

**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

*Competing Constructions: A Mixed Methods Investigation of the  
Popular and Media Framing of the Antigua Crime Story*

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Social Policy  
of the London School of Economics for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, London, September 2014

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## **Abstract**

This study makes an argument for a constructionist understanding of crime in Antigua and Barbuda. Specifically, the study argues that the way in which members of the public and the news media talk about crime is important because understanding how crime is framed in terms of causes and remedies necessarily influences who we criminalise, what legislation we pass and how we allocate our tax dollars. As such, framing crime in ways that are tinged with hyperbole, or that run contrary to evidence is unlikely to result in effective policy responses. The way in which crime is currently framed in Antigua and Barbuda – as a relatively recent phenomenon that is spiralling out of control and is characterised by increasing violence, as a phenomenon that is perpetuated by predatory young people with individual pathologies, as a phenomenon that is increasing largely because police and politicians are corrupt and young people are being inculcated with foreign cultural values – has resulted in punitive policy and ‘tough on crime’ rhetoric that do not appear to have had a substantial effect on the country’s crime rate. However, this study finds that there might be room for more progressive crime policy – policy that is informed by an understanding of crime that does not have at its heart notions of law and order or getting ‘tough on crime’.

## **Acknowledgements**

There are a number of people, without whom, this thesis would not have been possible.

First, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Michael Shiner and Dr. Coretta Phillips for all of their time and patience during this process. Their encouragement and comments on previous drafts have been invaluable and have allowed me to mature as a scholar.

I would also like to thank Tracy Robinson for her constant support and the many late nights in the office. Her encouragement and company made this long lonely process feel a little less so. Additionally, I would like to thank Andrew O’Kola for always believing in me and never letting me quit, as well as Kimberly Matthews and Deke Matthews for always keeping me sane and grounded and providing endless laughter.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Lionel and Cynthia Matthews who have made me everything I am. They created for me a sense of boundless possibility and gave me the license to dream. In many ways they sacrificed their own dreams so that I could live mine and I am eternally grateful. Their constant love and support have been invaluable and I am forever in their debt.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*'For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.'*

-- Walter Lippman (1922: 81)

### Statement of the Problem

Whether it is a spirited debate during one of the country's most popular talk radio programmes, a casual conversation among laypersons fervently advancing policy approaches with the authority of an expert, or the shocked gasp of a neighbour who has recently learned of a gruesome crime that took place 'just down the road', if you spend enough time in Antigua and Barbuda you are bound to encounter talk about crime. And, when you do, you will likely hear claims that crime has increased significantly over the past 20 years and continues to do so largely unabated. You may hear a throne speech in which the Governor-General confirms and denounces the increase in crime and outlines what her or his government plans to do about it. You may hear a politician vowing to get 'tough on crime' or you may hear people lamenting the way in which criminals have become so bold – daring to commit armed robbery in 'broad daylight'. You may hear regret that the 'serial rapist' was never caught or you may hear whose dogs are about to have pups and who may be interested in taking those pups because after all, dogs are the best security system – 'Black people tend to be afraid of dogs'. You may even hear people discussing how much they have had to adjust their behaviour because of crime, how much of an inconvenience life has become. These claims usually echo that made by Bolivar, an older Black Antiguan professional who says:

there are some places I just don't go at night...when I'm going to the airport in the daytime I always go through Barnes Hill. I would never go through New Winthropes at night.

Or, that made by Regine, a middle-aged Black Antiguan professional who explains:

Well, [crime] makes for an uncomfortable lifestyle... I remember when I moved to where I am now, or when I built [my house]. It took me a long time to start sleeping there because of the location. It's dark down there, it still is. But, my house got finished at a time when crime was just rampant – they were raping people – it was just crazy and I was afraid to be there. So, having worked as hard as I think I



have, to build a comfortable house, and can't sleep in it because of what I know crime can do, it was not good.

In all of this crime talk you may hear people calling for stiffer penalties including the death penalty or you may hear people lament, simply, that as a result of increased crime, life in Antigua and Barbuda is not like 'before time'<sup>1</sup>.

Indeed, a 2010 victimisation survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme ("UNDP") found that more than half of all respondents living in Antigua and Barbuda felt insecure because of crime or uncertain because of crime and security. According to the survey, nearly a quarter of respondents frequently worried that their house would be broken into at night or that they would be robbed at gunpoint. Additionally, almost 20 per cent of both men and women frequently worried about being sexually assaulted. Consequently, in an attempt to feel more secure, just over a quarter of respondents said that they kept a weapon at home (UNDP 2012).

If you read *The Daily Observer*, Antigua and Barbuda's most widely circulated newspaper, you would have reason to believe that all the crime talk you have heard is accurate. You may read headlines such as 'Tourist Held At Gunpoint On Runaway Beach', 'Seventy Year Old Woman Brutally Attacked in Her Home', or 'Courts Should Impose Appropriate Sanctions'. You may even come across a letter to the editor entitled 'Capital Punishment: A Biblical Perspective'. Or, you may encounter a headline that boldly declares, '2007 Crime Stats Confirm Public Opinion', with a corresponding story explaining to readers that:

[c]rime statistics show that overall there were 310 more reported incidents of crime in 2007 than 2006. This confirms the publicly held sentiment that crime is on the increase. Police figures show that there were 3,869 incidents of crimes on the blotter in 2007, compared to 3,559 in 2006 – an 8.71 per cent increase (*The Daily Observer* 2/8/2008: 20).

From the newspaper accounts of crime, you may get the general feeling that most crime in Antigua and Barbuda is violent, both violent crime and property crime are on the rise, and that very young people, the elderly and women are the most frequent victims of this crime.

But, when you look at official crime data from 1970 to 2010, you will realise that much of what you have heard and read is not borne out by the data. For example,

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<sup>1</sup> Antiguan and Barbudan parlance for 'generations ago'.

notwithstanding spikes in the recorded crime figures, the rate of violent crime has remained relatively stable since 1970 and the rate of property crime is continuing to decline from its peak in 1995. In fact, the overall crime rate has been on the decline since 1995. Additionally, in 2010 the rate of violent crime was the lowest that it had been over the 40 year time period. Similarly, if you look at the UNDP survey, you will find that despite the feelings of insecurity and media reports suggesting otherwise, only 11 per cent of residents admitted to being victimised in the year preceding the survey. This self-reported victimisation rate compares favourably to the rates among 30 nations that participated in the 2004-2005 round of the International Crime Victimization Survey (the “ICVS”). The ICVS found that 16 per cent of respondents reported that they had been victims of crime during the previous year (UNDP 2012).

This is not to suggest that crime is not a problem in Antigua and Barbuda, it may well be. However, there is a clear disconnect between the crime narrative told by official crime data and those told by members of the public and the news media. There is a clear disconnect between the ‘objective’ indicators of crime and the way in which crime is experienced or treated. This study is about the disconnect – how it emerges, why it exists and its implications for criminal justice policy. As such, the primary purpose of this study is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Antigua and Barbuda’s crime situation by investigating the ways in which the news media and members of the public explain crime in terms of its causes and remedies. Put differently, the study is primarily about the ‘social construction’ of crime and the crime ‘frames’ that the news media and members of the public draw on to make sense of the phenomena. The study proceeds largely on the constructionist assumption that, ‘the world may be in one state, but people can believe it is in another state and act accordingly’ (Surette 2015: 31).

To achieve its primary purpose this study uses frame analysis, a research strategy widely attributed to Erving Goffman (1974/1986). Frame analysis is commonly used in constructionist research on crime and criminal justice policy (Sasson 1995; Surette 2015) and operates on the presumption that because making sense of one’s social world is inherently complex, people must necessarily draw on their past experiences, which can be reduced to ‘frames’. According to Goffman (1974/1986: 21), a frame is a ‘schemata of interpretation’ that ‘allows its user to locate, perceive, identify and label’ events and experiences. Frame analysis then is a ‘slogan’ for analysing the frames that govern social events and experiences and our

subjective involvement in them (Goffman 1974/1986). Frames employed in the context of crime and criminal justice often articulate broad statements about the causes of crime, provide explanations for the nature of the crime problem and prescribe ameliorative policy responses. Using Theodore Sasson (1995) and Boda et al.'s (2011) working catalogue of culturally available crime frames, this study identifies the most prevalent crime frames used by the news media and members of the public.

Equally, this study is concerned with the processes through which people and the news media arrive at the explanations they offer with respect to crime (see Sasson 1995). That is, how members of the public and the news media come to 'frame' crime in a particular way. As a result, this study employs Surette's (2015) model of social construction. However, this study is not rooted solely in social constructionism. The study also proceeds on the basis that there is a world of material reality that exists independently of our perceptions of it. Exploring the dissonance between the ways in which crime is experienced and the way in which it is reflected in official crime data relies in part on this premise. In seeking to understand how crime is constructed in the media and public discourse, the study identifies biases and alternative interpretations through a comparison to official crime data. While this study acknowledges that official crime data are themselves socially constructed, it also acknowledges as Maguire (2012) and Newburn (2007) have, that official crime data are important in shaping what we think we know about crime and providing some empirical basis for critically assessing the claims that are made about crime. To this end, the study adopts a mixed methods approach that included the collection and analysis of quantitative data as well. To create an empirical account of historical crime trends and patterns, which did not exist previously, I collected and analysed 40 years of official crime data to determine the overall scale of crime, the relative incidence of different types of offences, trends in those offences over time and their geographical distribution. My methodology is further detailed in chapter three.

## **Rationale**

Despite the important strides that Caribbean crime literature has made with respect to methodological rigour and diversity of focus and perspective (see Harriott 2003), studies that focus on the crime experience of the smaller countries in the Eastern Caribbean are relatively rare. Specifically, there have been few attempts to understand Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation beyond the context of the Caribbean region as a whole. Where Antigua and Barbuda is included in regional studies, the analysis is

often based on incomplete data as Antigua and Barbuda's criminal justice agencies do not collect crime data in a systematic and uniform manner over time and the data collected are often not stored in a database that is conducive to easy extraction or manipulation (see Bennett and Lynch 1996/2007). Additionally, scant consideration has been paid to the social construction of crime in the Caribbean and existing studies pay little attention to the development of Caribbean crime policy (see for example Harriott 2003). This study is an attempt to fill some of these gaps in the Caribbean crime literature.

Although some work has been done with respect to Trinidad and Tobago, much of the existing literature on the social construction of crime is focused on Europe and North America. Few studies contemplate the experiences of smaller, developing countries. This gap in the literature is most acute with respect to frame analysis. To the extent that crime frames allow policy and decision makers to quickly process crime events and prescribe particular policies, a limited catalogue of culturally available frames necessarily limits the way in which crime is understood. Similarly, a catalogue of frames based strictly on the experience of Europe and North American may not apply to other jurisdictions and policy and decision makers in these jurisdictions may process crime events in a manner ill-suited to the jurisdiction. This study adds to the literature on frame analysis the experience of a small developing country.

### **Structure and Content of the study**

Chapter two locates the study within the relevant literature. Specifically, the chapter seeks to provide the rationale for the study's research questions and strategy and it establishes the theoretical framework that anchors the study's qualitative research. The chapter begins by describing how I arrived at the research question. The chapter then proceeds to explore the literature pertaining to crime statistics and official records as well as public knowledge and newspaper portrayals of crime. From here, the chapter moves on to consider the literature pertaining to social constructionism and frame analysis. Chapter two concludes with an explanation of how the literature outlined frames my research questions.

Chapter three outlines the mixed methods approach that I used to conduct the empirical research for this study. The chapter begins with a justification of the research approach and choice of methods before proceeding to discuss the tensions between the various epistemological tenets of the study. The chapter then discusses

mixed methods research within the context of social policy and describes the research design. At this point the chapter describes the research setting, process of conducting the peer group discussions and analysis of the resulting transcripts. Additionally, the chapter outlines the collection and analysis of political rhetoric as well as the use of in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders. Chapter three also describes the quantitative aspects of the research design – the collection and analysis of official police data as well as the collection and analysis of newspaper stories on crime and crime control. The chapter ends with a discussion of the study's limitations and an acknowledgement of my role as researcher questions surrounding my own subjectivity.

Chapter four uses police recorded data from 1970 to 2010 combined with secondary research to establish for Antigua and Barbuda what Maguire (2007) calls the 'basic contours of crime'. That is, the overall scale of crime and the relative incidence of different types of offences, trends in crime over time and its geographic distribution. The chapter begins with a description of Antigua and Barbuda's socio-political environment and proceeds to a trend analysis of both property and violent crime. With respect to violent crime, particular attention is paid to robbery, homicide, rape and indecent assault. Chapter four concludes with a discussion of the geographic distribution of crime in Antigua and Barbuda. This chapter is important because it provides the 'objective' indicators that are used to assess the claims made in chapters five to seven.

Chapter five focuses on the first of three major themes emerging from the qualitative analysis. The chapter describes socio-economic factors that the media and focus group participants blame for Antigua and Barbuda's current crime situation. Informed by a Mertonian (1938) understanding of anomie and strain theory as well as The Chicago School's social disorganisation theory (1942; 1969) and Hirschi's (1969) theory of social control, the chapter is divided into two sections organised around two separate frames. The first section discusses the *Blocked Opportunities* frame while the second section discusses the *Social Breakdown* frame. Each section of the chapter articulates the various components of the respective frame, discusses their theoretical underpinnings, reports the frequency with which the frame appeared in the newspaper discourse and describes the reactions to the frames by participants in the peer group discussions. This chapter concludes by discussing the claim that Antigua and Barbuda is not the peaceful close-knit society that it once was as it provides the segue to chapter six.

Chapter six focuses on the second of three major themes emerging from the analysis and is a logical extension of the themes presented in the preceding chapter. If

Antigua and Barbuda is not the peaceful close-knit society it once was, it is in part because of ‘alien influences’ or those elements, foreign to Antigua and Barbuda’s culture, which Antiguan feel are criminogenic. Such influences include immigration, Jamaican dancehall music, cable television broadcasted from the United States, including the Black Entertainment Television station, criminal deportees sent back to Antigua and Barbuda from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, the internet and policy seen to be a response to United States imperatives. This chapter is largely informed by the imitation theories advanced by Jean-Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904), Edwin Sutherland’s (1939) differential association and Thorsten Sellin’s (1938) contributions to culture conflict theory. Additionally, this chapter illustrates how social disorganisation theory and anomie, which were discussed in chapter five, apply to the *Poor Immigration Control* frame. Like chapter five, the chapter is divided by frame into two sections. The first section focuses on *Foreign Cultural Influences* while the second section focuses on *Poor Immigration Control*. Each section of the chapter articulates the various components of the respective frame, discusses their theoretical underpinnings, reports the frequency with which the frame appeared in the newspaper discourse and describes the reactions to the frames by participants in the peer group discussions. This chapter closes with the claim that crime in Antigua and Barbuda is associated with particular types of immigrants permitted into the country and the chapter serves as a segue to chapter seven which discusses the concern that immigration officers are susceptible to bribery and are contravening immigration rules by allowing people into the country who would be otherwise ineligible to permanently settle.

