes the conversation seem new, but the way people relate to each other when they talk about crime is familiar. Declarations for a need to return to an idealised past sit uncomfortably aside assertions that gang violence is a new iteration of old inequalities. Conversations about crime don't pick apart this contradiction or attempt to resolve it. Instead, those who mourn a peaceful 'Old Bermuda' and those who claim that the injustices of Old Bermuda laid the foundations for the violence continue to do so in their respective echo chambers. Additionally, gang violence is frequently framed as an imported threat - an unBermudian act perpetrated by non-Bermudians. This lack of ownership over gang violence means that Bermudian identity is not put under the microscope in crime talk, but instead is pinpointed as something to be defended against deviant foreign influence. When the threat comes from outside, there is no incentive to interrogate within. Island Criminology, with its postcolonial attention to the 'closed and bounded networks of island ecologies' (Scott and Staines 2021: 580), can aid in understanding why Bermudian conversations about crime and community are not transformative.

Island Criminology advocates for academic attention to be paid to experiences of crime in small, isolated communities. Conversation about community and violence in Bermuda can broadly be connected through an overarching theme of 'belonging' - in identifying who belongs, boundaries are drawn before those who do not. Scott and Staines (2023: 9) write of how '(t)he denser social networks which social disorganisation theorists have described in some small-scale societies are only achieved through a clear articulation of social order and social disorder, with much social activity operating to highlight what resides within and outside the boundaries of 'communities'.' Connection to place, identities that are formed around place, can

evolve into a fierce defence of who is an insider and who is an outsider. The boundaries of belonging are highlighted in community focused crime talk through rejection of so-called ‘New Bermuda’ and its values, through concern about disintegrating neighbourhood ties and religious beliefs and through the discursive de-Bermudianisation of gang members. The boundaries of an island are immediately obvious - there is land, and there is sea. Baldacchino (2020: 10) describes this as ‘an intensity of place - keenly felt in idiosyncratic political, social and economic ways – cut off from any other place in a self-evident, often natural way; surrounded by a distinct aquatic medium which does not simply envelop passively but nuances what happens on land.’ Island studies theorists argue this intensity of place naturally contributes to the formulation of ‘established vs outsider relations' within island populations, such as those described by Elias and Scotson (1965), for ‘(b)eing bound geographically reinforces a shared sense of purpose and identity among island dwellers, while also reinforcing a connection to place’ (Scott and Staines 2023: 13). Scott and Staines (2023: 11) suggest that understanding established-outsider relations in a society ‘may be helpful in understanding how social problems are defined and maintained over periods of time’ - and additionally, the reduced capacity for transformative talk. Elias and Scotson’s work ‘draws attention to the intimacy and density’ of socio-spatial relationships in small communities, and is ‘especially illuminating with regard to bounded and small-scale societies where notions of length of residence and age of families have been shown to affect social dynamics, being important indicators of status and authority’ (Scott and Staines 2023: 11). This notably resonates with Bermudian community dynamics described within this thesis.

The insider/outsider dynamic is well established within Island Studies as being reflective of ‘island mentality’ (Pine and Konidari 2020), yet this is never a simple

binary of insider and outsider. There is an unspoken 'hierarchy' of Bermudianess - where older, established families lay the greatest claim to Bermudian identity, ahead of newer generations of Bermudians and lastly, guest workers - and this hierarchy is further complicated by the delicate racial dynamics on the island. The Bermudian concerns about the impact of gang violence on tourism can also be viewed through the prism of established-outsider relations, but with an added consideration of the racialised, postcolonial history of tourism in island nations - the priority in these conversations shifts to protect the outsiders from being victims of crime. Sheller writes that the 'differential valuing of white and black bodies is one of the most enduring legacies of slavery…[manifesting] itself in the global economy's devaluation black lives' (2005: 33). We see this unfold in discourse around suppressing gang violence in order to prevent crime against tourists or to avoid impacting the tourism economy. Tourists are outsiders, but predominantly white - a group with greater economic significance to the island and as such their protection from hypothetical harm is easily prioritisable over the protection of young Black Bermudian men from very real and documented harm (Albuquerque and McElroy 1999, Karagiannis and Madjd-Sadjadi 2012, Scott and Staines 2023).

Race and Crime Talk

When race is invoked in Bermudian crime talk, it frequently references Bermuda's past. Bermuda's history is a story of battles for control of a land that belonged to no one, a story of white supremacy and suppression of emergent black power. Black Bermudians do not shy away from race in discussions about gang violence, but in general white Bermudians address the subject with reluctance.. The ways in which white and black Bermudians approach the subjects of race and crime reveal tensions

within their own identities and understandings of Bermudian society, which play out differently across generation, class, audience and forum.

Many commentators brought up racial inequality on the island as an explanation for gang violence, an assertion met with scepticism by many white discussants. White speakers are often quick to point to individual responsibility rather than systemic racism in explaining gang violence - a frame which would absolve them of implication in a racist social structure. Explanation for gang violence falls broadly into two camps - individualist and structuralist. On the surface level, there seems to be a distinct racial binary aligning with these narrative camps - white individualists and black structuralists. However, the methodology of this study revealed these allegiances are less clear cut. An examination of the landscape of censorship and caution in discussions of race and crime exposes intraracial tensions in responses to gang violence.

Bermudian history is not universally known due to its relative absence from school curricula. Public schools, which have a majority black student population, teach more of Bermudian civil rights history than private schools. Most black speakers in this study align with a structuralist perspective of racial inequality and gang violence, but additionally much of their racialised crime talk is overwhelmed with explaining Bermuda's civil rights history to white Bermudians. This could also explain the preponderance of black structuralist perspectives in this study, as interviewees may have assumed that they would need to explain historical context to me, as I am a white Bermudian. There is some evidence that middle and upper class black Bermudians may subscribe to a more conservative individualist perspective on crime, but do not frequently express it for fear this may be construed as a betrayal of

the collective black struggle. These simultaneous yet contrasting narratives are not exclusive to Bermuda - it echoes the findings of Lerman and Weaver in their interviews with black 'custodial citizens', American citizens who are disproportionately surveilled, controlled and punished by the state (2014). Lerman and Weaver discovered two contrasting 'transcripts' of the relationship between race and custodial status, which they call the 'racial oppression narrative' and the 'personal responsibility narrative' (ibid.: 161). As with this study, Lerman and Weaver found no clear cut distinction between these narratives, noting:

> *'…that black custodial citizens seeking to make sense of racially inflected institutions and experiences are left struggling for a clear framework that integrates the ideology of personal responsibility with their lived experiences of structural disadvantage and racialized poverty.'*
>
> (ibid.: 169)

As with this study, Lerman and Weaver conclude that '(t)he existence of these dual narratives among custodial citizens betrays an environment in which a political consciousness is unlikely to develop' (ibid.: 195). These narratives do not help custodial citizens understand or challenge dominant ideologies and their 'semi-citizenship' (Lerman and Weaver 2014, Cohen 2009). Likewise, the competing structuralist and individualist narratives in Bermudian crime talk serve to simultaneously erode and amplify individual agency and present a barrier to transformative, mobilising discourse.