Chapter seven focuses on governance, crime, culture, and control, the last of the three major themes emerging from the analysis. The chapter is a logical extension of chapter six as it focuses, in part, on the claims that corruption is endemic in Antigua and Barbuda. These claims include arguments that wealthier people are able to manipulate the system in their favour while poor people are unfairly victimised by the system. Additionally, this chapter discusses claims that people are happy cutting corners and committing seemingly victimless crimes. This chapter also interrogates claims that Antigua and Barbuda’s criminal justice system is antiquated, inefficient, too lenient and in dire need of reform. The chapter is steeped in the differential association theory, which was discussed in chapter six, and 18<sup>th</sup> century classical criminology built around the reformist ideas of Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham. Like the chapters before it, chapter seven is divided by frame into two sections. The first section focuses on the *Criminal Culture* frame while the second section focuses

on the *Faulty System* frame. Each section of the chapter articulates the various components of the respective frame, discusses their theoretical underpinnings, reports the frequency with which the frame appeared in the newspaper discourse and describes the reactions to the frames by participants in the peer group discussions.

Finally, chapter eight concludes the study summarising the study's main findings and discussing its contributions to the extant literature. The chapter begins by reviewing the primary and secondary research questions and summarising the findings with respect to each. The chapter then moves on to discuss the contributions that this study makes to Caribbean crime literature, the literature on the public knowledge of crime, newspaper portrayals of crime and the social construction of crime and criminal justice. Additionally, the chapter discusses the significance of this study outlining policy implications and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to provide the rationale for the study's research questions and strategy and establishes the underlying theoretical framework that anchors the study. To this end, section I reviews the literature pertaining to public knowledge and media representations of crime as well as the meaning of criminal statistics. It also traces the evolution of criminological work in the Caribbean and illustrates the gaps in the extant literature. Section II describes social constructionism and frame analysis. In so doing, it discusses criminological research and illustrates why the method is useful to this study,

### **I**

#### **Competing Constructions of Antigua and Barbuda's Crime Story**

In formulating the research questions and devising a research strategy for this study, I conducted preliminary research in order to get a sense of some of the issues surrounding crime in Antigua and Barbuda. I listened to popular talk radio programmes on two major radio stations and in my personal capacity, spoke informally with residents I encountered. During introductory meetings with several of the key stakeholders I would eventually interview, I tried to ascertain what they believed to be pressing crime issues. Additionally, I conducted an initial review of various newspapers dating back to 1970 and political manifestos, budget and throne speeches dating back to 1994. The narrative that emerged from this preliminary research was one in which crime was held to be virtually non-existent until the mid 1990s when the country's crime rate increased significantly and continued to climb, largely unabated, well into the 2000s. In this narrative, the sitting government and each major political party decried increasing crime as a threat to public safety and vowed to implement a series of corrective measures that would restore Antigua and Barbuda to the peaceful society it once was (see for example Antigua Labour Party



Manifesto 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009; United Progressive Party Manifesto 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009; Government of Antigua and Barbuda Throne Speech 1995, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009). In this narrative there were frequent references to riots and serious security breaches in the country's sole prison, a 1999 prison fire – allegedly started by inmates – that destroyed most of the prison facility (United States Department of State 2000), and residents who were nostalgic for the days, not so long ago, when prison inmates were better behaved – when they could leave their belongings unattended and their homes unlocked without fear of theft or violation.

When I began an initial review of official reports, however, a different narrative unfolded. Annual reports produced by the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (the “RPF”) between 1970 and 1989 documented the raw number of specific crimes recorded by the police as well as explanations by the head of the RPF regarding noteworthy crime trends and cases. In this narrative, pre-1990 Antigua and Barbuda was not as peaceful as my preliminary research suggested. Homicides and robberies occurred more frequently than the residents and stakeholders in my preliminary research implied. The types of violent crimes described in the pre-1990 annual reports did not appear drastically different from the types of violent crimes reflected in contemporary police data. In the narrative told by these pre-1990 annual reports, police officers bemoaned the fact that residents left their belongings unattended and their homes unlocked. In fact, in these reports the RPF attributed much of the country's property crime to property owners' ‘carelessness’ and their failure ‘to secure their property despite frequent advice by the police’ (see *Annual Report on the Organization and Administration of the Royal Police Force and Fire Service of Antigua and Barbuda* 1987: 3, 1979: 5). Contemporary police records pointed to a similar dissonance. The narrative told by the raw number of crimes recorded by the police between 1994 and 2010, was not one in which crime was increasing exponentially. To the contrary, official police data suggested that overall rates of both violent crime and property crime were declining although the homicide rate experienced a slight upward trend.

To better understand these competing narratives, I reviewed the literature on the usage of crime statistics as well as the literature on public and media constructions of crime.

## Crime Statistics and Official Records

In Antigua and Barbuda the official crime statistics are comprised of all ‘major offences’ or ‘serious crimes’ known or reported to the police in a given year (see for example Antigua and Barbuda 1979). From at least 1970 to 1989 these figures were published annually in a report entitled *Annual Report on the Organization and Administration of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda*. The terms ‘major offences’ and ‘serious crimes’ were used interchangeably across the 19 volumes to describe those crimes tried on indictment in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court<sup>2</sup> by a judge and jury. Although the annual report has not been published since 1989, internal police records have retained the terminology and the crime figures are still compiled annually.

As is the case elsewhere (see for example Reiner 1996; Maguire 2012), Antigua and Barbuda’s official crime statistics feature prominently in news media and public debate as ‘the crime rate’. The suggestion is that these official crime statistics are an accurate assessment of national crime levels and trends over time. But, from as early as 1897 researchers have warned against interpreting official crime statistics in this manner (see for example Morrison 1897). Although sustained challenges to the interpretation of official crime statistics were rare, the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw an explosion of critical engagement with questions surrounding the social construction and meaning of crime statistics (Maguire 2012). Building on work by Biderman and Reiss (1967), Maguire (2012), Reiner (1996, 2000), MacDonald (2002) and others have demonstrated that the flaws inherent in discovering, reporting, recording and solving crimes mean that official crime statistics reflect only an unknown and selective portion of total crimes. For example, Maguire (2012) explains how recorded crime levels can be affected by proactive ‘discovery’ by the police through their own investigative efforts (see also Coleman and Moynihan 1996). If police intensify foot patrols, engage in stop and search practices, or target particular communities, the total number of recorded crimes will likely rise. Phillips and Bowling (2012: 381) offer the example of a 1960s report, which described police officers as going ‘nigger hunting...to bring in a coloured person at all costs’. The inappropriate use of paramilitary tactics, mass stop and search operations, excessive surveillance and unjustified armed raids employed to ‘bring in’ ‘coloured persons’, very likely created a skewed picture of offending patterns. Conversely, if police were to choose not to

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<sup>2</sup> Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court is comprised of the High Court and the appellate court. These terms describe crimes that are tried in the High Court of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

prioritise certain crimes such as possession of drugs for personal use or if they were to change their pattern of patrol, the total number of recorded crimes would likely fall, also changing the patterns of offending (Maguire 2012).

Similarly, Coleman and Moynihan (1996) have shown how recorded crime levels can vary according to the crime reporting behaviour of the public. For example, in Britain between 77 and 96 per cent of recorded crimes are initially discovered by members of the public. If these crimes were never reported, in the absence of a corresponding increase in the number of crimes discovered by the police, much of the crime in Britain would not be captured by official crime statistics (Coleman and Moynihan 1996). Understanding crime reporting is therefore critical to interpreting official crime statistics. Although the literature suggests that people are generally more likely to report a crime when they believe the police to be competent and effective (Peak et al. 1992), researchers have found that the decision to report a crime to the police is largely 'incident-specific' determined by the particular features of the event (Skogan 1984: 129; Gottfredson and Hindelang 1979; Garofalo 1979; Bennett and Wiegand 1994). Of the range of possible incident-specific determinants, Skogan (1984) found the seriousness of the crime to be the strongest determinant by far. The more serious the crime, the more likely it is to be reported (see also Hindelang and Gottfredson 1976). Block (1974) found the relationship between the victim and the offender to be an important determinant as well. The closer the relationship of the victim to the assailant, the less likely it is that she or he will report the offence to the police. Similarly, researchers have found that 'individual-specific' features such as age, gender, race, income, past victimisation and education play a role in whether people report a crime to the police although these features are far less significant than those that are incident-specific (see for example Skogan 1984; Block 1974). Of the individual-specific determinants of crime reporting, Hindelang and Gottfredson (1976) found age to be the strongest. Victims under the age of 35 are less likely to notify the police of criminal incidents than those 35 and older. Other significant individual-specific determinants of reporting include victimisation history and, in cases of property crime, the property insurance status of the victim (Skogan 1984; van Dijk 2001). Although researchers such as van Dijk (2001: 33) and Kidd and Chayet (1984) have found that victims who have been previously victimised are less inclined to report crimes to the police, others (see for example Bennett and Wiegand 1994) suggest that past victimisation or vicarious experiences of victimisation through

friends or neighbours, increases the likelihood of crime reporting. Conaway and Lohr (1994) argue from a slightly different perspective that victims are more likely to report crime in the future if they have had or know of positive experiences with the police in past victimisation. In the case of property crime, Skogan (1984) suggests that when property is insured the victim is more likely to report the crime to the police in the hopes of securing restorative services, claiming compensation or receiving a private insurance payment. Finally, researchers have found that ‘environment-specific’ features such as neighbourhood size, cohesion and wealth are the weakest determinants of crime reporting behaviour. Most studies show that when the seriousness of the offense is controlled there is no significant relationship between environment-specific features and reporting practices (see for example Gottfredson and Hindelang 1979; Bennett and Wiegand 1994; Fishman 1979) although some studies suggest that the neighbourhood in which a victim lives may have some influence on whether the crime is reported (see for example Ruback et al., 1984). While this body of research on crime reporting behaviour largely contemplates highly industrialised, socially and economically developed urban nations, Bennett and Wiegand (1994) found that the crime reporting behaviour in these places, can be largely generalised to Belize, a Caribbean country geographically located in Central America but culturally, politically and socially similar to Antigua and Barbuda. In Belize the decision to report a crime to the police is similarly ‘incident-specific’, determined by the seriousness of the crime, although certain individual-specific determinants – past victimisation and socioeconomic status – play an important role as well (Bennett and Wiegand 1994).

Flaws also abound with respect to how crimes are recorded. Of those crimes that come to the attention of the police, officers select which crimes to record based on internal policies and procedures, existing legal definitions or their subjective assessment of the incident (see Reiner 2000; Maguire 2012; Bottomley and Coleman 1981; see also Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary 2014). Farrington and Dowd's (1985) comprehensive study of police recording practices best exemplifies the point. This study found that, compared to neighbouring counties, the Nottinghamshire police were much more likely to record crimes involving property of little monetary value and crimes admitted to them during the course of interrogations. Thus, Nottinghamshire's comparatively high crime rate was not a product of significantly higher levels of criminal activity, but of police recording practices. Moreover, police

departments may have ulterior motives with respect to the information they report and how they report it. For example, there may be institutional attempts to protect the reputation of the force or jurisdiction (Wolfgang 1963; Wittebrood and Junger 2002). In the case of Antigua and Barbuda, attributing property crime to the carelessness of property owners may absolve the RPF of having to admit its own failures and shortcomings. Additionally, Maguire (2012) explains that some police departments engage in the practice of ‘cuffing’ or hiding offences as a means of work avoidance or to improve the overall clear up rate while others record large numbers of minor offences to artificially inflate the crime rate in an attempt to justify requests for additional resources. As Reiner (2000: 76) notes, ‘to a large extent the better name for “crimes recorded by the police” might be “crimes which the police wish to make known”’.

But, police recording practices are not always dependent on internal policies and procedures or subjective assessments by police officers. In many cases changes in legislation or counting rules may determine how crimes are recorded and which are included in the crime rate. Maguire (2012: 213) offers the example of the Theft Act 1968, which expanded the definition of burglary, eliminating such offences as ‘shopbreaking’ as well as the Public Order Act 1986, which created several new offences including ‘violent disorder’. Therefore, even after adjusting for those crimes that never come to the attention of the police, official police data may not accurately reflect true crime levels. Rather, official police data may more accurately reflect the particular normative perspectives and inner workings of the police and as such say more about police working practices (Biderman and Reiss 1967), the changing legal definitions of various crimes (Glaser 1967), and reporting behaviour by the public (Block 1974; Skogan 1984).

These critiques of crime statistics notwithstanding, some scholars concede that they provide an empirical basis, albeit an imperfect one, for critically assessing claims that are made about crime. In the example of England and Wales, Maguire (2012) and Newburn (2007) have observed that crime trends emerging from police recorded crime figures and those emerging from annual household victimisation surveys have followed a similar trajectory. Additionally, other indicators, including the number of suspects arrested by the police, have corroborated these trends. These scholars agree that the fact that multiple sources lead to a similar conclusion suggests that crime statistics have some validity although the knowledge is always partial. While crime

statistics cannot provide raw numerical truth, Maguire (2007: 255) argues that they do help to establish the ‘basic contours of crime’. That is, the overall scale of crime and the relative incidence of different types of offences, trends in crime over time, and its geographical distribution. This observation is especially important in the context of Antigua and Barbuda where there are few other ways to assess crime levels. Although crime statistics are supplemented by an annual household victimisation survey in many countries (see for example Newburn 2007; Maguire 2012; Reiner 2000), no such survey exists in Antigua and Barbuda. While Antigua and Barbuda was recently included in a 2010 UNDP victimisation survey, there is no consistent regional survey nor does the country systematically participate in the ICVS (UNDP 2012).

Understanding that Antigua and Barbuda’s crime statistics are an imperfect but legitimate basis for critically assessing the claims that the public and the news media make about crime, I then turned to the literature on public and media knowledge of crime to better understand the dissonance between these claims and the official crime data.

### **Public Knowledge of Crime**

It is well established that most people are ill informed about crime and criminal justice (see for example Hough and Roberts 2012). While some studies have shown that people seem better at estimating the magnitude and direction of crime the closer the area in question gets to their own neighbourhood (Ditton and Chadee 2006; Hough and Roberts 2012), researchers have found that when compared to official crime data most people routinely overestimate the magnitude and direction of crime nationwide (Hough and Roberts 2012). For example, in countries where official crime data suggest the crime rate has declined or remained stable, most members of the public believe that crime was actually increasing (Hough and Roberts 2012). In the United States, despite declining crime rates in 2011, 68 per cent of Americans believed that crime had increased from the year before (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2011). In 2008 nearly 70 per cent of Australians erroneously believed that crime rates in Australia had increased over the past five years and in New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom, most people believed that crime rates were on the rise even though crime rates had fallen or remained stable (Butler and McFarlane 2009). Similar trends have been documented in contemporary South Africa (Govender 2013; Pharoah 2008). Even in countries where crime rates have increased incrementally, researchers have found that most members of the public grossly overestimate the level

of increase. As one of the few Caribbean countries for which such a study exists, the Barbados case is instructive. In Barbados where crime rates increased modestly between 1997 and 2002, 70 per cent of Barbadians believed that crime rates increased significantly (Nuttall et al. 2003).