There is further evidence of submerged black conservative thought regarding the encouragement that black Bermudians revitalise black clubs and support black owned businesses rather than waste time changing white minds. This is only

apparent in conversations where white voices are not present. Many discussants felt that white people had no place in discussions of gang violence as the effects of the violence are felt most acutely by black families in black neighbourhoods. White discussants are not able to meaningfully participate in this strand of crime talk and are often actively excluded if they do not self-censor. Bermudian neighbourhoods and lived experiences are racially segregated, and this bleeds into conversation about crime.

There is frustration regarding the experience of black Bermudians being silenced by white Bermudians when they discuss inequality and racialised experiences of crime and violence, while white Bermudians are applauded and listened to when they speak out. That being said, many of the white Bermudians, particularly white men, who are not convinced by individualist narratives of gang violence and know or want to know more of structural racism are hesitant to join conversations about race and crime for fear that they are stepping out of place. With white men already dominating a significant sphere of privilege in Bermuda, many young white men do not want to wade into discursive spaces in which they are not welcome. Often, white people who want to know more about racism in Bermuda or want to disagree with a point made by a black person about racism in Bermuda will seek to start a dialogue with a black Bermudian in private. This is done due to fear of publicly stating a controversial opinion or even publicly being seen to change an opinion after receiving more information. In some circumstances, this private correspondence has led to a softening of stance on either side of the debate.

There is tension in the white Bermudian community regarding where responsibility lies for violent crime and where white voices belong in discussions of

race and gang violence. Many white Bermudians adamantly espouse individualist narratives of responsibility for gang violence without critical interrogation of societal structure. Some white Bermudians have awareness that their opinions would not be received well by a black Bermudian audience, so they share them privately instead of publicly. Those white Bermudians who do have enough knowledge of Bermudian history to critique individualism may be hesitant to step out of place and participate in conversations about 'black issues'. Black Bermudians are more literate in Bermuda's racial history and the ways in which white supremacy continues to operate in Bermudian society, but much discussion with white Bermudians about race and crime is dominated by explaining these social realities. As a result, the degree to which black Bermudians subscribe to structural narratives of accountability may be inflated. There is evidence that narratives of individual accountability for criminal actions are endorsed by some black Bermudians but that they are loath to express this publicly for fear of being perceived to be endorsing tenets of white supremacy. The way Bermudians talk about race, inequality and accountability changes depending on who they are talking to and where they are speaking. Bermudian responses to gang violence have illuminated how race continues to play a structural role in Bermudian society, and how the lack of overlapping experience continues to obstruct interracial communication. However, conversations about race and crime have particularly illuminated the importance of where these conversations take place. Perspectives have softened and even changed when conversations are taken off line or play out in private. This suggests that there is still transformative potential in crime talk, if the right arena is found for productive discourse.

Racialised crime discourse illustrates the divisions and dualities inherent to the Bermudian experience, and reflect the enduring legacies of colonialism and

persistence of colonial narratives in Bermudian discourse. This is not unusual for island nations. Write Scott and Staines:

> *'Islands were 'ground zero' for the imperialist colonial enterprise, and criminologies of islands cannot ignore the crime committed to meet these ends. The very process of colonisation was criminal, with dispossession/theft of property accompanied by violence, harsh (often forced) labour regimes, economic exploitation, the importation of diseases, and environmental destruction…humans were trafficked into and out of islands as slaves, and later indentured labourers (Aldrich and Johnson 2018: 161-3) and islanding has served as a technique of erasing Indigenous peoples and cultures the world over.'*
>
> (2023: 133)

Gang violence and the response to it emerges, often unconsciously, from Bermuda's colonial history. Nijjar (2018) points to 'echoes of empire' in state responses to and discourse about gang violence - compounding the 'myth of black criminality' (Gilroy 1987) and thus strengthening institutional racism. Just as this work notes the static and enduring qualities of Bermudian crime talk, Nijjar outlines the enduring nature of racism in crime control, 'given Britain's punitive and exploitative history of constructing, controlling and punishing colonial subjects as criminal *collectives*' (2018: 149). Scott and Staines agree, writing of how '(i)n combination with deeply rooted intergenerational traumas, which are a product of past and present colonial violence, intensive surveillance of indigenous peoples in remote communities has driven crime rates in these spaces up' (2023: 74). As outlined in Chapter Four, Bermuda's history is no different, with numerous examples of suppressing, controlling and punishing Black Bermudians through slavery, immigration policies and suffrage laws. This history informs the public conception of gang violence as being synonymous with black violence, which when coupled with a dominant philosophy of

American individualism leads to a roadblock in discourse regarding responsibility for and solutions to the violence. In suggesting solutions for reducing crime in the Caribbean, Karagiannis and Madjd-Sadjadi (2012: 82) note that 'Perhaps the biggest challenge is to provide the youth of the Caribbean with well-paying, full-time, permanent jobs…(t)he lack of opportunities for constructive engagement, lead wayward youth to pursue antisocial behaviours', echoing the sentiments of many black Bermudians pointing to the island's enduring social inequality as a root cause of gang violence. Meaningful responses to gang violence must involve dismantling colonial narratives of black criminality and strategies of punishment and control, and must utilise knowledge of Bermuda's history to address socio-economic inequality.

Gender and Crime Talk

Gendered crime talk also reveals a persistence in Bermudian social relationships, but in a different way from crime talk focusing on race and community. When race and community appear in crime talk, they prompt debate and doubt over opinions shared. The persistence of social hierarchies and divisions is predominantly revealed through these debates. Discourse around gender and crime is closed. Socially acceptable expression of Bermudian masculinity is presented in contrast with gang masculinities, and crime talk shames and ridicules those who transgress the orthodox. Crime talk doubles down on historic gender norms, and the absence of debate reflects the extent to which these opinions are shared across social groups.

A predominant weaponising tactic of Bermudian crime talk is to emasculate participants in gang violence. This is done in a variety of ways, primarily through dismissing the men as 'little boys', feminising the men through choice of language or

insinuating that they are gay. Heteronormative declarations of what makes a 'real Bermudian man' are not often challenged, and the assertion that gang members are not real Bermudian men (and therefore must be considered boys, or gay, or like women) reveals collective structures of acceptable societal masculinity.

Gendered talk frequently intersects with racialised discourse on gang violence as the vast majority of perpetrators and victims are black men. Many speakers connect racial inequality with the rise in gang violence as they assert that black men are left behind, and thereby pursue successful capitalist manhood illegitimately. Additionally, many black male interviewees and discussants assert that black spaces are overly feminised, leading young men to seek male company outside of legitimate spaces. There is a sentiment that powerful Bermudian women disempower Bermudian men, and that disempowerment takes away something integral to Bermudian manhood. There is a notable absence of white voices when gender and race appear in conversations about crime, but there does not appear to be a similar private sphere of interracial discussions about black masculinity.

Female discussants were more likely to focus on supporting the emotional wellbeing of boys and men and point out the failings in institutions to do so. This departure from the heteronormative focus on the male pursuit of power was generally not entertained by male discussants nor did it trigger wider debate. There is a cultural script of doing gender in Bermuda that emerges unchallenged in crime talk. There is discussion on the nature of Bermudian masculinity and the crises that threaten it, but little critique of the potential harm of the masculine ideal and how this can snowball into toxic masculinity.

Another frequent feature of gendered crime talk is a focus on the 'breakdown' of black families leading young men into gangs. This 'breakdown' seems to be connected to female headed-households. Women out-earning men is problematised - again revealing the prominence of patriarchal sexism in Bermudian culture. This results in women being the targets of blame for male behaviour as men fail to achieve the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. Mothers are frequently the target of blame for the behaviour of their sons, and subject to scrutiny that fathers seem to be immune from. This is another symptom of Bermudian patriarchy - orthodox femininity can be just as damaging as hegemonic masculinity. The public response to Garrina Cann's murder, the only female shooting victim, illuminated the public desensitisation to violence against black women, and a reluctance to see vulnerability in black femininity. Many black women in Bermuda must adapt and embody non-traditional familial roles - their evolution and survival leaves them vulnerable to a punitive public gaze that remains loyal to orthodox conceptions of gender roles.

Crime talk reveals how patriarchy continues to influence Bermudian life and relationships, and how both men and women face ridicule and shame if they are unable to meet the demands of doing gender in Bermuda. White speakers avoid participation when race is incorporated into discussions of gender and crime. When white speakers do participate in gendered crime talk, they join a consensus around hegemonic gender roles. Without participation or debate, there is no space for transformation in gendered crime talk. Heteropatriarchy is a dominant, almost universally unchallenged social code in Bermuda. Baldacchino writes of how 'small island societies may be wonderful places to live in, *but only as long as one conforms to the dominant culture.* Should one deviate from expected and established practices, the threat of ostracism is immense' (2012: 109, emphasis in original). This is starkly

demonstrated through how Bermudians talk about gender and gang violence. English colonisers were presented with a 'blank canvas' in Bermuda, and from this created a society hinged upon colonialistic ideals - where power and control are inextricably linked to white supremacist heteropatriarchy. Hegemonic masculine ideals of power, control and conquest are not only exhibited amongst gang members themselves, but are reinforced by the general public's overwhelming discursive support for it. Bermuda, like many Caribbean nations, has struggled for postcolonial self determination, a struggle further complicated politically by Bermuda's ongoing status as a dependent territory of the United Kingdom. Lewis (2002: 262) identifies this struggle for self determination as 'largely masculinist in orientation' - noting that masculinist framing of Caribbean nationalism has been neglected in academic study of the region, neglect that continues over two decades later. Heteropatriarchal values are incorporated into national identity and consciousness without question, because '(p)rivileged ideologies are seldom obliged to articulate the basis of their power; it is only in the discourse of resistance that the need arises to delineate the anguish of marginalization associated with lack of access to apparatuses of power' (ibid.). Lewis traces the history of the nationalist project in the Anglophone Caribbean, finding its foundations 'in the crucible of projects of colonial resistance, be they the result of trade union mobilization, intellectual rebuttals of English condescension toward the abilities of Caribbean people, experiences in the British West Indies Regiment or involvement in radical race conscious movements' (ibid.: 270). Lewis connects to the colonial socialisation of the nationalist movement's leadership with the reproduction of colonial hierarchies, summarising as follows:

'*The masculinist character of the nationalist movement in the Anglophone Caribbean was not, however, merely the result of the predominance of men, even though this was an important condition for the movement's success. More important,*

was the extent to which the nationalist project manifested and reproduced male forms of domination— institutional, political and social— which essentially formed a continuum from the colonial times to the construction of a post-colonial society.'

(ibid.)

This concept of inherited colonial masculinity is supported by scholars such as Sheller (2005: 31-2), who connects the moral policing of black femininity to colonial 'racial and sexual ideologies' centred around the ideal of the white bourgeois patriarchal family unit. Deviation from this established norm 'were used as excuses to deny equal civil and political rights to emancipated peoples' (ibid.: 32). The discursive shaming of non-nuclear, non-patriarchal family units in Bermudian crime talk, despite the lack of evidence that this has a causal relationship with violence, demonstrates the abiding power of the colonial vision of gender in society. Patriarchal empowerment is transactional - it is dependent on the disenfranchisement of another. In a society where patriarchal empowerment is presented as the only route to successful masculinity, it should come as no surprise that a sub-sect of marginalised men pursue power, respect and successful manhood through violence (Cloward and Ohlin 1960, Thame 2011).

The nature of gendered crime talk illuminates the need for a critical and intersectional reflection of Bermudian gender norms. The transformative potential of gendered crime talk can only be accessed through new constructions of Bermudian masculinities, divorced from inherited colonial heteropatriarchy.

Some Barriers to Social Change Through Crime Talk

In diagnosing what is preventing crime talk from being transformative, we can begin to build a framework for crime talk that brings about social change. The 'barriers' that emerge in the empirical chapters can be summarised in the following three themes:

1. *Speaker*

   The lack of a universal, intersectional understanding of Bermudian history and the inequality of experience of gang violence creates barriers to meaningful conversation.

2. *Forum*

   As talk about race and crime exemplifies, it is possible for opinions to change, but public arenas like social media do not lend themselves to reflective crime talk, and often dissuades speakers from participating in discussion.

3. *Subject*

   The subject of crime itself arguably presents a barrier to transformative talk, as crime talk is frequently preoccupied with boundary maintenance without a critical reckoning of the origins of those boundaries. Additionally, gang violence lacks the 'worthy defenceless victim' that could galvanise public outrage into action.

The remainder of this chapter will tentatively suggest some ideas to overcome these barriers to transformative public responses to gang violence in Bermuda. These are not definitive but possible solutions to mobilising 'the village' needed for creating change and preventing further deaths. The framework is informed by

Bermudian research, but the lessons from it are not exclusive to Bermuda and could be adapted for other cultural contexts.

Informing the Speaker

Each of the empirical chapters highlighted how a lack of universal knowledge of Bermudian civil rights history and the enduring legacy of this history debilitates conversations about crime. Black speakers are continuously having to educate white Bermudians about the history of slavery on the island and how this has laid the foundation for modern social inequalities. Meanwhile, white speakers are often joining conversations without necessary historical context. Some white speakers are aware of their own lack of knowledge, and this prevents them from joining conversations at all. The addition of critical Bermudian history to white pedagogical spaces would relieve pressure from black Bermudians to educate white Bermudians on race so that more meaningful dialogue and reflection can take place regarding the legacies of slavery and the realities of modern institutional racism.