Similarly, researchers have demonstrated that although people have a more accurate sense of the relative frequency of certain types of crimes in their own neighbourhoods (Ditton and Chadee 2006; Hough and Roberts 2012), on a national level, most members of the public have a skewed sense of the proportion of crime that involves violence generally (Butler and McFarlane 2009; Hough and Roberts 2012), and murder specifically (Mitchell and Roberts 2010). For example, while official crime data show that only 20 per cent of the crime that occurred in Barbados between 1997 and 2002 involved violence, over 40 per cent of Barbadians believed that more than 75 per cent of crimes involved violence and nearly 70 per cent of Barbadians believed that it was more than 50 per cent (Nuttall et al. 2003). The same applies to the United States, Britain, Australia and Canada where a review of official crime data suggested that no more than approximately 10 per cent of crimes involved violence yet more than 75 per cent of the public thought the percentage was much higher (Butler and McFarlane 2009; see also Hough and Roberts 2012). With regard to murder, and irrespective of jurisdiction, the bias towards overestimation remains. Although an early study conducted by Hough and Roberts (1992) expressed doubt as to whether the British public tended to overestimate the country's murder rate, later studies have found otherwise. For example, Mitchell and Roberts (2010) found that a relatively small percentage of the British public accurately characterised the murder rate as declining while close to two-thirds erroneously believed that it had risen. Despite a stable murder rate in Barbados between 1997 and 2002, 53 per cent of Barbadians believed there was a significant increase in murders during that time period (Nuttall et al. 2003). In Trinidad and Tobago, Chadee et al. (2007) argued that the reason why more than 40 per cent of Trinidadians expected to be murdered in the next 12 months was due, in part, to them grossly overestimating the frequency of murders occurring in the country. According to Chadee et al. (2007) the Trinidadian case is an extreme example of the general tendency for people to rate undesirable and involuntary events as more likely to occur than those that are desirable and voluntary. However, finding that 31 per cent and 25 per cent of Jamaicans below the age of 25 and above the age of 56, respectively, overestimated their risk of being murdered, Harriott (2003a) has

attributed such staggering overestimations to a combination of national economic vulnerability, a highly competitive media environment, and the small size of the society.

Finally, researchers have demonstrated that most members of the public have a skewed sense of the criminal justice system as well. For example, when compared to official crime data most people overestimate rates of recidivism (Roberts 1992) while underestimating the length of time that offenders serve in prison (Mitchell and Roberts 2010) and the severity of judicial sentencing in general (Hough and Roberts 2012). For example, Roberts and White (1986) found that Canadians substantially overestimated the rate at which convicted first-time offenders went on to reoffend. Mitchell and Roberts (2010) found that in England and Wales most people underestimated the amount of time a convicted offender served in prison and believed that judicial sentencing was too lenient. In fact, Hough and Roberts (2012) conclude that in general, most people believe that the criminal justice process is plagued by excessive leniency.

The dissonance between public perception of crime and criminal justice and official crime data remains for many reasons (Hough and Roberts 2012). Several commentators, including Maguire (2012) and Reiner (2000), have noted that it is misguided to use official crime statistics – the very standard against which public perception is measured – as a reliable barometer of true crime levels. These scholars have long argued that official crime statistics are a more accurate measure of crimes that are recorded by the police than of crimes that actually occur, although they do concede that there may be some validity to the crime statistics even if information they provide is always partial (see also Newburn 2007).

Other reasons for the dissonance between the public perception of crime and official crime data include the fact that politicians often politicise crime, attacking opponents who draw attention to declining crime rates. For example, although academic criminologists and statisticians in Britain agreed that crime had fallen between 2000 and 2010, during this time politicians took every opportunity to attack their opponents if they emphasised the decline (Hough and Roberts 2012). Additionally, many countries did in fact experience sustained increases in crime for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in Britain the crime rate increased dramatically in the mid 1920s and increased almost every year between 1955 and 1992 (Reiner 2000). According to David Garland (2001), within a single generation these



increased crime rates made crime a prominent fact of life for the British middle class thus creating new sensibilities around the phenomena. Hough and Roberts (201: 282) argue that such prolonged periods of increasing crime may lead members of the public to believe that crime always rises thus hindering their ability to recognise immediately reversing trends and cite the mass media's emphasis on 'dramatic and worrying' crime stories for the public's dystopic view of crime and criminal justice. Indeed, crime and criminal justice are similarly distorted in their newspaper representation.

### **Newspaper Portrayals of Crime**

The crime narrative most often told by newspaper crime stories is one that embodies Surette's (2003: 41; 2015: 59) 'law of opposites' or 'backwards law'. That is, newspaper crime articles overwhelmingly emphasise the opposite of whatever crime trends and patterns emerge from official crime data. Where official crime data suggest that incidents of property crime outstrip those of violent crime, articles focused on violent crime are more prevalent (see for example Surette 2003; 2015). Where official crime data identify the elderly, children and women among those least likely to be victimised, newspaper crime articles exaggerate the crime risks faced by these very people (see for example Greer and Reiner 2012). Where official crime data suggest that the overall crime rate is declining, crime related articles become increasingly numerous, focusing on individual incidents without engaging in any meaningful trend analysis or discussion of the causes of crime. Moreover, beyond demonising individual offenders, these stories fail to investigate the nature of criminals (Marsh 1991; Graber 1980; see also Greer and Reiner 2012; Sasson 1995). According to Surette (2003), this law also holds true for most characteristics of criminal justice including the severity of judicial sentences and prison conditions. Additionally, newspaper crime stories are overwhelmingly concerned with the early stages of the criminal justice process – the planning and commission of the crime, the subsequent police investigation and the apprehension of the offender. Less represented are articles focused on the seemingly more mundane aspects of the process – court procedures and corrections (Surette 2015, 2003). This kind of distortion transcends individual news organisations or jurisdiction.

Analysis of newspapers in a number of jurisdictions confirms these findings. According to Reiner et al. (2003), the patterns of crimes reported in British newspaper articles since the Second World War have generally been the 'opposite' of official crime data. For example, approximately two-thirds of newspaper crime articles focus

on violent crime or sexual violation even though such offences account for less than 10 per cent of crimes recorded by the police. In fact, Reiner et al. (2003) maintain that newspapers are unlikely to publish articles on property crime at all unless the incidents involve celebrities. The study further found that British newspaper crime articles exaggerate the risks of victimisation faced by older middle-class members of the public and represent crime as increasingly menacing and unyielding. In contrast, British crime data suggest that it is poor and socially marginalised members of the public who are at greater risk of victimisation and that crime rates are not unyielding as they actually declined during the relevant time period (Reiner et al. 2003).

A content analysis of four daily newspapers in the United States mirrors these trends. Graber (1980) found that when compared to official crime data murder is grossly overrepresented in newspaper articles while property crimes are grossly underrepresented. Additionally, Graber (1980) found that American newspapers supply a large amount of data about specific crimes without commensurate analytical or evaluative information that might facilitate a broader understanding of the data. Marsh's (1991) research supports Graber's (1980) findings in the United States and draws similar conclusions with respect to 14 other countries including countries – such as Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda – that are not often represented in the literature. In Trinidad and Tobago, one of the very few English speaking Caribbean countries represented in the literature, Chadee and Ditton (2005, 2007) found the 'law of opposites' to be most acute with respect to murder specifically though pertinent to violent crime more generally.

Like the dissonance between the public perception of crime and official crime data, the extant literature offers clear reasons for the dissonance between newspaper representations of crime and official crime data (see for example Hough and Roberts 2012). One important reason for this dissonance is 'newsworthiness'. In their seminal work, Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified 12 'news values' or criteria by which news organisations determine the events they deem newsworthy. Among these news values are immediacy, negativity, unpredictability, clarity and novelty. According to Galtung and Ruge (1965), the more of these news values an event satisfies, the more likely it is to be included in newspapers. Moreover, once the event is selected, the very news values for which it was selected are accentuated. This process of selection and distortion (Galtung and Ruge 1965) encourages news organisations to emphasise individual incidents featuring violent crime, sexual violation, and the victimisation of

people who, statistically, are the least likely to be victimised – especially those people who best comport with Nils Christie's (1986) composite of the vulnerable and blameless 'ideal victim'. Equally, the process discourages nuance, complexity and the type of trend analysis or evaluative information that would facilitate a broader understanding of crime and criminal justice. Thus, the 'news values' of newspaper organisations play a pivotal role in ensuring that certain crime narratives receive significantly more coverage than others (Hough and Roberts 2012: 282). Or, as a former Antiguan and Barbudan newspaper publisher excitedly explained in an interview conducted for this study, 'if a guy chops off a woman's head or like in Grenada comes to the police station with a bucket with two heads in it, now that there's big news! You'll need to print extra papers!'

But, although two severed heads in a bucket may satisfy nearly all of Galtung and Ruge's (1965) news values, researchers have long argued that newsworthiness by itself does not explain the distorted representation of crime in newspapers (see for example Greer and Reiner 2012; Schudson 2011; Halloran et al. 1970). Beyond newsworthiness, researchers such as Hall et al. (1978) argue that it is the very newspaper production process – the transformation of a newsworthy event into a story – that ensures crime news is written from a particular perspective. Thus, the newspaper production process is itself value-laden. This approach to understanding media representations of crime is a structuralist approach most closely associated with the control paradigm. The control paradigm, one of two theoretical paradigms that shaped news media research in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, has been influential in the academy and dominates academic research on news media, crime and justice (Greer 2010; see also Hall 1982).

### ***The Control Paradigm***

Control approaches, including the structuralist approach, are informed by Marxist and critical theory and emphasise the unequal distribution of economic and cultural power throughout society (Greer 2010; Greer and Reiner 2012). Structuralist researchers operating within this paradigm argue that newspapers exist to reproduce dominant ideology, promote the interests of the ruling elite and legitimate the capitalist system (Greer 2010; Greer and Reiner 2012). According to these researchers, implicit and explicit constraints on journalists' professional autonomy, the dominance of a narrow range of powerful sources and the normalisation of ruling class values throughout

societies structured around a ‘manufactured consensus’ combine to shape the process of news selection and production (Greer 2010). From this perspective, what news organisations choose to publish as news reflects socially determined notions of who and what are important (Greer and Reiner 2012; Graber 1980). These organisations assume the identity of an audience and the terms that would make an event comprehensible to that audience (Hall 1993). From this structuralist understanding, news organisations necessarily distort because they create their own reality.

Building on work by Lang and Lang (1955), Halloran et al. (1970) describe the news production process as being governed by ‘inferential structures’ or frameworks that have been predefined on the basis of values and definitions already legitimated in the public mind (see also Greer 2010). According to Hall (1993) these inferential structures are ‘maps of meaning’ that give plausibility, order, and coherence to discrete events by tapping into broadly shared beliefs and a ‘common stock of knowledge’ (see also Greer and Reiner 2012). While the development of an inferential structure involves neither intentional bias nor ‘simple selection by expectation’, it does involve ‘a process of simplification and interpretation, which structures the meaning given to the story around its original news value’ (Cohen 1972/2002: 33; Halloran et al. 1970: 215-16). For Chibnall (1977/2013: 30), this simplification and interpretation involves the ‘pruning down’ and ‘moulding’ of reality to fit pre-existing forms of news. Thus, reality is forced to accommodate the news – the news need not concern itself with reality. And, to facilitate immediate comprehension, social situations, where possible, are forced into binary oppositions that are familiar (Chibnall 1977/2013: 30). In their media analysis of London’s 1968 anti-Vietnam war demonstrations, Halloran et al. (1970) show how in the weeks preceding the demonstrations the media predefined the event as one that would or could involve violent confrontations between the binary forces of ‘law and order’ (as represented by the police) on the one hand and ‘anarchy’ (as represented by the demonstrators) on the other (Halloran et al. 1970: 90; see also Greer and Reiner 2012: 264). On the day of the demonstrations, although there were very few incidents of violence, reporters nevertheless emphasised in their news reports those violent incidents. It was the issue of violence that became news. The news coverage distorted the relatively peaceful event to fit with a predefined inferential structure – a ‘framework of violence’.

Over time these inferential structures have become incorporated into journalism's 'stock of knowledge' and in employing them journalists simultaneously normalise value-laden definitions and images and obviate fresh thinking about new phenomena (Hall 1993; Hall et al. 1978; Chibnall 1977/2013). Rather than helping the audience to understand old realities in new ways, in using inferential structures journalists encourage the audience to understand new realities in old ways (Chibnall 1977/2013: 35). As one crime reporter in Chibnall's research admitted, news stories are 'simple clichés set to music – you select the right cliché and you write it up to suit the particular circumstances' (see Chibnall 1977/2013: 35). Moreover, occupational pressures encourage reliance on these predefined structures. Retrieving a 'framework' is convenient, facilitates deadlines and the time schedules of news production, ensures that stories will not offend and provides a story with instant credibility. When journalists construct a story around a predefined structure, their reporting is more likely to be respected and seen as 'responsible' (see Chibnall 1977/2013). According to Hall (1993: 87), such normative structures 'contain strong prescriptions to 'see' events in certain ways: they tend to 'rule in' and 'rule out' certain kinds of additional inferences'. As such, journalism's inferential structures inform and reflect a hegemonic ideology – an ideology that rarely changes once established (see for example Lang and Lang 1955).

However, Hall et al. (1978) are quick to emphasise that news organisations do not autonomously create these structures or transmit the resulting ideology in a conspiratorial manner. Rather, news organisations play a secondary role. News organisations *reproduce* the dominant ideology. Hall et al. (1978) locate this activity in the journalistic imperatives of 'impartiality', 'balance', and 'objectivity'. These professional rules require a clear distinction between 'fact' and 'opinion' privileging stories that are firmly grounded in the authority of 'experts' in the fields covered by the stories (Hall et al. 1978; Chibnall 1977). The more powerful the position of the 'expert' informing the story – the more information members of the public perceive the expert to possess – the more 'factual' and 'objective' members of the public will believe the story to be. Becker (1967) explains this as society's 'hierarchy of credibility':

[i]n any system of ranked groups, participants take it as given that members of the highest group have the right to define the way things really are...those at the top have access to a more complete picture of what is going on than anybody else. Members of lower groups will

have incomplete information and their view of reality will be partial and distorted in consequence. (see Chibnall 1977: 38-39)

For crime reporters, this means the most coveted sources of statements and information are those perceived to have all the ‘facts’ pertaining to crime: the police, Members of Parliament responsible for public safety and other high-ranking government officials. By necessity crime reporters develop a symbiotic relationship with these sources, as access to official statements and information is critical to the crime reporter’s livelihood (Greer and Reiner 2012). Ultimately, crime reporters become the mouthpiece of the police and the criminal justice system inevitably relying on and reproducing their respective institutional views. Hall et al. (1978: 58) note:

Ironically, the very rules which aim to preserve the impartiality of the media and which grew out of desires for greater professional neutrality, also serve powerfully to orientate the media in the ‘definitions of social reality’ which their ‘accredited sources’ – the institutional spokesmen – provide.