For many white Bermudians, gang violence remains an abstract problem. The vast majority of white Bermudians are not directly affected by gang violence and could not conceive of ever fearing gang violence. As a result, a sector of Bermudian society with a significant share of the capital needed to create change is not sufficiently affected by the violence enough to care about it. Trained facilitators for community conversations about gang violence could help bridge the gaps of knowledge and experience between speakers. This style of talk has already been implemented in restorative community courses and conversations about racism by the charity Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda, and this framework could certainly

be applied to talk about crime. When more white people are informed about and speak against gang violence, they are more likely to mobilise other white people to do the same. However, these conversations must be heavily moderated in order to prevent white speakers from centring the conversation on their own anxieties about white supremacies and seeking reassurance that they are, actually, 'not racist'. This process is already taking an immense energetic toll on black Bermudians who engage with white Bermudians on the subject of race, and necessitates proactive action from white Bermudians with other white Bermudians in order to be successful.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, the originator of the term 'intersectionality', wrote that 'any discourse about identity has to acknowledge how our identities are constructed through the intersection of multiple dimensions' (Crenshaw 1991: 1299). If we are to unravel what hooks (1982: 52) terms 'sexist-racist conditioning' we must acknowledge that social categories like 'community', 'race' and 'gender' do not exist in isolation from each other. Greater understanding and education about gender inequality, toxic masculinity and the intersections of race and gender would aid in the formulation of a critical approach to orthodox gender roles in crime talk. Additionally, facilitators with an understanding of intersectionality in the Bermudian context could help educate participants in organised conversations about crime.

In addition to intersectional knowledge, there is an acute need for honest ownership of gang violence in Bermuda by all speakers. The truth is that the violence is not imported from elsewhere - it is perpetrated in Bermuda by Bermudian men. Without an acceptance of this as truth, there can be no meaningful reflection or movement to resolve the root causes of gang violence. The origins of gang violence in Bermuda are pinned to internalised colonial ideologies and stark socio-economic

inequalities, but to de-Bermudianise gang membership further feeds into colonial narratives of the black, criminal, Other. Doing so only succeeds in further marginalising young people in gangs.

Finding the Forum

Conversations about race and crime shed light on how forum can affect how speakers participate in crime talk and the malleability of opinion. Regardless of race, speakers were more reflective and likely to reconsider opinions privately. As discussed, there is already an established system of trained facilitators for organised conversations about racism in Bermuda. A similar structure could be introduced for conversations about gang violence. This could be small, in-person focus groups aiming to bring together people from a range of backgrounds to talk about tackling gang violence on the island. Online groups do not have to be off limits, however. Private social media groups could be established with a team of trained moderators committed to protecting a group culture that supports rather than condemns. The success of these groups depends on having willing participants. However, if they are successful in creating transformative crime talk, these speakers will in theory take the lessons learned from private conversations into the public sphere of conversation. There does not need to be universal participation in small group talks, just as there doesn't need to be universal knowledge of critical race theory and intersectionality, but wider participation in this style of talk and wider education around these subjects will lead to a more informed and reflective population of participants in public crime talk.

Reframing the Subject

There is an argument to be made that the subject of crime itself, particularly the subject of gang violence, prevents a barrier to transformative talk. This argument intimates that crime talk is preoccupied by moral boundary maintenance, drawing lines between 'us', the law abiding and morally good citizens, and 'them', the deviants. As Durkheim wrote in *The Division of Labour in Society:*

> *'We have only to observe what happens, particularly in a small town, when some scandal involving morality has just taken place. People stop each other in the street, call upon one another, meet in their customary places to talk about what has happened. A common indignation is expressed. From all the similar impressions exchanged and all the different expressions of wrath there rises up a single fount of anger, more or less clear-cut according to the particular case, anger which is that of everybody without being that of anybody in particular. It is public anger.'*
>
> (1984: 58)

This anger is born out of a 'collective consciousness', a universal agreement on what is condemnable. Erikson expands, writing that '(d)eviance makes people more alert to the interests they share in common and draws attention to those values which constitute the 'collective community'' (1966: 4). Crime talk therefore functions in maintaining social solidarity over what is right and what is wrong, in 'sustaining common consciousness' (Durkheim 1984: 63). Punishment is not only vengeance but defence of the morality of society. If the primary function of crime talk is to sustain, then there is arguably little space in this talk to question, reflect and challenge. There is even less space in conversations about gang violence, where there is rarely a moral binary between perpetrator and victim. The absence of a 'perfect victim' alongside the boundary maintenance inherent in crime talk appears to radically diminish the transformative potential of talk about gang violence.

How could this be changed? If we look at the history of social change in Bermuda, much has taken place as a result of civil rights protests. Restricting our gaze to the last century, take, for example, the 1935 Report of Unemployment. This report recommended the dissemination of birth control and voluntary sterilisation, but also the compulsory sterilisation of 'mental defectives' - taken as code for poor, black Bermudians, as the criterion attached to this policy would disproportionately affect them. This report was widely condemned and protested against, keeping the white community cautious and defensive and the black community on alert for potentially eugenicist future family planning policies.

The 1959 Theatre Boycott is another turning point in Bermuda's civil rights history. This peaceful protest prompted an end to the segregation of Bermuda's movie theatres, triggering a wave of desegregation across the island and increased mobilisation of working class Bermudians. The Boycott arguably paved the way to universal adult suffrage in 1961 and the establishment of the first black political party, the PLP, in 1963. The political voice of black Bermudians was being amplified to the extent that they could no longer be ignored by white Bermudians, and were actively able to participate in the political process and physically enter white spaces.

Protests haven't always been peaceful. Class tensions and civil unrest reached a new peak when violent attempts to break up the Bermuda Electric Light Company strike sparked a riot. Civil unrest continued through the late 60s: in 1968, the mistreatment of a young black man by a white police officer at the Annual Floral Pageant Day triggered widespread protests and riots across the island. This led to the publication of the Wooding Report, which critically and officially assessed the

'white plantation' character of Bermudian society and the struggle to change it (1969: 63).

The 1977 execution of Larry Tacklyn and Buck Burrows for the assassination of the Governor Richard Sharples and his aide-de-camp Captain Hugh Sayers in 1972 also triggered riots, symbolising black anger at white oligarchical control of the political economy. The Clark Report, commissioned before the riots but published after, and the Pitt Report, commissioned after the riots, both recommended measures to resolve racial inequality and tension on the island. The Pitt Report went so far as to suggest constitutional reform, suggesting that black Bermudians would identify themselves more with an independent Bermuda.