Thus, from a structuralist perspective, the dissonance between newspaper representations of crime and official crime data lie in a combination of newsworthiness, the newspaper production process and an overreliance on official crime data and statements from the police and high-ranking government officials.

### ***The Liberal Pluralist Paradigm***

The second theoretical paradigm that shaped news media in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – the liberal pluralist paradigm – emphasises the principles of freedom, choice and democracy. Operating from this largely American perspective, pluralist researchers argue that news selection and production is shaped not by elite interests but by public interests and consumer demand and the sovereignty of professional journalistic values rather than constraints on journalists’ professional autonomy. Additionally, pluralist researchers argue that news selection and production is shaped by equal competition for media access by a diversity of news sources and the collective values of a society built around ‘organic consensus’. These approaches are popular among media practitioners and those wielding the most cultural, economic and political power (Greer 2010; see also Hall 1982). From this perspective, the role of the news media is to accurately inform audiences, protect democracy and serve the interests of the social majority. Such an approach inadequately explains why crime articles would

overwhelmingly emphasise the opposite of whatever crime trends and patterns emerge from official crime data (see Hall 1982).

### **Caribbean Crime Literature**

Criminological literature on crime in the Caribbean developed in two discernible phases (see Harriott 2003; Birkbeck 1999). The first phase saw scholars grappling with questions surrounding the appropriate content and direction of the region's theoretical work (Birkbeck 1999). In calling for a 'Caribbean criminology', for example, Kenneth Pryce (1976/2007) argued that scholars working in and on the Caribbean should adopt critical criminology as the theoretical framework for their work while Bennett and Lynch (1996/2007) identified five Caribbean-specific features that rendered critical criminology and all other existing theoretical frameworks inapplicable to the region. Maureen Cain (1996/2007) rebuffed the wholesale embrace or rejection of existing theories arguing instead that Caribbean criminologists must engage with existing theoretical frameworks 'instrumentally' as they explore the concrete reality of Caribbean experiences. Similarly, Deosaran and Chadee (1997/2007) maintained that any Caribbean criminology eventually taking shape would not have at its core a theoretical framework radically different from those already existing. Rather, any Caribbean criminology would reinterpret existing theory in a way that made sense for the Caribbean. According to Birkbeck (1999/2007), at this point Caribbean criminology was thought to exist at a pre-theoretical level as most scholars had not engaged in the empirical testing of a set of general statements that offered an explanation for the region's experience with crime. Harriott (2003) explains that much of this early criminological work in and on the region involved very little empirical work.

In contrast, the second phase of criminological research has proven to be more empirically grounded and methodologically rigorous. This research that Harriott (2003) refers to as 'second-generation literature' does not rely solely on official crime statistics and is more varied in focus and perspective. For example, scholars have focused on, *inter alia*, female victimisation (see for example Jones 2003; Bernard 2006), victimisation and ethnicity (see for example Norris and Bergdahl 2007), crime and tourism (see for example Alleyne and Boxill 2003; King 2003), policing and security (see for example Harriott 2000; Mars 2001/2007; Deosaran 2002, 2007; Griffith 2004; Bowling 2005, 2006, 2010), gang violence (see for example Seepersad

and Bissessar 2013), crime and governance (see for example Ryan and Ferguson 2003; Gray 2001), drugs (see for example King 2000; Klein et al. 2004; Figueira 2004; Bartilow 2007; Bowling 2008), gun violence (see for example Agozino et al. 2009), fear of crime (see for example Chadee 2001, 2003; Harriott 2003a; Chadee and Ditton 2007), incarceration (see for example Ramdhanie 2002/2007; Jones 2007), crime reporting behaviour by the public (see for example Bennett and Wiegand 1994) and crime policy (see for example Surette et al. 2011; Robotham 2003). Notwithstanding the important strides that have been made, however, important gaps remain.

First, literature that focus on the crime experience of individual Caribbean countries tend to focus exclusively on the region's larger countries such as Jamaica (see for example Harriott 2000, 2003, 2008; Headley 2002, 2003; Gunst 2003; Lawton 2008, Bailey 2008, 2010), Trinidad and Tobago (see for example Hagley-Dickinson 2011) and Guyana (see for example Mars and Mars 2002; Granger 2011). To date, there is very little academic literature dedicated solely to the crime experience of Antigua and Barbuda, any of the other countries comprising the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (the "OECS") or Barbados. Of those regional studies that include these smaller countries, the analysis is often based on incomplete data provided by national criminal justice organisations (see for example de Albuquerque and McElroy 1999; Deosoran 2004). The data to which researchers gain access are often incomplete because, as is the case in Antigua and Barbuda, national criminal justice organisations in many of these countries do not collect crime data in a systematic or uniform manner over time, organisations are sometimes unwilling to divulge the data to non-governmental individuals, and the data collected are often not stored in a database that is conducive to easy extraction or manipulation (Bennett and Lynch 1996/2007).

Second, very little work has been done with respect to the social construction of crime in the Caribbean. That is, Caribbean criminological research is mainly conducted from an 'objectivist' perspective that is concerned with the sources, dimensions and possible remedies of crime rather than the process by which crime has come to be viewed as a problem. Much of this work is centred on 'practical' questions including who or what causes crime in the Caribbean, who is harmed by that crime, what is the harm suffered, and what are the prescribed measures that can ameliorate the situation. The unquestioned assumption is that crime is a problem in the region. Rarely asked is whether crime deserves the type of attention it receives – whether



there is any relationship between the questions that dominate the crime literature and the ways in which Caribbean people have understood their criminological realities.

Finally, there is a dearth of academic research on the development of Caribbean crime policy. This deficiency has resulted in what Harriott (2003: xvii) calls an ‘emerging intellectual dependence on external assistance and consultancies’. Indeed, much of the regional crime literature that includes Antigua and Barbuda has been conducted by consultants and published by regional or international organisations (see for example Maertens and Anstey 2007; Barnes et al. 2008; UNDP 2012). As Harriott (2003: xvii) explains:

These consultants bring with them the experience of their countries, and in some instances a wider experience, but they have no knowledge of the local situation and no time to learn about it. They may also bring considerable ideological luggage with them, as expressed in fads associated with the rotation of political administrations in their home countries, which are not interrogated from the viewpoint of the concrete realities of [the Caribbean].

As a study focused exclusively on crime and crime policy in Antigua and Barbuda, this research makes a modest attempt to begin filling some of these gaps in Caribbean crime literature. More broadly, this research responds to Harriott’s (2003) call for the type of empirical research that will facilitate a better understanding of the Caribbean crime phenomenon and allow for evidence-based judgements and policy.

## II

### **Social Constructionism**

As a result of their seminal 1966 text, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann are widely heralded as the intellectual forefathers of the modern social constructionist movement (Gubrium and Holstein 2008; Best 2008). Informed by Durkheim (1961, 1964), Berger and Luckmann rendered problematic the taken-for-granted ‘facts’ of experience that had been treated as matters to be discovered, recorded and analysed (Best 2008). In their text, Berger and Luckmann (1966) encouraged empirical attention to the social processes that shape knowledge and established a framework for understanding the ways in which meanings are created through social interaction.

Within sociology, Berger and Luckmann's ideas were infectious. By the late 1970s, sociologists commonly used constructionist theory to anchor their inquiries of news, science, deviance and social problems (see for example Knorr-Cetina 1981; Tuchman 1978; Douglas 1970; Spector and Kitsuse 1977; see also Best 2008). Beyond sociology, Berger and Luckmann's approach had far reaching effects. In charting the development of the paradigm, Best (2008) explains that Berger and Luckmann's insights were published at a fortuitous time, when the academy was characterised by an increasing demand for innovative ideas rigid enough to guide emerging scholarship but malleable enough to be applied to many different experiences in many different disciplines. As such, social constructionism quickly flourished as a frame for understanding a range of disparate experiences including, child abuse (Gelles 1975), social problems (Spector and Kitsuse 1977), gender (Lorber and Farrell 1991), sexuality (Kitzinger 1987), race (Haney Lopez 1994), wife abuse (Loseke 1992) and pregnancy (Gardener 1994), across a range of disparate disciplines such as anthropology (Faubian and Marcus 2008), communications (Foster and Bochner 2008), education (Wortham and Jackson 2008), psychology (Gergen 1985; Gergen and Gergen 2008), public policy (Schneider and Ingram 2008) and political science (Edelman 1988; Schneider and Ingram 1993).

For scholars interested in drawing attention to troubling social conditions and the plight of vulnerable communities or for those interested in the disjunction between the objective indicators of a social condition and the way in which that social condition is experienced or treated, the appeal of social constructionism was clear. In contrast to the objectivist perspective, social constructionism allowed these scholars to look beyond the causes, dimensions or possible remedies of the conditions they investigated and to question the processes through which knowledge of these conditions were created. Additionally, social constructionism allowed scholars to examine how impacted communities experienced these social conditions. W.I. Thomas famously wrote, 'if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences' (Goffman 1974/1986: 1). Social constructionism allowed scholars to better understand these consequences.

At the heart of social constructionism are the shared meanings held by members of society – what Surette (2015) calls the ideas, interpretations and knowledge that groups of people agree to hold in common. According to this perspective, what we understand to be real is not independent of human processes or

grounded in discrete events but is created through active social relationships and a tacit agreement to see the world in a specific way. As Surette (2015: 31) explains:

...in social constructionism, the degree to which a given constructed reality prevails is not directly dependent on its objective empirical validity but is instead strongly influenced by shifting cultural trends and social forces. The world may be in one state, but people can believe it is in another state and act accordingly.

According to Best (2008: 57):

People constantly make choices based on how they understand their alternatives...and those choices...then constrain what they will do next. Many of these choices are soon lost from sight, and an edifice of taken-for-granted assumptions about the world emerges and evolves. Adopting a constructionist stance makes it easier for analysts to penetrate those assumptions and to recognize and study these processes.

This is the insight that informed Stanley Cohen's (1972/2002) seminal work on 'moral panics', Craig Reinerman's (1994) work on 'drug scares', Stuart Hall et al.'s (1978) work on mugging, Joel Best's (1991) work on freeway violence and a host of other constructionist studies looking at how particular issues come to public attention (Best 1999). Indeed, social problems research offers the clearest examples. Social constructionism provided to social problem scholars a well-developed framework for investigating the contested claims made by 'claims makers' – the promoters, activists, professional experts and spokespersons involved in articulating specific claims about a social condition – in the creation of new social problem categories (Cohen 1972/2002; Surette 2015). Put differently, '[c]onditions might exist, people might be hurt by them, but conditions are not social problems until humans categorize them as troublesome and in need of repair' (Loseke 2003: 14). Social constructionism provided a framework for understanding the categorisation process.

But, social constructionism has flourished in spite of its critics not without them. Beyond the general critique that constructionist research questions often seemed trivial or secondary as compared to objective concerns about the condition itself (Loseke 2003), scholars such as Hacking (1999) argued that constructionists were too concerned with the extent to which claims were accepted as truthful and not concerned enough with the actual truthfulness of the claims themselves. Hacking (1999: 4) famously suggested,

The next stage in the notorious series of holocaust denials might be a book entitled *The Social Construction of the Holocaust*, a work urging that the Nazi extermination camps are exaggerated and the gas chambers fictions.

For these critics, constructionist language offered a cloak of legitimacy that could allow spurious, arbitrary or self-serving claims to flourish (Best 2008). Other critics argued that social constructionist scholars engaged in the same detrimental practices that they condemned. That is, social constructionists routinely privileged their own assumptions by failing to simultaneously apply the same sort of constructionist critiques to their own ideas and assumptions (Best 2008). Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) called this failure ‘ontological gerrymandering’. Constructionist scholars ultimately addressed the charge of ontological gerrymandering by splitting into two separate factions, the strict constructionists who conceded the charge and sought to avoid all objectivist assumptions about reality, and the less radical contextual constructionists, who accepted the basic premise of social constructionism but saw ontological gerrymandering as a necessary evil, something to be aware of and to be handled with caution (Best 2008). This divide among social constructionist researchers had profound implications for the type of research that they could produce. While strict constructionism allowed researchers to note claims and counterclaims about social conditions, the ontological imperative to avoid all assumptions about the ‘truth’ of these conditions enjoined them from assessing their relative merits. As Best (1993: 136) explains:

Calls for sociologists to stay within the analytic boundaries of strict constructionism, coupled with admissions that most – if not all – constructionist case studies fail to meet those standards, raise the question whether a strict constructionist analysis is possible or even desirable.

In contrast, contextual constructionism allowed researchers to move past the ontological dilemma and study ‘claims-making’ within the context of culture and social structure. Researchers were able to examine the relative veracity of claims and assess the societal impact of those claims making very careful assumptions about the ‘truth’ of the conditions they studied. According to Best (1993), these studies were particularly useful in societies heavily committed to information and comment through mass media, governmental organisations and professional agencies. In short, contextual constructionism facilitated increased knowledge of social life by assuming that understanding the empirical world is desirable and thus a better understanding of the empirical world would result from paying more attention to the manner in which social problems emerged (Best 1993). Much of the social construction research

pertaining to crime and criminal justice, including this study, is informed by contextual constructionist assumptions.

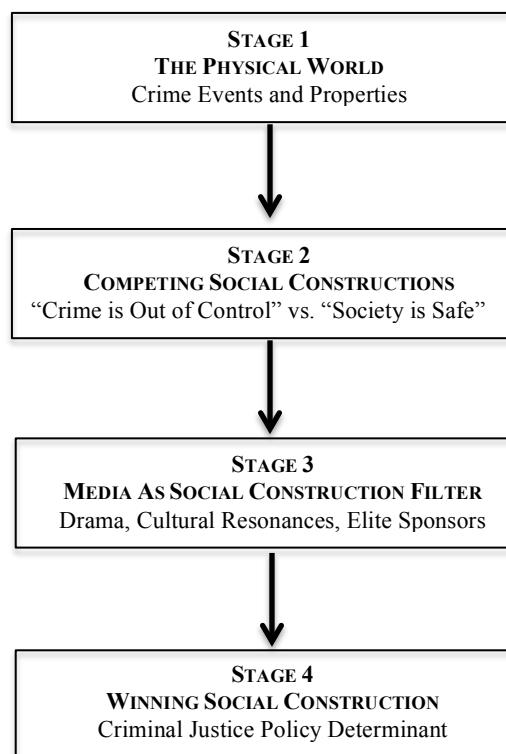
### ***The Social Construction of Crime and Criminal Justice***

Gamson (1992) and Sasson (1995) argue that in constructing meaning people draw on ‘popular wisdom’, ‘experiential knowledge’ and ‘media discourse’. Loseke (2003) adds to these ideational resources the terms ‘practical experience’, ‘cultural themes and feeling rules’, and ‘local culture’, while Surette (2015) includes ‘conversational reality’. Nomenclature aside, constructionist scholars generally agree that people acquire social knowledge and construct their own version of reality from a variety of sources that are broadly categorised as ‘experienced reality’, ‘symbolic reality’, and ‘socially constructed reality’ (Surette 2015). With respect to crime and criminal justice, a person’s experienced reality is her or his direct first-hand experience with crime or the criminal justice system. A person’s symbolic reality includes those accounts of crime or criminal justice experiences she or he believes that were relayed to her or him by friends, acquaintances or other people, social groups, institutions and the media. A person’s socially constructed reality is what she or he perceives as the ‘real’ world based on the mixture of her or his experienced and symbolic realities. It is this socially constructed reality that largely governs a person’s behaviour because people generally behave according to what they believe about the world around them and it is this socially constructed reality that ultimately shapes public policy (Surette 2015).

Surette (2015: 33) describes the social construction of crime and criminal justice in four stages. During Stage 1 criminal events occur and are noted by individuals and organisations. During Stage 2 there is an attempt to contextualise the criminal events. Here, competing constructions offer differing descriptions of the context in which the criminal events occurred. For example, some may argue that crime is out of control while others might argue that society is safe. Crime statistics and stories may be used at this time to support either construction. Those articulating each argument – the ‘claims makers’ – might offer differing explanations of why crime is out of control or why society is safe and prescribe a set of corrective or maintenance measures. During Stage 3 the media help to filter competing constructions favouring those that are dramatic, sponsored by powerful groups and related to pre-established cultural themes. In this example, the media are more likely to support the construction that crime is out of control because gruesome murders,

random violence, bizarre crimes and the triumph of evil over innocence are the sort of crime drama that the media relish. By privileging some constructions over others, the media effectively determine which version of reality is considered legitimate and thus 'real'. During the final stage, Stage 4, the dominant social construction of crime emerges. As most people have very little direct experience with crime and the criminal justice system, the construction most likely to prevail is the construction favoured by the media. This four-stage process has significant implications because the dominant social construction of crime actually directs criminal justice policy. That is, the dominant socially constructed crime reality will establish the contours of the crime problem – its sources, trends, definitions and policy responses (Surette 2015). The crime reality that people believe to be true will influence legislation and the allocation of government resources and will communicate implicit value judgments: which members of society are virtuous or dangerous, who deserves attention and protection, and which actions should be rewarded or penalised (Sasson 1995).

**Figure 1: Surette's Four Stages of Social Construction**



**SOURCE:** Adapted from Surette, R. 2015. Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice. Pg. 33. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning

## **Frame Analysis**

Although frame analysis has its roots in cognitive psychology and anthropology (Gamson 1988; Goffman 1974/1986), the methodology is widely attributed to the sociologist Erving Goffman (1974/1986) and is commonly used in constructionist research on crime and criminal justice policy (Sasson 1995; Surette 2015). As a sociologist, Goffman appreciated the complexity inherent in making sense of one's social world and understood that people could not make sense of their social world without drawing on their past experiences. As such, Goffman focused on the 'organisation of experience'. Operating from the question, 'What is going on here?' Goffman (1974/1986) aimed to fashion a response by isolating the available 'frameworks of understanding' or 'frames' that people draw on to make sense of events and analysing the peculiarities and vulnerabilities to which these frameworks are subject. Frame analysis is thus premised on the constructionist notion that we are active assemblers of meaning and in constructing our accounts of reality we draw upon the ideational resources at our disposal. For Goffman and his intellectual progeny, this cognitive process is not done consciously. As Koenig (2004: 2) explains, in a 'Goffmanian' context, 'frames are not consciously manufactured but are unconsciously adopted in the course of communicative processes'. Gitlin (1980: 6-7) elaborates:

[f]rames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters. In everyday life, as Erving Goffman has amply demonstrated, we frame reality in order to negotiate it, manage it, comprehend it, and choose appropriate repertoires of cognition and action.

But, contemporary frame analysis reflects a break with Goffmanian tradition. During its evolution, theorists reimagined the concept of framing as something done consciously. Second generation frame analysis, traced back to Entman (1993), emphasises deliberate frame selection. According to Entman (1993: 52):

[f]raming essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

Reese (2001: 6) goes as far as suggesting that framing is necessarily an active process and as such the paramount question ought to be 'how much 'framing' is going on'?

Whether the framing process happens consciously or unconsciously, scholars are clear that ultimately frames give coherence and meaning to events and phenomena (Beckett 1994; Gamson et al. 1992). On a functional level, frames serve to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies (Entman 1993; Gamson 1992). That is, frames contain a 'diagnostic component that identifies a condition as intolerable and attributes blame or causality, and a prognostic component that prescribes one or more courses of ameliorative action' (Sasson 1995: 10). Each frame often evokes a standard counterclaim or rebuttal argument from those who disagree with it. Frames, and their corresponding rebuttals can be conjured through metaphors, catch phrases, public figures, and other condensing symbols (Sasson 1995; Gamson 1988). Frames have significant policy implications because they determine which events and phenomena garner public attention, how the public understand them, how they are evaluated and how law and policymakers choose to respond. Accordingly, what a frame includes is as important as what it omits (Entman 1993). Edelman (1993: 232) underscores the point:

The character, causes, and consequences of any phenomenon becomes radically different as changes are made in what is prominently displayed, what is repressed, and especially in how observations are classified. Far from being stable, the social world is therefore a chameleon, or, to suggest a better metaphor, a kaleidoscope of potential realities, any of which can be readily evoked by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized.

In short, frames can be thought of as fully developed social construction templates that allow people to easily categorise, label and deal with the events and phenomena they invariably encounter as they go about their everyday lives (Surette 2015: 37).

### ***Framing Crime and Criminal Justice Policy***

Just as media scholars have come to rely increasingly on frame analysis (Tuchman 1978; Gitlin 1980; Lang and Lang 1983; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Gamson et al. 1992) so too have those scholars who conduct research on crime and criminal justice policy (Gusfield 1984; Reinerman and Levine 1989; Best 1990, 1991, 1994, 1999, 2004; Sasson 1995, 1995a; Beckett 1994, 1997, 2000; Altheide 2002; Cavender 2004; Reinerman 2004; Hayward and Presdee 2010; Boda et al. 2011; Boda and Szabo 2011). For these scholars, frame analysis provides a useful intellectual framework for mapping shifts in crime policy, examining crime discourse in the media and



understanding public perceptions of crime (see for example Sasson 1995; Altheide 2002; Cavender 2004; Boda et al. 2011). Like the frames that exist with respect to other social problems, crime frames consist of diagnostic and prognostic components. Crime frames might articulate broad statements about the causes of crime generally or the causes of a specific incident, they may provide explanations for the nature of the crime problem or why the specific incident occurred and they may prescribe ameliorative policy responses. Beyond the confines of the academy, when attempting to make sense of crime and criminal justice events and phenomena, the ability to quickly employ a pre-established frame, especially those with built-in policy prescriptions, obviates the analysis, deliberation and nuance otherwise required. Because various frames have sponsors of varying levels of influence and power, the frames end up competing with one another to define the society's crime reality. Put differently, how criminality is understood in the society, which criminal justice policies enjoy public support and how new crimes and criminals are perceived, are linked inextricably to the frame that is most widely accepted (Surrette 2015).

*Crime Talk: How Citizens Construct a Social Problem* by Theodore Sasson (1994) is one of the few texts to include a working catalogue of culturally available frames on street crime. From examining samples of media and popular crime discourse, Sasson determined that all the main views on crime and criminal justice could be distilled into one of five frames: 'Faulty System', 'Blocked Opportunities', 'Social Breakdown', 'Media Violence' and 'Racist System'. Although Sasson's research is focused on the crime discourse in the United States, Boda et al. (2011) expands the catalogue beyond this context and contributes the 'Cruel World' frame, and the 'Faulty Politics' frame. However, these latter two frames are less comprehensive than Sasson's with respect to its prognostic and diagnostic components.

The first frame, Faulty System, posits that crime is a result of impunity – people commit crimes because they know they can get away with them. The police are 'handcuffed' by liberal judges, the overcrowded prisons have 'revolving doors' for serious offenders and the 'system' is riddled with loopholes and technicalities. The only way to ensure public safety is to increase the swiftness, certainty and severity of punishment. Adequate funding for police, courts, and prisons must be made available. The symbolic representation of the Faulty System frame is recidivism (Sasson 1995: 13-14).

The Blocked Opportunities frame depicts crime as a consequence of inequality and discrimination, especially with respect to unemployment, poverty and inadequate educational opportunities. People commit crimes when they discover that the legitimate means for attaining material success are blocked. According to this frame, growing desperation promotes violence as well as property crime – ‘if you’re going to create a sink-or-swim society, you have to expect people to thrash before they go down’. To reduce crime, government must ameliorate the social conditions that cause it. The Blocked Opportunities frame is symbolically represented by ‘dead-end’ jobs such as ‘flipping burgers at McDonald’s’ (Sasson 1995: 14-15).

The Social Breakdown frame depicts crime as a consequence of family and community disintegration and skyrocketing rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock births. Although the frame is typically expressed in a neutral fashion, the conservative version of this frame attributes family and community breakdown to ‘permissiveness’, the civil rights and feminist protest movements in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, and government-sponsored antipoverty initiatives. The liberal version of this frame attributes family and community breakdown to unemployment, racial discrimination, and the loss of jobs and income. According to this frame, the crime problem can be solved by collective efforts to reconstitute family and community through moral exhortation, neighbourhood associations, crime watches and community policing. Social breakdown is symbolically condensed by complaints about the lack of ‘family values’ and comparisons to the ‘good ol’ days’ (Sasson 1995: 15-16).

The Media Violence frame depicts crime as a consequence of violence on television, in the movies, in popular music and video games. Proponents of this frame make such arguments as, ‘Television has become a school of violence and a college for crime’. Because violence in the mass media undermines respect for life, the way to reduce crime is to first reduce it in the mass media. The Media Violence frame is symbolically represented by allusions to violent visual media, video games, and musical lyrics (Sasson 1995: 16; see also Surette 2015).

The Racist System frame sees the courts and police as racist agents of oppression. According to the frame, police resources are dedicated to the protection of low crime white neighbourhoods rather than high crime minority ghettos. Black offenders are more likely than whites who commit comparable offences to be arrested, convicted and sentenced to prison. Additionally, the death penalty is administered in a racist fashion. Some versions of this frame argue that the fundamental purpose of the

criminal justice system is to suppress a potentially rebellious underclass. The racist system frame is symbolised by the Trayvon Martin shooting, the beatings of Rodney King and the murder trial of O.J. Simpson. (Sasson 2015).

The Cruel World frame holds that crime is an inevitable feature of modern life. Because modern life is inherently dangerous and unpredictable, crime can strike anyone at anytime. The random nature of crime means that irrespective of age, sex and social status, everyone has the potential to be a perpetrator or a victim. In order to reduce crime, society must be as cruel with criminals as the criminals were when they broke the law. The Cruel World frame can be symbolically condensed by random, senseless violence. Finally, the Faulty Politics frame focuses on ‘bad politics’ and ‘bad and corrupt’ politicians. According to this frame, crime is caused, albeit indirectly, by political corruption. Therefore, in order to curb crime, it is important to eliminate corruption. The frame can be condensed by reference to ‘corrupt politicians’ (Boda et al. 2011: 6).

**Table 1: Criminal Justice Frames**

Frame	Cause	Policy Response	Symbols
Faulty System	Crime stems from criminal justice leniency and inefficiency	The criminal justice system needs to 'get tough'	'Handcuffed police', 'Revolving door justice'
Blocked Opportunities	Crime stems from poverty and inequality	The government must address the 'root causes' of crime by creating jobs and reducing poverty	Dead-end, low paying jobs 'Flipping burgers' at McDonald's
Social Breakdown	Crime stems from family and community breakdown	Citizens should band together to recreate traditional communities	Urban riots
Violent Media	Crime stems from violence in the mass media	The government should regulate violent imagery in the media	'Life imitates art'
Racist System	The criminal justice system operates in a racist fashion	Black people should band together to demand justice	Trayvon Martin shooting Racial Profiling
Cruel World	Crime is an inevitable feature of modern life	Society must be as cruel with criminals as the criminals were when they broke the law	Random violence
Faulty Politics	Crime stems from political corruption	Eliminate corruption	'Corrupt politicians'

**SOURCE:** Adapted from Sasson, T. 1995. *Crime Talk*. Pgs. 13-17. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine De Gruyter; Surette, R. 2015. *Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice*. Pg. 38. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning; and Boda et al. 2011. 'Penal Populism and Justice Policy Reform in Hungary: Analysing discourses of media and politics'. Pg. 6.

While not an exhaustive catalogue of all possible crime frames, these frames are a comprehensive representation of the most prevalent frames found in public and media crime discourse. As such, it is likely that one or more of these frames are likely to garner some portion of public support. The frames are not mutually exclusive, as

people commonly support more than one frame simultaneously and identify particular frames with particular crimes and criminals. Criminal justice claims makers are therefore guaranteed some level of support if they can fit their social construction of crime within one of these frames (Surette 2015).

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I laid out the competing constructions of Antigua and Barbuda's crime story and I highlighted the literature on the usage of crime statistics and official data as well as that on public and media knowledge of crime and the social construction of crime. In this chapter I described frame analysis as a useful intellectual framework for examining crime discourse in the media and understanding public perceptions of crime. I also made a case for using Antigua and Barbuda's crime statistics as an empirical basis for critically assessing claims made about crime. In so doing, I have located this study in contextual constructionist assumptions. Having laid this foundation, chapter three will describe the mixed methods research design that I implement to address my research questions.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*'There is a world of empirical reality out there. The way we perceive and understand that world is largely up to us, but the world does not tolerate all understandings equally.'*

-- Kirk and Miller (1986: 11)

### Introduction

Much like Theodore Sasson's (1995) seminal work *Crime Talk: How Citizens Construct a Social Problem*, after conducting my preliminary research I conceived this study as one that would be qualitative in nature and firmly rooted in the contextual constructionist paradigm. Employing a very similar methodology to that used by Sasson, and borrowing heavily from his work, I did not intend to question the 'objective' nature of the crime problem in Antigua and Barbuda at all. Rather, my goal was to focus exclusively on those activities through which Antiguan and Barbudans have come to view crime as a problem in the first place. By analysing transcripts of peer group discussions, focused interviews and newspaper stories, I wanted this constructionist study to be one generated solely from the 'bottom up' where multiple views were pulled together and categorised into broader themes. I expected that these broader themes would ultimately lead to a unifying theory (see for example Creswell and Plano Clark 2011: 41). I expected this study to build on Gamson's (1992: 4) insights that contrary to the way in which the mass public is often characterised, 'people are not so passive, people are not so dumb, and people negotiate with media messages in complicated [and varied] ways...'