These historic moments of reformation may have at times been associated with violence, but were fundamentally a result of civil rights movements. Violent crime is starkly different from political protest, strikes and riots - the closest comparisons could be drawn to dialogue after the assassinations of Sharpe and Sayers, but those assassinations were still objectively political when compared to the gang murders of the last decade. The questions that emerge from the rise in violence may be similar to those that emerged in the past from civil rights movements, but the way in which participants engage in and shape the discussion differs.

In terms of dialogue on community and race, there is a more complicated relationship between speakers and subject when conversations are started by crime rather than civil unrest. The noble objectives of collective action make a more readily accessible subject for black speakers than violent crime, where speakers struggle with the tension between individual accountability, community responsibility and

systemic racist systems in trying to make sense of gang violence. Conversely, for white speakers, conversations about gang violence are less threatening to their social position than those that emerge from collective action, as gang violence does not directly affect the white community - though they are implicated in its origin through the historical oppression of black Bermudians. Civil unrest is a direct attack on white privilege, and white communities must grapple with how to defend their privilege and how much they are willing to surrender for the sake of social peace. White Bermudians have responded to gang violence and certainly participated in conversations about it, as this thesis has demonstrated, their participation in these national dialogues on race and community differ from the dialogues resulting from past instances of civil protests and unrest - white Bermudians can absolve themselves of responsibility in conversations about gang violence and rationalise themselves as an audience to the events unfolding, whereas collective action is explicit in targeting white supremacy and social inequality. Collective action undermines imported individualistic ideologies and fosters an inclusive relational framework of belonging among citizens - 'where people are intimately linked to others and their surrounding environment' (Scott and Staines 2023: 137). This collective, relational self is a recurrent philosophy inherent in island and indigenous cultures all over the world (Scott and Staines 2023, Anae 2010), the seeds of which are already present in Bermudian culture but rarely activated in response to crime and violence.

When comparing gendered dialogue that emerges from collective action versus crime, the conclusions are more opaque. Battles for suffrage were generally dominated by white women, without much concern for the empowerment of black women. The outcry that came from the 1935 Report of Unemployment, though it was in response to a proposal on birth control and enforced sterilisation, was more in

relation to racist eugenicist family planning policy rather than women's sexual and bodily autonomy. That being said, collective action around gender has historically activated discussion and dialogue around women's rights and role in Bermudian society. In this case, gang violence draws more attention to the other half of the gender binary, encouraging a dialogue on men's role in Bermudian society. Although the dialogue is generally an affirmation of Bermudian patriarchy, with the emergence of critical gender dialogue regarding same sex marriage and the influence of #MeToo on Bermudian discourse, it is possible that gendered crime talk may evolve to critically interrogate toxic Bermudian masculinity. There is little prospect of eradicating violence in society without a systematic dismantling of patriarchal masculinity - as long as heteropatriarchy is collectively upheld, the consequences will continue to be felt by Bermudian society.

I introduce Bermuda's civil rights history as an example of transformative social movements on the island. If discourse around gang violence is to become transformative, this may require a fundamental reframing of the issue of gang violence, away from the criminal and deviant and instead as a civil rights issue. Gang violence is a civil rights issue for the following reasons: it impinges on the right of black Bermudian men to freedom of movement throughout the island, whether they are affiliated with a gang or not; gang violence further marginalises black working class communities and traps these communities in a cycle of deprivation; and gang violence impinges on the right to life, liberty and security of Bermudian citizens. If we reframe the subject of gang violence as a civil rights issue, there could be greater public and political will to tackle it, rather than just talk about it.

Towards Transformative Talk

The social inequalities and disconnections revealed through crime talk can be harnessed towards a platform for open national dialogue about Bermudian society. Although crime talk does not trigger a reconception of Bermudian identity or social change in its current form, the lessons learned about speakers, fora and subject could potentially lead to transformative talk about crime. The potential for crime to engage society to enact meaningful change has not gone unnoticed by sociological and criminological scholars. Durkheim wrote of the inherent 'use' crime offers to societies:

> *'Not only does it imply that the way to necessary changes remains open, but in certain cases it also directly prepares for these changes. Where crime exists, collective sentiments are not only in the state of plasticity necessary to assume a new form, but sometimes it even contributes to determining beforehand the shape they will take on. Indeed, how often is it only an anticipation of the morality to come, a progression towards what will be!'*
>
> (1982: 102)

This thesis presents a snapshot of the discourse that has emerged from the last decade of gang violence in Bermuda. This has been incredibly painful for many families - it would be callous to frame these murders as 'useful' in a Durkheimian sense. There is potential, however, for the shock and grief that has gripped Bermuda to be mobilising rather than paralysing. We are approaching a discursive turning point, spurred on by the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo movements in the United States. There is a need to go beyond the surface level discussion of events. A particular point NOBODY made in our interview struck me:

'Bermuda's extremely polite. We do things very superficially. We socialise with one another in a very superficial way. Politeness isn't kind. Politeness isn't compassion. We're not necessarily handling each other with a great deal of care.'

This point struck me because I'd heard it before. Many times. From my interviewees and in my fieldwork data. That Bermudian conversation is too 'polite' to scratch the surface and meaningfully interrogate an issue. That Bermudians are too 'polite' to speak to the heart of an issue and instead choose to circumnavigate it. That Bermudian conversation is rarely direct or face to face, you more often than not hear opinions through 'the grapevine.'

Crime will always be a preoccupying point of discussion for members of a society. Observers are challenged to reflect on the inner workings of society in order to make sense of it, particularly in the case of gang violence in Bermuda, which so suddenly escalated and so stubbornly resists suppression. There is already a consensus, a collective consciousness against the violence. There is an opportunity here to generate meaningful dialogue, critical dialogue that reaches the heart of Bermudian communities, racial inequalities and gender orthodoxies instead of continuing the repetitious cycle of crime talk exemplified in this research. We cannot continue to tread water as we have been when it comes to gang violence in Bermuda. Eventually, we will be forced into a choice: to sink or to swim.