Yet, in creating the research design I was troubled by the significant data gaps that I encountered during my initial review of the existing crime data. Just as similar constructionist studies were able to present a more robust picture of how crime is constructed by comparing claims to historical crime trends and patterns, could I too create a similarly robust picture with respect to Antigua and Barbuda? Might basic knowledge of the country's crime trends and patterns over time shed additional light on, or help to contextualise, the various perceptions of the Antiguan and Barbudan crime problem? While this broader approach was more appealing to me because I felt the findings of such a study might have important implications for criminal justice policy, the major obstacle to incorporating official crime data was the burden of collecting and analysing the data myself. Because the RPF did not keep computerised

records prior to 1994, there is very little academic analysis of the country's crime trends during this time. Where such analysis does exist, gaps in the data are common and Antigua and Barbuda is discussed within the broader context of the English-speaking Caribbean (see for example de Albuquerque and McElroy 1999; Deosoran 2004). As a result, in order to assess subjective perceptions of crime against the backdrop of crime trends, the collection and analysis of official crime data would need to be included in the design of the study. And, arguably, altering the research design in this way would necessarily shift the underlying epistemology of the study. This epistemological shift is significant because epistemology, or how we gain knowledge of what we know, necessarily influences how research questions are asked and answered. Additionally, epistemology is linked inextricably to the relationship between the researcher and research as well as the paradigm, or framework of beliefs and practices guiding the study (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Morgan 2007). Altering the epistemology would mean that the contemplated paradigm could no longer be solely constructionist focused on process and meaning, it would have to be one that is more pluralistic and incorporate a positivist perspective (see Sale et al. 2008). Put differently, the assumptions underlying this study would need to acknowledge, as Kirk and Miller (1986: 11) acknowledged in the epigraph of this chapter, that while reality may very well be socially constructed and comprised of multiple truths, it could also be objective and exist independent of human perceptions. The world does not tolerate all understandings equally. My relationship with my research would not only be one of 'closeness' and subjectivity, it would also be one of some distance.

Understanding these implications, I decided to change the research design to one that is both qualitative and quantitative. I decided to ground my work in a mixed methods design, where both quantitative and qualitative data are collected, analysed and 'mixed' in a single study or series of studies (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). At the heart of my research design would be Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) central premise that the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection can provide a better understanding of the research problem than each approach on its own. And, the new mixed methods research design would be steeped in a paradigm of pragmatism – a paradigm that allows for diverse approaches and values both objective and subjective knowledge (see Creswell and Plano Clark 2011: 43). I still expect to build on Gamson's insights – that the mass public negotiate their realities in nuanced

ways – but I also hope, like Fincham et al. (2011), that this mixed methods approach will contribute to a more creative, lateral-thinking, problem-oriented body of social science research.

This chapter outlines my mixed methods approach and associated issues, including tensions between the various epistemological tenets of the study, data selection and collection, methods of analysis and my role as researcher. In section I, I will articulate my epistemological assumptions and detail my research design. Additionally, I will discuss mixed methods research in the context of social policy. In section II, I will describe the quantitative aspects of the design and discuss collecting and analysing official police data. I will also outline the process of collecting and analysing newspaper stories of crime and crime control. Similarly, in this section I will describe the qualitative aspects of the design. Here I will describe the process of conducting the peer group discussions and how I analysed the transcripts. Lastly, in section III, I will highlight the strengths and limitations of this study and discuss the role of my own subjectivity.

## I

### **Paradigm Wars: Qualitative *or* Quantitative? Or, Quantitative *and* Quantitative?**

Since the mid-nineteenth century sociologists have debated the merits of qualitative and quantitative research. During the 1950s these debates became more prominent as proponents of qualitative research attacked the positivistic nature of mainstream sociology (Fincham et al. 2011). For example, in his attack on what he called ‘scientism’ and ‘variable analysis’, Herbert Blumer (1956, 1969) argued that because sociological notions are typically abstract and lack any fixed or uniform indicators, any claim that these notions are measurable is spurious. For Blumer, social science variables are not clear and discrete ‘objects’ with the clearly and precisely defined properties inherent to genuine variables. Rather, they are little more than ‘abbreviated terms of reference’ for complex patterns of social organisation (Cuff et al. 1990). Framed in terms drawn largely by critics of quantitative research, the ‘paradigm wars’, as they came to be called, gave voice to philosophical positions and intellectual rationales that qualitative researchers believed had been marginalised theretofore (Bryman 2006a). Although while these paradigm wars were fought largely on the

epistemological level, many of those involved began to conflate epistemology and method, erroneously treating the two as synonymous (Howe 1988, 1992; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005). Proponents of qualitative research argued that social phenomena and their meanings are produced through social interaction. Thus, reality is indeterminate and in a constant state of revision. Any investigation of this reality would necessarily require research methods that rejected the natural scientific model. According to this view, a good qualitative research strategy would rely on words rather than numbers and ‘inductive’ rather than ‘deductive approaches’. That is, approaches that generate rather than test hypotheses. Those engaged in qualitative research professed the superiority of deep, rich observational data that included the interpretations of the social actors themselves. By contrast, proponents of quantitative research argued that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence independent of social actors. By this account, reality is categorical – it is external and objective. Investigation of any social phenomena would need to embrace the natural scientific model and employ a hypothetico-deductive approach. These proponents extol the virtues of hard generalizable survey data (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005; Bryman 2012; Fincham et al. 2011; Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Sandelowski 2001).

Although the paradigm wars are now widely thought to be over (Bryman 2006a), they gave birth to three distinct perspectives on whether qualitative and quantitative research can and should be combined in a single study: the purist perspective, the situationalist perspective and the pragmatist perspective (Rossman and Wilson 1985). Purists tend to focus on the assumed epistemological and methodological differences described above and would argue a version of what Kenneth Howe (1988: 10) coined the ‘incompatibility thesis’ – the idea that qualitative and quantitative research methods are fundamentally incompatible because they are rooted in diametrically opposed, and therefore mutually exclusive, ontological and epistemological traditions. Purists tend to be preoccupied by the differences between qualitative and quantitative research and rarely acknowledge the myriad similarities that exist between the two (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005). Purists advocate a mono-method approach believing ‘...one [paradigm] precludes the other just as surely as belief in a round world precludes belief in a flat one’ (Howe 1988: 12).

Unlike the purists, situationalists focus not on ontology or epistemology but on research methods. Situationalists maintain that both quantitative and qualitative



methods have value and may be used in a single study, but each method has usefulness in a specific situation or phase of the research process (Rossman and Wilson 1985). Research methods, according to this view, are not competitive but are complementary. Methods most often associated with quantitative research can provide representative information, which is given meaning by methods most often associated with qualitative research (Vidich and Shapiro 1955:33). Although this position is less extreme than that of the purist, Rossman and Wilson (1985) rightly point out that this attempt at rapprochement falls short of meaningful integration. Like the purist perspective, the situationalist perspective still advocates a mono-method approach because while situationalists see quantitative and qualitative methods as complementary, they still see quantitative and qualitative methods as representing distant universes (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005; Rossman and Wilson 1985).

In contrast to both the purist and the situationalist perspectives, the pragmatist perspective is the only one that argues for a truly integrated approach in a single study (Rossman and Wilson 1985). Like situationalists, pragmatists privilege research methods over epistemology and argue a version of the ‘common-sense’ position frequently cited, ‘epistemological purity doesn’t get research done’ (see for example Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005: 377; Onwuegbuzie 2003: 395; Greene et al. 1989: 257; Tedlie and Tashakkori 2003: 19; see also Bryman 1984). But, this concern with methods notwithstanding, a pragmatist approach places primary importance not on methods but on the research question. As such, pragmatism is a problem-centred approach in which the researcher is not afraid to use multiple methods of data collection and analysis to investigate the question driving the research. Pragmatist researchers collect data according to what works best to address the research question (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). The pragmatist approach to research is therefore pluralistic and oriented towards inquirer flexibility and adaptability (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Howe 1988; Greene et al. 1989). Pragmatists believe that the dichotomy that exists between quantitative and qualitative approaches is artificial and argue that qualitative methods are not inherently constructionist nor are quantitative methods inherently positivist (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005). Appreciating that quantitative and qualitative approaches have inherent strengths and weaknesses, pragmatists believe researchers should exploit the respective strengths of both approaches to most efficiently use them in addressing the research question (Rossman and Wilson 1985). By this account, examining cultural behaviour with a variety of

different approaches can greatly enhance the credibility of research results (Rossman and Wilson 1985).

### **Paradigm Peace: Quantitative *and* Qualitative!**

As more and more scholars began to demonstrate that they had mixed qualitative and quantitative research, the incompatibility thesis became less tenable (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003). Increasingly, textbooks began calling attention to the fact that distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research are neither absolute nor clear-cut (Bryman 1984, 1988, 2004). Many argued that excessive focus on the differences underlying the incompatibility thesis obfuscated the myriad similarities between quantitative and qualitative research. For example, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) argued that both quantitative and qualitative methods describe the data, construct explanatory arguments from the data, and speculate about why the outcomes they observed happened as they did. Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative researchers are concerned with verifying their data and incorporate safeguards in the research design that minimise confirmation bias and other sources of invalidity. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005; 381), perhaps the most important similarity between qualitative and quantitative research, however, is the fact that all data can be viewed as qualitative or quantitative. That is, all data can be ‘binarised’, dichotomously expressing a variable in binary form just as all data represent an attempt to capture a raw experience. Qualitative designs can incorporate inferential statistics that can be created by treating words or observations as sample units of representative data just as experimental, quasi-experimental and correlational designs can incorporate the collection of observational and interview data (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005).

Because the incompatibility thesis has now been largely ‘discredited’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003: 19), the epistemological concerns at the crux of the paradigm wars have been blunted (Bryman 2006a, 2007). As such, the legitimacy of the purist perspective has been severely compromised. While some researchers continue to subscribe to some version of the purist perspective, irrespective of whether they combine methods themselves, most researchers today accept that quantitative and qualitative research can and should be meaningfully combined. Social science research is now increasingly oriented towards a pragmatic viewpoint that prioritises using any approach that allows research questions to be answered regardless of its supposed

philosophical presuppositions (Bryman 2006a). Indeed, an examination of recent social and behavioural science research reveals that qualitative and quantitative methods are being mixed extensively to solve practical research problems (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003). Accordingly, in this time of ‘paradigm peace’, we have embarked on what Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003: ix) have called the ‘third methodological movement’ – the use of mixed methodology in social problems research.

This orientation towards pragmatic research is important to my work because my approach is informed by pragmatism. Rejecting purist and situationalist arguments, I mix qualitative and quantitative methods taking the view that these methods are more alike than they are different (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005). Like Morgan (2007: 60), I reject the artificial choice between a pair of extremes where research results are either completely specific to a particular context or an instance of some more generalised set of principles; where the results are either so unique that they have no implications for other actors in other settings or so generalised that they apply in every historical and cultural setting. Underpinning my approach is Greene’s (2007: 20) understanding that there are multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the social world, and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued. Thus, my work assumes that Antigua and Barbuda’s crime problem is extraordinarily complex, that there are multiple legitimate approaches to investigating it and that any given approach would inevitably be partial (Greene 2007).

Still, I faced practical challenges in contemplating my research design. Bryman (2007) aptly sums up my difficulty by asking: how do you put it all together? How can I bring together an objectivist account of crime with the more subjective accounts of how people construct crime? While I am interested in people’s accounts, from a socially constructionist discursive perspective, which is agnostic about whether there is a real crime problem, I recognise that there may be official crime data that suggest a crime problem actually exists. Here, my values as a researcher are paramount. While I approach this research from a perspective of pragmatism, I cannot deny that my main emphasis is the social construction of crime. Like other researchers sympathetic to social constructionism, I openly acknowledge that the goal of my research is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation and to focus on the socio-historical context that inevitably shaped those views (Creswell 2003). Thus, while this research is steeped in pragmatism, the primary qualitative aspects of the research are based on contextual constructionist epistemological assumptions. In this study I mix

qualitative and quantitative methods in order to achieve completeness. In so doing, my intent is to create a more comprehensive understanding of the crime problem in Antigua and Barbuda given that such a comprehensive account has not been written to date.

Because there are no established templates or specific rules for forging such a negotiated account I would need to make decisions regarding how and when data would be collected, how and when this data would be mixed and how to ensure the quality of the research. In the following section I will outline my research design.

### **Mixed Methods Research Design**

The primary purpose of this study is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation by investigating the 'social construction' of crime and the crime 'frames' that the news media and members of the public draw on to make sense of the phenomena. Accordingly, the research is designed to answer the primary and secondary research questions:

**Primary Research Question:**

*How do the news media and members of the public in Antigua and Barbuda describe and explain crime in terms of its causes and remedies?*

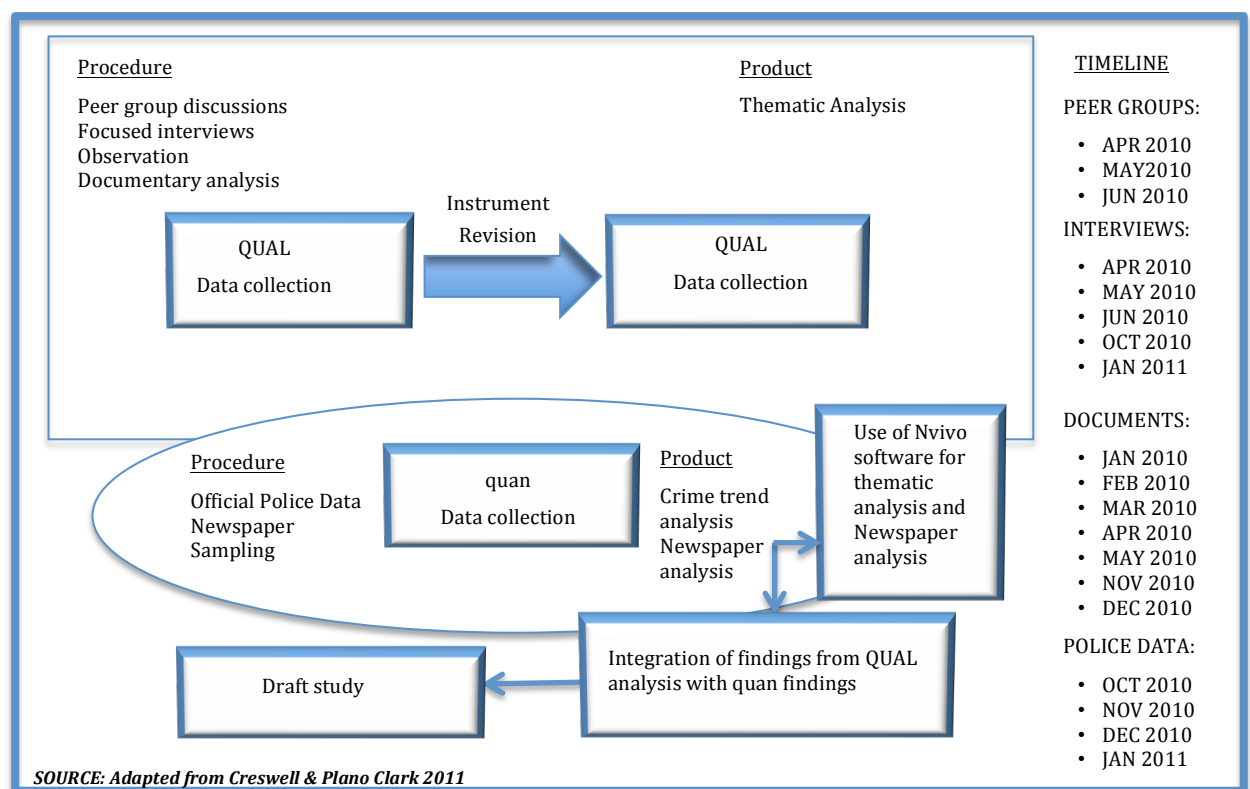
**Secondary Research Question:**

*What are the basic crime trends and patterns in Antigua and Barbuda from 1970 to 2010?*

I chose to use a concurrent 'embedded', or 'nested', mixed methods research design symbolically represented as QUAL (+quan) (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011: 71). In this design, the researcher implements a secondary quantitative strand within the larger qualitative case study. A strand refers to the component of the study that encompasses the basic process of conducting research – from posing the initial question to interpreting results generated from the data collected to answer that question (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). Unlike a sequential research design, in a concurrent design the qualitative and quantitative strands are implemented at the same time and in a single phase. In this case, the supplementary quantitative strand is added to enhance the overall design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Hanson et al. 2005).