Appendix I

Victims and Geographic Coordinates of Bermuda Murders with a Firearm, 2003-2021

Year and Flag Colour	Victim Name	Coordinates
2003	Shaundae Jones	32.32637122, -64.83548944
2006	Jason Lightbourne	32.27571102, -64.78574932
2007	Shaki Crockwell	32.31021275, -64.76013958
	Aquil Richardson	32.25965555, -64.81907442
2009	Kenwandae Robinson	32.30440000, -64.77764400
	Kumi Harford	32.30482600, -64.77927400
	Gary Cann	32.29316800, -64.87241700
	Shane Minors	32.30088200, -64.77469300
2010	Perry Puckerin	32.34131400, -64.73575800
	James Lawes	32.29612300, -64.78328000
	Kimwandae Walker	32.30164800, -64.77645300
	George Lynch	32.34276900, -64.73425600
	Dekimo Martin	32.26995500, -64.87788700
	Frederick Maybury	32.30821800, -64.85447800
	Raymond Troy Rawlins	32.29627900, -64.78099100
2011	Colford Ferguson	32.30335300, -64.86450100
	Jahmiko Leshore	32.31072800, -64.74690900
	Randy Robinson	32.30278200, -64.77427500
	David Clarke	32.30618700, -64.78012200
	Jason Smith	32.30489900, -64.79105500
2012	Stefan Burgess	32.30552500, -64.77683900
	Joshua Robinson	32.30602300, -64.78173100
	Lorenzo Stovell	32.30821800, -64.85447800
	Michael Phillips	32.30860800, -64.76884600
	Malcolm Augustus	32.38557900, -64.67906700

2013	Ricco Furbert	32.29578400, -64.77685500
	Haile Outerbridge	32.29578400, -64.77685500
	Jonathan Dill	32.30157000, -64.77642800
2014	Erin Richardson	32.25730600, -64.82581600
	Prince Edness	32.25501200, -64.82294600
2015	Rickai Swan	32.25574454, -64.82117823
2016	Patrick Dill	32.30073692, -64.77413541
	Fiqre Crockwell	32.29803186, -64.78863808
	Jason Mello	32.30573630, -64.77873584
	Isaiah Furbert	32.30749664, -64.75219502
	Deshaun Berkeley	32.30085459, -64.79485740
2017	Jahni Outerbridge	32.30848401, -64.76879637
	Jahcari Francis	32.30749664, -64.75219502
	Morlan Steede	32.29952586, -64.77368598
2018	Taylor Grier	32.29718355, -64.78116076
	Paul Johnson	32.29885213, -64.77762845
	Ronniko Burchall	32.36936244, -64.65153173
2020	Clark Fox	32.29718355, -64.78116076
	Garrina Cann	32.30403234, -64.80114108
2021	Allan Outerbridge	32.27120487, -64.79403757
	Ayinde Eve	32.29486216, -64.78953325
	Micah Davis	32.29486216, -64.78953325

Appendix II

Stage 1 Key Informant Biographies

1. **Atara** (F) - sister of Idris, victim of gun violence; Bermudian; black (A)

Atara's brother Idris was a victim of gun violence, and an infamous character in Bermuda news media. Even after death, he is remembered and referred to not only by the public but also by claimsmakers. In the aftermath of her brother's death, she was outspoken in the media about the need for empathy in public treatment of gang members, victims of gun violence and their family members. Her commentary on the public's dehumanisation of gang members and their families prompted me to reach out to her. She was open and warm. I had tissues ready for her but she never needed them. She recognised that we came from very different worlds but this did not dissuade her from sharing her story with me. We met three times for formal interviews, but frequently ran into each other in town informally as well - Bermuda is a small place. We bonded over bell hooks and the mental and physical benefits of movement.

2. **Jacob** (M) - police officer; Bermudian; white (B)

I first became aware of Jacob's expertise in Bermudian gang violence when I was serving as a member of a jury on a gang related murder trial and he testified as an expert witness in the case. Jacob very kindly met with me three times formally over the course of this study. As is typical for the island, we frequently ran into each other informally when out and about as well. Jacob was also immensely helpful in suggesting and arranging follow up interviews. Jacob was a pioneering member of the Gang Targeting Unit, a small unit of police officers who developed relationships with the communities associated with gangs in the 2000s. He had an intriguing

working ‘relationship’ with Idris which was fascinating to explore. He was passionate about the work of the GTU and felt strongly that it helped to reduce the violence. Due to death threats, he had to step down from his work with the GTU and the unit was soon after disbanded. Jacob was anxious for the future without the GTU - he felt that the small size of the unit gave them a unique opportunity to forge relationships with the community as police officers and take part in prevention and redirection, rather than just control. He was restless stuck behind a desk, but he acknowledged his family were much happier that he wasn’t working on the street anymore.

3. **Michael** (M) - former prosector and MP, local entrepreneur and activist; Bermudian; black (C)

Michael and I had two formal interviews, but we have since become friends on social media and he has been immensely helpful connecting me with other interviewees, most recently Roy and Jerome. Since our formal meetings, there was a change in government and the PLP returned to power after four years of OBA leadership. Michael later became Minister for National Security, a portfolio which encompasses policies aimed at controlling and reducing gang violence. He later stepped down after a Covid-related controversy. This was not the only controversy Michael encountered while an MP, but he was immensely popular with constituents and with his department. Roy shared that he missed Michael’s energy and enthusiasm within the Ministry. Michael is now a local entrepreneur but is still a significant presence on Bermudian social media and in Bermudian life due to the nature of his business - energy supply and production. It is quite remarkable and a testament to his force of personality how reliant his public image has been despite the political gaffs and challenges with rising violence and government response to

Covid-19. He was a very enthusiastic and passionate interviewee, often getting visibly and audibly heated and agitated when discussing injustice in Bermuda.

4. **Lucas** (M) - educator and writer; Bermudian; black (B)

Lucas and I were connected through a mutual friend. He is a Bermudian educator and holds a PhD in Chemistry. He currently teaches in a South London state school, and has taught in the Bermuda public school system. We met over Zoom. Much of our discussion compared his experience teaching in Bermuda and the UK, and the similar struggles for young black men in framing their identity. His mother was a prominent figure in black Bermudian politics and particularly outspoken in blogs and online. Lucas has kept a lower profile in the sphere of social media. Lucas warmed throughout the interview, but seemed hesitant and sceptical of my intentions with the project. He has not kept in touch since our meeting.

5. **Remy** (M) - anti-racist activist and educator; Bermudian; black (D)

Remy was a particularly prominent feature of Bermudian 'political Facebook' in the 2010s, and I knew I had to speak to him. He has also held various leadership positions in a local anti-racism charity, has taught in the prison system and is a college lecturer on quantitative methods. I spoke to Remy under a government he did not politically align with, and much of our discussion reflected his disquiet with the then current government's approach to race relations and labour laws. He considers himself 'old school' and bemoaned the ways in which young black Bermudians are taking their civil rights for granted. Remy was immediately open and had a lot to say. He knows my father, is from the same part of the island I am from and was immediately comfortable. We still connect over Facebook. Much of our conversation

was related to Bermudian history. Remy devotes much of his time to uncovering hidden Bermudian histories tracing their legacies to the present day.

6. **Angie** (F) - parole officer; American-Bermudian; white (C)

Angie is a no-nonsense Italian American with an undergraduate degree in Social Work and a Masters in Criminal Justice. She has Bermudian citizenship but openly called herself a 'paper Bermudian' as she grew up in the States. She felt this distinction helped rather than hindered her in connecting with men in gangs. We met twice for formal interviews. She had been a parole officer for nearly a decade and at the time of our interview had been brought in to oversee a relatively new non-profit diverting men and boys away from gangs. She knew Idris well. She was sceptical of the extent to which the GTU could establish meaningful relationships within communities affected by violence. She was remarkably candid: exhausted and frustrated with the courts and non-profit sector approaches to tackling gang violence. She didn't shy away from sharing her opinion about specific authority figures and politicians on the island. She has since left the field entirely and I lost touch with her. I did however run into her by chance and learned that she now works in hospitality. She was as uncensored as she always had been, and told me in no uncertain terms to stay away from working in the Bermudian criminal justice system.

7. **Maya** (F) - prison forensic psychologist; British; black (B)

Maya worked in the Bermuda prison service as a forensic psychologist, mostly with the men at Westgate as she lived in the west end of the island. She had worked in Holloway, Felton, Brixton and Wandsworth in the UK and also worked for five years in the Cayman Islands. As an expat and relatively new to the island when we interviewed (she had been there for two years) she had a unique experience working

in Bermuda prisons as an ‘outsider’ and discussed the impact of not having the historical knowledge of the men she worked with that a Bermudian might, though she said how her gaps in knowledge about locations and individuals on the island were also a disadvantage at times. She has since left the island and we have lost touch.

8. **Elijah** (M) - journalist and activist; Bermudian; black (C)

Elijah is Michael’s brother, and together they were prominent community activists: starting mentorship programmes, organising community fundraising events and speaking on positive black masculinity. Elijah’s background is in broadcasting and public relations and has worked in television in Bermuda and America. He worked for nearly a decade as a public relations correspondent for the Bermuda police. Whenever there was an accident or a shooting, you would see Elijah on the news reporting from the scene. Since our interview he has left the police and works for City of Hamilton. We have kept in touch over Facebook, though I hear from his brother more frequently.

9. **Nathan** (M) - corrections leader; Bermudian; biracial (D)

After Angie mentioned him in our interview, I reached out to Nathan. He knew my cousin from the Bermuda regiment, so that broke the ice fairly quickly. His background was in the military, an institution that had personally brought him some structure and guidance. He was certainly trying to implement this sense of structure to prison life, but as he pointed out, the outside world was the challenging place, where Bermudians are struggling to survive. I only met with Nathan the one time, he was too difficult to pin down for further interviews. Years after our interview, I began working with Nathan at the Ministry of National Security and now encounter him regularly.

10. **John** (M) - police intelligence officer; British; white (D)

John lived in my neighbourhood and we met by chance. He had worked for the Metropolitan and Kent police forces for nearly two decades, and at the time of our interview had been in Bermuda for six years. Much of our interview involved comparing his experience working in the UK to working in Bermuda. As with Maya, he found his expat status gave him advantages and disadvantages when it came to establishing trust within communities. He gave a candid account about navigating space as a white expat on the island. We have kept in touch and often see each other in the community.

11. **Adam** (M) - local entrepreneur, former politician and police officer; Bermudian; white (C)

Adam was a person many of my white interviewees urged me to speak to. At the time of our interview, he held the same ministerial position with the OBA that Michael would later occupy after the change in government. Adam had served in the police for 9 years before joining the United Nations public peacekeeping operations in Kosovo. His political career emerged from presenting on his Masters dissertation. Adam was very confident. He implemented American programmes on the island and brought in guest speakers from his Masters to help develop policy. He was an open and enthusiastic research participant and, despite some public scepticism at his suitability for the role as a white man, was remarkably popular when in office. I see Adam on social media and out and about in town fairly frequently. He has left politics and now works in finance.

12. **Thomas** (M) - local entrepreneur and former MP; Bermudian; white (Portuguese) (D)

Thomas was an MP for the OBA and extremely proud of it. He was a common feature in Facebook comment forums prior to his political career, and was particularly vocal on the subject of gang violence. Thomas and I only met once formally, we have run into each other a few times informally but he never remembers me. He did have very traditionalist perspectives which came across strongly in his interview. He correlated work ethic with social success, a 'create your own opportunities' narrative. In a surprise upset, Thomas lost his seat in his constituency in the last election.

13. **Kevin** (M) - journalist; Bermudian; white (C)

Kevin's name not only cropped up in Royal Gazette articles about gang violence but also online in comment forums. He is a Bermudian journalist with 30 years experience who had worked for a lot of his life off island. He returned to the island in 2010. The change in the landscape of violence in Bermuda at this time shocked him. Kevin had been 'corrected' on details in several stories by Idris and his associates, however he was careful to stress that at the time of our interview he'd never been threatened by anybody. It was interesting chatting to Kevin about the reputation of the Royal Gazette as a white establishment paper and how he navigated that as well as being a recognisable face in print media. He spoke about 'wearing the costume' of suspenders and a waistcoat to look like a stereotypical reporter, to be coded as someone people could speak to to get their message out. We met twice formally and he also sent several follow up emails on his thoughts about Bermudian media. I have since seen Kevin several times at social events and we are connected on social media.

14. **Davis** (M) - cab driver; Jamaican-Bermudian; black (C)

Davis and I met formally to interview after I was in his cab. Our informal and formal conversations compared Bermudian and Caribbean identities. Davis had spent a great deal of time in both Jamaica and Bermuda and had citizenship in both countries. He was also interested in outlining the 'tribal' nature of Bermudian communities as a contributing factor to friction between members of those communities. I have seen Davis a few times since our meeting.

15. **Sabrina** (F) - non-profit program coordinator; Bermudian; black (D)

Sabrina had extensive Bermudian and American experience as a social worker and in probation services. Noticing patterns in the histories of her clients, she went on to establish drug abuse prevention and gang diversion programmes. Sabrina was knowledgeable on the risk factors for gang membership and the challenges in supporting those trying to leave gangs in Bermuda. At the time of our interview she was working with two intervention programmes, one for teenage boys and one for men. The second programme faced significant community pushback - the men enrolled had established histories and Sabrina found it a struggle to drum up community support. During our interview, one of her very first clients popped in to say hello and catch her up on what they were doing now. I have not seen Sabrina since, but our interview lasted well over an hour.

16. **Lloyd** (M) - educator; Bermudian; black (D)

Lloyd had been a teacher in Bermudian public school system, a university professor and advisor in the Ministry of Education. He was also a substance abuse rehabilitation counsellor and campaigned in the 90s for interventions supporting marginalised black men in Bermuda, in order to avoid what he termed 'emerging

gang socialisation'. He seemed surprised at my questions on white privilege and social inequality. His initial hesitance snowballed into warmth and openness as the interview progressed - once we had established that we were both from the same part of the island and that I wasn't going to be offended by him talking about race.

17. **Sarah** (F) - anti-racist activist; British; white (E)

Sarah is a prominent and polemic figure in anti-racism discourse in Bermuda. As a white British woman, her input is both welcomed and rejected. She is often dismissed as a 'white saviour', mostly by white commentators. She has led the island's leading anti-racism charity, organised South African inspired Truth and Reconciliation programmes and led Restorative Methods training programmes. I knew Sarah well prior to our interview. Our formal interview mostly focused on the racialised erasure of Bermudian history.