In my research design, although both sets of data were collected and analysed concurrently and in a single phase, the qualitative data collection was an iterative process. As Figure 2 suggests, I began collecting qualitative data – reading speeches by partisan politicians, government speeches and publications, reading newspaper articles and recording observations – and then used that information to make minor revisions to the instrument that would be used to conduct peer group discussions. The process of reviewing regularly the data generated and fine-tuning the peer group discussion instrument was important because I wanted to be sure I was capturing all of the crime themes that were present in popular discourse. At the same time, I began collecting official police data. I created a spreadsheet of all ‘major crimes’ or ‘serious

**Figure 2: Concurrent Embedded Mixed Methods Design**



crimes’ known or reported to the police in each year from 1970 to 2010 with the intention of conducting a crime trend analysis. Additionally, I began sampling newspaper articles and commentary so as to conduct a newspaper analysis.

At first glance, my research design may appear closer to Creswell and Plano Clark’s (2011: 71) sequential exploratory design where data collection occurs in two distinct phases with the researcher creating an instrument to test or generalise the findings based on the results of the initial qualitative phase. With such a design, data strands are mixed during data collection whereby the researcher connects the results of

one strand to the data collection of the other (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). My concurrent design differs in that the mixing of the qualitative and quantitative data occurs during interpretation, the final step of the research process. Accordingly, I collected qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, analysed each data strand independently and interpreted the qualitative results in light of what was learned from the quantitative research.

There are several advantages of using a concurrent embedded mixed methods research design. For example, because one data type is given less priority than the other and both data can be collected and analysed simultaneously, this design can be used when the researcher does not have sufficient time or resources to commit to extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection. Additionally, by adding the supplemental data the researcher is able to improve the larger design by exploiting the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Creswell et al. 2008). Moreover, concurrent embedded designs allow the researcher to gain and report multiple perspectives on the topic at hand within the same study (Hanson et al. 2005; Creswell et al. 2008).

I chose to use an embedded mixed methods design because a single data set was not sufficient to answer both research questions. As discussed in chapter two, official crime data and newspaper articles would not tell me much about popular conceptions of crime in Antigua and Barbuda just as individual accounts of crime could not give me an accurate account of crime trends and patterns. Moreover, the fundamental nature of each research question differed and each type of question required different types of data (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). My goal with this research was to investigate ‘multiple constructed realities’ through the shared investigation of meanings and explanations. I wanted to know how people living in Antigua and Barbuda think and talk about crime, how their ideas are shaped, generated or moderated through conversation with others (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). I wanted to understand how the newspapers cover crime in the media. But, I also wondered what crime looked like from the perspective of crime statistics over a long period of time – without the missing years that are all too common. I wondered what sorts of trends and patterns served as the backdrop to the country’s crime talk. Did referenced ‘crime waves’ correspond with actual increases in reported crime? Was there really significantly less reported crime during the 1970s and early 1980s? I wanted to understand crime from the most empirical perspective available to me (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2008). Given my rationale, the individual nature of doctoral research and the

time and funding constraints associated with this type of research, the embedded mixed methods design is an ideal way of creating this sort of comprehensive account of crime in Antigua and Barbuda.

### ***Mixed Methods Reliability and Validity***

Despite the unique opportunity to exploit the combination of complementary strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses, mixed methods research is still plagued by the problems of reliability and validity<sup>3</sup> (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson 2006). That is, mixed methods research remains subject to potential issues that might compromise the merging or connecting of the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study and the conclusions drawn (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). Because different mixed methods research designs are subject to different threats to reliability and validity, I sought to minimise the threats most often associated with the concurrent embedded mixed methods design. These potential threats, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), are most prevalent in the data analysis and interpretation stages of the research. For example, during the data analysis stage the potential exists for the researcher to use inadequate approaches in combining the data. I sought to minimise this threat by quantifying my peer group discussion data and creating graphs to depict the results of both the peer group discussions and the newspaper analysis. In doing so, I was better able to compare the frequency of frames in the newspaper discourse and the public discourse. Additionally, there exists the potential for the researcher to use inadequate approaches in transforming the data. To minimise this threat I kept data transformation straightforward. As previously discussed, I quantified my qualitative data using NVivo software. With NVivo I coded the data and created themes. I then used the software to count the frequency of the codes and themes, which allowed me to recognise patterns and idiosyncrasies, document analytic moves and verify interpretations. Using NVivo made the coding and retrieval process more efficient and enhanced the transparency of my analysis.

In interpreting their findings, researchers using concurrent embedded mixed methods designs are at risk of not addressing the mixed methods research questions and giving more weight to one form of data than the other without adequate

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<sup>3</sup> The literature calls for using new terminology with respect reliability and validation in mixed methods research. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) discuss reliability and validity in terms of representation, legitimation and integration. However, like Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), I believe that reliability and validity remain the best terms to use because they represent common language understandable to many researchers and because they are accepted by both quantitative and qualitative researchers.

explanation (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). I avoided these validity and reliability threats by following advice set forth by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011). I was careful to address each of my research questions. Moreover, in addition to using Microsoft Excel to create charts and graphs that present both sets of results in an equal way, I was explicit in my intention to place greater weight on the qualitative data. As previously discussed, I clearly explained that I was most concerned with how members of the public in Antigua and Barbuda think and talk about crime control.

### ***Limitations of the Concurrent Embedded Mixed Methods Research Design***

Despite the strengths of using the concurrent embedded mixed methods design, like most research designs, there are limitations. First there can be difficulty in integrating the results because data might first need to be transformed in some way (consistent units of analysis for example). Additionally, integration may be difficult because the two methods are used to answer different research questions. Next, the researcher needs to have expertise in both quantitative and qualitative methods. Finally, because of the sheer volume of data generated, the possibility exists that much of the data generated may not be fully used, thus wasting the researcher's time, research resources and the participants' time (Creswell 2003; Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Bryman 2006).

I took care to mitigate these limitations by attending intense QSR International NVivo training conferences in order to learn how to use NVivo software. By quantifying my qualitative data, integrating the results of the two data sets was much easier. Additionally, by articulating clearly that the official police data was secondary and meant only to contextualise the various perceptions of crime, neither integrating the results nor conducting the analysis posed much of a challenge. Lastly, I tried as much as possible to keep my interviewees focused on the topic and I spent significant time developing the instrument used for the peer group discussions and honing my data collection strategy. Both my instrument and data collection strategies were reviewed by and discussed with experienced qualitative researchers.



## II

In section II, I will describe the various aspects of the design. Here I will describe the research setting, quantitative aspects of the design, including the collection and analysis of official police data and newspaper stories relating to crime. Similarly, in this section I will describe the process of conducting the peer group discussions and how I analysed the transcripts. I will also discuss conducting in-depth interviews with relevant political stakeholders.

### **The Research Setting**

Although Antigua and Barbuda is a twin island nation, financial and time constraints did not allow for research to take place in Barbuda. Accordingly, all of the research was conducted on the island of Antigua over the course of ten months during 2010. With nearly 87,000 people, Antigua is 108 square miles and is comprised of six parishes: St. John, St. George, St. Peter, St. Philip, St. Mary and St. Paul. According to official police data, of the six parishes St. John sees the vast majority the country's crime, as it is the parish in which the capital city, St. John's, is located. The vast majority of the research was conducted in St. John's, the country's urban centre, and its surrounding area.

### **Quantitative Research**

My general approach to the quantitative research in this study was informed by objectivism. As an ontological position, objectivism builds on the postivist idea that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors (Bryman 2012). Notwithstanding the critiques of police recorded crime figures discussed in chapter two, I approached this data intending it to provide some empirical basis for assessing claims made about crime. Although it is an imperfect measure, the official crime data shaped much of my interpretation of the qualitative data. As such, this quantitative portion of my research is concerned with the nature of the crime problem in Antigua and Barbuda. This portion of the research is primarily concerned with an unbiased description of crime patterns, crime trends and media representations. My relationship with this portion of my research was necessarily one of some distance.

In analysing the quantitative data, I conducted a basic crime trend analysis (Osborne and Wernicke 2003) using police recorded crime figures for the 40-year period between 1970 and 2010. My goal at this point was to create an empirical account of historical crime trends and patterns, which had not previously existed. With this trend analysis I simply sought to establish what Maguire (2007: 255) calls the ‘basic contours’ of crime in Antigua and Barbuda – the overall scale of crime and the relative incidence of different types of offences, trends in those offences over time, and their geographical distribution. Additionally, I conducted a newspaper analysis using quantitative content analysis. The newspaper analysis focused on newspaper articles discussing crime from 1994 to 2009. My goal for the newspaper analysis was to better understand the country’s media discourse surrounding these issues.

### ***Trend Analysis***

Obtaining police statistics for the 40-year period between 1970 and 2010 was very difficult because there is no database designed to capture incidence of crime reported to and recorded by the police. Prior to 1994 the police force did not keep computerised records at all and even after the records were computerised there was still no easy way to extract or manipulate the records because the crimes are recorded in a basic word processing file with very limited functionality. As such, at the national archives I searched old colonial police records, namely annual reports that have since been discontinued entitled *Annual Report on the Organisation and Administration of the Royal Police Force and Fire Service of Antigua and Barbuda*. From these reports I obtained the official crime statistics from 1970 to 1989. I then verified the authenticity of these reports with senior police officers who were familiar with them. These senior members also verified that the way in which the statistics were calculated for these reports is consistent with the way in which they are now captured notwithstanding the fact that the reports are no longer published. To obtain crime statistics for the years 1990 to 1993 I sat with one of the same senior members of the police force and we went through old notebooks in which the crimes had been recorded and recreated the statistics for those years. I obtained the crime statistics from 1994 to 2010 from the police officer attached to the Criminal Investigation Department who is responsible for entering the statistics into a computerised file that is stored electronically. Despite my best efforts, there are still three years for which I was unable to locate statistics: 1975, 1981 and 1983. Although I am disappointed by these gaps, I am heartened by the fact that this trend analysis is the most

comprehensive longitudinal account of crime in Antigua and Barbuda to date.

Upon verifying the accuracy of the statistics, I entered them into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. I then consulted secondary legal material as well as senior members of the police force to gain clarification with respect to the changing definition of crimes over time. So as to ensure I was making fair and reliable comparisons, where there was any ambiguity with respect to crime definitions and police interpretations thereof, or recording practices, I created a combined category. For example, there seemed to be confusion amongst members of the police force surrounding the precise definitions of unlawful carnal knowledge and unlawful sexual intercourse. As such, I combined these two categories and discussed them as one. Similarly, until 2004 rape was recorded with indecent assault. To remain consistent, from 2004 to 2010 I combined the statistics for rape and indecent assault although they were initially recorded separately by the police. With respect to theft crimes, from 1970 to 1993 the classifications used by the police were simply 'Thefts and Other Stealings' and 'Burglary, Housebreaking, Storebreaking' while corresponding categories used between 1994 and 2010 were 'Larceny,' 'Breaking and Larceny' and 'Praedial Larceny'. To maintain consistency, I subsumed the 1994-2010 classifications as well as 'Burglary, Housebreaking, Storebreaking' under the single 1970-1993 classification 'Theft and Other Stealings'. Once I compiled the official statistics in a new spreadsheet with newly created categories, I used census information to calculate the rate of each crime per 100,000 inhabitants for each year. In the case of sexual violence, I acknowledged the fact that women are disproportionately at risk of experiencing this type of crime by calculating the rate per 100,000 women. Additionally, adhering to traditional criminological classifications (see for example Harriott 2000), I classified murder, wounding, assault, robbery and shooting as violent crimes while classifying theft and other stealings, arson, malicious damage, embezzlement and fraud as property crime. These classifications allowed me to determine by year what percentage of total recorded crime was comprised of violent crime and property crime, and, they allowed me to compare the amount of violent crime to the amount of property crime recorded each year. I was also able to discern the most prevalent violent crimes and property crimes over time. Moreover, I was also able to determine the geographic distribution of crimes during this time period.

### *Newspaper Analysis*

I derived the sample for my newspaper analysis from newspaper articles and commentary published in the *Daily Observer* from 1994 to 2009. I chose the *Daily Observer* because it was the newspaper with the largest circulation during the period under review and because the second most widely circulated newspaper, the *Antigua Sun*, ceased circulation as I was conducting my field. As such the *Daily Observer* was the country's sole daily newspaper in circulation. I selected this particular 15-year period for several reasons. First, the official crime data suggested a noticeable change in recorded offending patterns during this time. Next, government speeches and other documents suggested that politicians and senior government officials began referencing the country's crime 'problem' in the mid 1990s. Lastly, the first edition of the *Daily Observer* was published on 27 January 1994. Thus, my newspaper analysis would essentially cover the life of the publication.

Having chosen the newspaper and the time period, I had to consider how I would sample the newspaper articles and commentary. I initially expected to select the articles and commentary based on probability sampling methods. Specifically I intended to use systematic sampling techniques. However, as I became familiar with the available catalogue of newspapers in the national archives I learned that the newspapers were not digitised, a significant number of issues were missing – including entire months, the newspapers varied greatly with respect to the number of articles and commentary included in each and there were many issues that did not discuss crime at all. In using traditional systematic sampling, I feared that the sample might be underinclusive given the incompleteness of the catalogue. As such, I chose to focus on the month of February since it was the month with the fewest number of missing issues and the only month that was represented each year. I then went through each issue looking for all articles and commentary that discussed crime and crime control in Antigua and Barbuda. In total, there were 1092 items that fit this criteria spanning all sections of the newspaper: Editorial, Observations, Letters, Court News, Press Releases, Regional, Sports and International. I subsequently winnowed the sample to include only items that expressed at least one of the crime frames either for the purpose of advocacy or rebuttal.