18. **Esther** (F) - non-profit program coordinator; Bermudian; black (D)

Esther is well-respected for her extensive experience in the non-profit sector, and has advised the government on community responses to gang violence. She was clear that class and race played a part in Bermudian awareness of the factors contributing to the violence and general social issues, Esther was keen to emphasise that addressing gangs needed to start within schools. My discussion with Esther was very informative in terms of understanding gang recruitment and the challenges in educating the wider population about risk, violence and rehabilitation. We only met once formally but we've run into each other several times afterwards.

19. **Peter** (M) - police officer; British; white (D)

Peter was a very experienced police officer and held a leadership role in the police. His retirement was imminent at the time of our interview. He came to Bermuda in the mid-80s, having worked in a British police service. Peter's extensive experience gave him perspective on the changing landscape of crime and violence in Bermuda, as well as the constants that persisted across the decades. Our conversations covered community outreach, being an expat in the police service, public understanding of gang violence and community trust in police over the decades.

20. **Harold** (M) - cab driver; Bermudian; biracial (E)

Harold and I had our formal interview spontaneously in his cab. Much of our conversation revolved around the challenges of the justice system in Bermuda, and his experiences in jury duty. We also compared Bermudian crime to crime overseas, the Bermudian prison system and Bermudian identity. Harold is always candid and talkative, and I see him often.

21. **Solomon** (M) - educator and activist; Bermudian; black (B)

Solomon was a prominent discussant in Bermuda political facebook. Solomon worked in child psychology and education, with a particular interest in black identity. We discussed black masculinity and the Bermudian understanding of inequality. Solomon was open, but I got the impression that he felt uneasy about a white woman undertaking this research.

22. **Imani** (F) - police officer; Bermudian; black (B)

Imani worked in the Gang Targeting Unit right at the peak levels of the violence. We chatted about her experiences as a woman in the unit. She found the

size of the community made the job much more difficult - the high level of familiarity between people made it difficult for witnesses to come forwards and difficult for men to leave gangs. Imani had been an officer for 16 years at the time that we spoke. Like Jacob, Imani is sceptical now that the GTU has been disbanded - there are no more school presentations and active community outreach, only the firearms response. We met two times and Imani was helpful over email.

23. **Constance** (F) - prison educator, Bermudian, black (E)

Constance had a leadership role as an education officer in the Bermuda prison system, and also ran an education support non-profit. Constance has been in education since the mid-80s. We discussed the programmes she had implemented in the prison system, how she encourages uptake and how she trains her teachers. We then moved on naturally to wider discussion about familial trauma and the path to gang membership. Constance and I met for one formal interview but have kept in touch, she continues to be vocal on social issues on the island and the effect of gang violence in communities.

24. **George** (M) - political writer, Bermudian, black (D)

George was infamous as a political opinion columnist in the Bermuda media. He has never pretended to be apolitical and never shied away from discussions of race. He was very active on Facebook at the time of our interviews, although since then he has significantly reduced his social media presence. George and I have become good friends, we met three times formally to interview for this thesis and he kindly drove me around key central parish gang territories so that I could get an understanding of the space in which many of these confrontations take place. Since our interview, George has been elected MP.

25. **Robert** (M) - journalist, British, white (D)

I met Robert once formally but knew him well prior to our meeting. Robert had been editor and a writer for several different Bermudian print and online news platforms. He always spoke candidly, if slightly cynically, about Bermudian media and our interview was no exception. Robert sadly and unexpectedly passed away a few years after the interview quoted in this thesis.

26. **Isaiah** (M) - academic, Bermudian, black (B)

Isaiah had recently written a book on black Bermudian male identity. He was concerned about the lack of input from gang members in my thesis. He was also concerned with my suitability for carrying out this study as a white Bermudian woman. It is a concern I understand and address in this chapter, but ultimately I believe Isaiah's concerns were founded in my miscommunication of the research question. Isaiah is a university lecturer in the US. We chatted about his experiences carrying out his research, the social construction of black masculinity and the balance of agency and structure in human action and opportunity. Isaiah and I only met once, but we have kept in touch over social media.

27. **Freddy** (M) - politician, Bermudian, black (C)

Freddy was very open, the only research participant who reached out to me. He has been involved in politics from a young age in PLP youth groups. Our conversations revolved around Bermudian political history, generational differences in political opinions, and the then opposition party's approach to gang violence. We have become friends since our two formal interviews.

28. **Roman** (M) - cab driver, Bermudian, black (A)

Cab drivers offered an interesting perspective. They met and connected with a huge range of demographics, so could speak with some authority comparing the opinions of others to their own. Much of my conversation with Roman revolved around comparing the Bermudian and Jamaican experiences of crime. We interviewed once formally and have seen each other around several times since.

29. **Elliott** (M) - entrepreneur, Bermudian, black (A) and **Jones** (M) - mason, Bermudian, black (D)

I met Elliott and Jones at a friend's house - we hit it off and started an impromptu formal interview session. This was my only 'focus group', if you could call it that. It was interesting to see how Elliott and Jones approached the subject of gang violence coming from different generations. I have seen Elliott a few times since our interview.

30. **NOBODY** (M/X) - artist, Bermudian, black (B)

I have known NOBODY for a decade. We met through a local arts collective. NOBODY has always been vocal on social media about social issues and defining Bermudian identity, but when we spoke they were on a social media hiatus as they felt the short form format of expression stifled nuance and empathy. We spoke primarily on the nature of Bermudian discourse and identity.

31. **Roy** (M) - community outreach worker and pastor, Bermudian, black (C)

Roy has played a prominent role in the current Bermudian government's anti-gang strategy. I was surprised to learn in our interview that he had a historic firearms offence, and had turned his life around after that event. We spoke about the lack of

engagement and understanding from the community about the realities of gang violence. As Roy is a pastor, we also discussed the influence of religion in his gang intervention work, as well as the rumours that Idris and others practised Satanism. I now see Roy regularly through my own work with the Ministry of National Security.

32. **D** (M) - community outreach worker and youth pastor, Bermudian, black (A)

D is a young man in his late twenties who started work as a summer intern with the Gang violence Reduction Team in the Ministry of National Security in the summer of 2022 - an internship which evolved into a full time job. D grew up in Somerset, a stone's throw from my family homestead. D described his childhood home as 'the neighbourhood crackhouse', and explained that he was inspired to do community outreach work after his own experiences growing up around drugs and gang violence. D grew up in gang territory and has family and friends who are involved in gangs. D is currently studying for a Bachelors in Sociology with a Minor in Psychology. I first encountered D through my own employment with the Ministry of National Security and we see each other regularly.

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