Employing Sasson's (1995) methodology, I used the individual article or commentary as the unit of analysis and I tracked the frequency of frames in the media discourse. I coded an item as expressing a positive version of a frame if it expressed at

least one of the frame's components when characterising Antigua and Barbuda's current crime situation or as a suggested remedy for the country's crime situation. I coded an item as expressing a rebuttal to a frame if it expressed an emphatic rejection of at least one of the frame's components. Where an item expressed elements of multiple frames, I coded it as displaying multiple frames.

It is important to understand that the findings of my newspaper analysis should not be generalised to all forms of media in Antigua and Barbuda or to those newspapers that are no longer in circulation. My findings are representative only of the type of crime discourse published in the most widely circulated newspaper and the type of media discourse that looms in the background as people go about their lives and formulate their opinions about crime and criminal justice.

## **Qualitative Research**

### ***Frame Analysis***

The specific methodology I employed during this constructionist stage of the study is frame analysis. As discussed in chapter two, frame analysis is a methodology, widely attributed to Goffman (1974), which is commonly used to conduct research in the constructionist paradigm (Sasson 1995). The methodology is premised on the idea that we are active assemblers of meaning and in constructing accounts of public issues we draw upon the resources at our disposal, including popular wisdom, our personal experiences, and bits of media discourse. In using these resources to create coherent and meaningful accounts of public issues, we select from a range of interpretive frameworks available in the culture in order to create meaning (Sasson 1995). These interpretive frameworks, or frames, are the 'schemata of interpretation' and typically include a diagnostic component that identifies a condition as intolerable and attributes blame or causality, and a prognostic component that prescribes a course of ameliorative action (Goffman 1974/1986: 21; Borah 2011; Sasson 1995). Additionally, frame analysis presupposes that meaning created through the use of frames occurs in various contexts including mass media and everyday conversation.

As such, my goal in this part of the study was to determine what the prevalent crime frames were, which frames dominated the public, media and political discourses, and why some frames were more successful than others. To achieve my goals, I collected and analysed newspaper articles, political manifestos, government speeches, speeches by opposing politicians and political parties, parliamentary

debates, criminal law judicial opinions and annual crime reports. Understanding as Atkinson and Coffey (2011), that documents are not firm evidence of what they report but construct particular kinds of representations, I used these documents to establish a catalogue of culturally available frames on crime in Antigua and Barbuda (Sasson 1995). I then conducted nine focused interviews (Kvale 2009) with key stakeholders in order to get a better sense of existing criminal justice policy, the newspaper production process and to discuss their own perceptions of crime. I conducted these interviews with the Minister of National Security, the Police Commissioner, the Prison Superintendent, a criminologist and a senior officer in the Criminal Investigation Department of the RPF, the Director of the Office of National Drug and Control Policy, the former publisher of *The Daily Observer*, the Director of Youth Affairs and the Director of the Bureau of Gender Affairs. Finally, finding value in the ‘...explicit use of...group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction of the group’ (Morgan 1988: 12), I conducted ten peer group discussions comprised of 52 members of the public in the hopes of eliciting perceptions of crime and reaction to the pre-established crime frames. The group discussions held were not traditional focus groups but were more akin to Gamson’s (1992) peer group conversations, which are smaller than traditional focus groups, held in the participants’ own environment, conducted with participants who are already familiar acquaintances and conducted with little interference or intervention by the facilitator.

The documentary analysis, focused interviews and peer group discussions were all intended to provide an in-depth understanding of crime in Antigua and Barbuda through the eyes of the public, the media and politicians. Although discreet portions of the data analysis took place during the data collection process, the bulk of the analysis occurred after the data collection was already completed. In the discussion below, I outline my procedures with respect to each of these areas.

### ***Documentary Analysis***

The purpose of my documentary analysis was threefold. First, I wanted to create a catalogue of culturally available crime frames, second, I wanted to examine how government officials and opposing politicians discussed crime in public discourse and third, I wanted to understand Antigua and Barbuda’s socio-political context – the crime story that the official crime data could not possibly capture. To achieve these three objectives, I spent significant time in the country’s national archives reviewing

all available material on crime and crime control from 1970 to 2009. Specifically, I reviewed 76 documents: available party manifestos and individual candidate manifestos from 1994 to 2010, government throne and budget speeches from 1994 to 2010, selected parliamentary debates on crime legislation and annual crime reports from 1970 to 1989. Most documents preceding 1994 made no explicit reference to crime excluding the annual crime reports, which dated back to 1970.

In order to create a catalogue of culturally available frames, I scoured a wide range of newspapers for articles related to crime. Initially, my search was unfocused. At this point, I was familiarising myself with the archival resources that I would have at my disposal as well as noting the various themes invoked in the relevant articles. From this experience I learned that none of the newspapers were available in digital form, many newspapers were missing a number of issues, and many newspapers ceased publication after only a few years. This information would have significant implications for my formal newspaper analysis. It was also helpful to see the diversity of crime frames across various newspapers from as early as 1970. From only one newspaper, the country's sole daily newspaper currently in circulation, I selected one year – 1996 – and collect every single crime related article. I chose 1996 because the country saw a significant number of murders in 1994 and to a lesser extent in 1995 and I thought crime might be a well-debated topic at this time. Additionally, 1996 saw one of the biggest murder trials in the country's history. I expected that the details of the murder trial coupled with the potential frustration with the sheer number of murders in 1994 and 1995 might generate a lot of newspaper coverage of crime as a social problem.

Because I wanted to create a catalogue of culturally available crime frames rather than a catalogue of media crime frames, I also examined other documents likely to contain crime frames. Persuaded by Sasson's (1995: 13) thinking that frame sponsors 'tend to express their views in an ideologically coherent manner, thus presenting relatively 'pure' or unadulterated frames', I mined political manifestos, government speeches, parliamentary debates with respect to two crime bills and annual crime reports for 'crime talk' and created a working catalogue of frames. I then conducted two exploratory interviews, one with a renowned cultural critic, playwright, author and songwriter, the other with a popular musician and songwriter. Based on these interviews I further revised my working catalogue and then compared my catalogue with Boda et al. (2011) and Sasson's (1994) to determine what, if any, overlap existed. Given the precision and economy of these frame descriptions, my

thinking at this point was that I could build on those descriptions striving for similar precision and economy in other emerging themes. I then ‘tested’ my adjusted catalogue using a sub-sample of the media discourse I intended to analyse. That is, I looked to see whether the frames were comprehensive enough to capture all of the claims in the discourse and whether there were claims that required brand new frames. My rationale in testing the catalogue was to ensure accurate reflection of the important crime themes that emerged. From this exercise I created a new frame that I titled *Poor Immigration Control*. Ultimately, my catalogue of culturally available frames included Sasson’s (1995) *Faulty System*, *Blocked Opportunities*, and *Social Breakdown* and my newly created *Poor Immigration Control*. Given Antigua and Barbuda’s relatively homogenous population – 91 per cent of the population is Black – the *Racist System* frame was unsurprisingly absent from the discourse. Also absent from the discourse was *Violent Media*. Similarly, Boda et al.’s (2011) *Cruel World* frame did not appear in Antigua and Barbuda’s crime discourse although there were elements of *Faulty Politics*.

### ***Focused Interviews***

According to Kvale (2009), focused interviews are neither strictly structured with standard questions, nor entirely nondirective. Focused interviews enable the interview subject to shape the interview raising issues she finds important to the topic, while allowing the interviewer to lead the interview subject towards certain themes without expressing any specific opinions about these themes. As previously mentioned I conducted focused interviews with nine relevant stakeholders: eight government officials and the publisher of the daily newspaper that I used in my newspaper analysis.

I chose to interview senior government officials – the Minister of National Security, the Police Commissioner, the Prison Superintendent, a criminologist and a senior officer in the Criminal Investigation Department of the RPF, the Director of the Office of National Drug and Control Policy, the Director of Youth Affairs, and the Director of the Bureau of Gender Affairs – in order to get a better sense of existing criminal justice policy and to capture government reactions to the final catalogue of frames. I was interested to hear how these officials would describe the country’s crime problem. I selected these government officials based on their position in the current government. From the Minister of National Security, the Police Commissioner and the Prison Superintendent I was particularly interested in whether they were operating according to an articulated criminal justice policy and how criminal justice



policy was constructed. From the directors of Youth Affairs and the Bureau of Gender Affairs I was particularly interested obtaining any additional information they could provide with respect to youth and gender violence. I was interested in verifying newspaper reports of 'youth gangs' and school violence and 'gang violence'. I chose to interview the publisher of the newspaper not only to hear his views on crime and get his reaction to my catalogue of frames but also to have a sense of how the newspaper is produced.

### ***Peer Group Discussions***

Focus groups are group interviews that rely on interaction with the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who takes the role of moderator (Morgan 1997). According to Morgan (1997: 2), the 'hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group'. Historically, focus groups were used most widely with respect to market research. The increasingly prevalence of focus groups in social science research is a result of social scientists' ability to borrow from and adapt the practices used by market researchers (Morgan 1997; Gamson 1992). The main advantages of focus groups are twofold: they can produce concentrated amounts of data on the precise topic of interest informed by the opinions of more people than might otherwise have been possible and they can provide invaluable insight into complex behaviours and motivations by not only uncovering what participants think but, more importantly, why participants think what they think. In this regard focus groups are well suited to discovering group norms (Morgan 1997; Gamson 1992).

However, focus groups also have two significant weaknesses that cannot be overlooked. First, there is always some uncertainty about the accuracy of what the participants say because the fact that the researcher creates and directs the groups, often in an unfamiliar environment, makes focus groups less naturalistic than other qualitative methods. Second, the reliance on interaction in the group to produce the data can be problematic because there may be a tendency toward both conformity – participants withholding things that they might say in private – and polarisation, participants expressing more extreme views in the group than those they may express in private (Morgan 1997). To exploit the strengths of focus groups while mitigating the weaknesses, I chose to conduct peer group discussions akin to Gamson's (1992) peer group conversations. By definition peer group discussions are somewhat smaller than traditional focus groups, downplay the facilitator's role in keeping the

conversation going and are held among familiar acquaintances in their own environment (Gamson 1992). Thus I conducted ten peer group discussions with small groups of at least three participants who were already familiar with each other. Because I wanted them to meet in a familiar space where they might have spontaneously engaged in a conversation about crime had I not been present, I met the participants in locales as disparate as the beach, a restaurant, participants' homes, and participants' workplaces.

To minimise researcher effect and build rapport I typically arrived at the specified location thirty minutes prior to the scheduled time of the discussion in order to meet with the group organiser, test my recording device and take care of any preliminary matters. I asked participants to complete a short demographic questionnaire that included questions detailing race, gender, age, experience with crime, occupation, place of residence and nationality. Ideally I would have liked to include questions about income and educational background but culturally, those questions are thought to be intrusive and I tried to keep the participants as relaxed as possible. I transcribed the recordings myself so that I would have greater familiarity with the data. After transcribing each discussion, I replayed each recording in order to check the transcript for accuracy.

I recruited participants for the peer group discussions using such convenience sampling techniques as email and word of mouth. I initially began recruiting participants by contacting the head of a community program conducted through the Bureau of Gender Affairs and engaging members of the public who visited the National Archives. I employed these recruitment techniques because I was cognisant of the fact that I was not asking participants to merely complete a survey or to participate in a peer group discussion at a neutral location, but rather to allow me into their intimate social spaces, including their homes (Gamson 1992). Understanding Caribbean culture, I suspected I would be met with suspicion and hesitation if I approached people cold in a shopping centre or unfamiliar public space. Sacrificing random selection, I instead strove for heterogeneity with respect to key demographics such as race, age and ethnicity. From my initial contacts from the National Archives and the community program at the Bureau of Gender Affairs, I sought referrals for additional candidates. I then selected the cadre candidates I would include in the study based on criteria derived from the 2001 census. Each selected candidate was designated a group coordinator and asked to form a group of at least three people, including themselves. I asked each group coordinator to arrange a meeting that I

would join and facilitate. My instructions were threefold: the group should consist of people who are already familiar with one another and who would otherwise socialise, the group members should be comfortable discussing sensitive issues with each other and should have discussed such issues at least once in the past, and in choosing the venue for the meeting the group leader should select a venue familiar to the group in which a spontaneous conversation about crime and other controversial issues might conceivably occur irrespective of my involvement.

An obvious limitation to my approach is the resulting fact that I do not have a probability sample but a type of quota sample. A quota sample is a sample that reflects a population in terms of the relative proportions of people in different categories such as gender, age, ethnicity and regions of residence. Unlike a stratified sample, the sampling of individuals is not carried out randomly since the final selection of people is left to the interviewer. Compared to other sampling techniques, quota sampling is rarely employed in academic social research although it is used extensively in market research and political opinion polling (Bryman 2012). Because quota samples are not random, they are rightly criticised as not being representative of the population as a whole. That is, the findings emanating from a quota sample cannot be generalised to, or held to be equally true of, the population from which the sample is drawn (Ritchie and Lewis 2003; Bryman 2012). However, this limitation does not detract from the quality of my findings because random sampling is typically not ideal for traditional focus groups or the type of peer group discussions that I conducted (Morgan 1997). As Morgan (1997: 35) explains, the small number of participants involved in these types of projects makes it extremely unlikely that a sample size of less than 50 will be adequate to represent a larger population, regardless of random selection. Furthermore, as group members are unlikely to hold a shared perspective on the research topic, a randomly sampled group may not be able to generate meaningful discussions.

While the peer group discussions cannot be generalised to, or held to be equally true of, all residents in Antigua and Barbuda, because the discussions created by the group were created collectively, it reflects the common sense of the culture from which the participants are drawn (Sasson 1995). Thus, what my peer group discussions provide is an intersubjective understanding – an understanding of the taken-for-granted assumptions shared by the group (Gamson 1992; Sasson 1995). As such, the potential danger of marginal ideas and individuals with idiosyncratic views

were minimised in this research in ways that they may not have been in more conventional interview research (Sasson 1995).

In total, 52 Antiguan residents participated in 10 peer group discussions. Because Barbuda is often marginalised in the nation's policy discourse, I hoped to conduct a discussion group on that island. However, limited time and resources precluded travel to Barbuda and thus that island, which represents two per cent of Antigua and Barbuda's entire population, is underrepresented in the sample. But, Barbuda's underrepresentation notwithstanding, the sample population is as geographically diverse as the population at large, according to the 2011 census. Based on a demographic questionnaire that participants completed at the end of each discussion, 58 per cent of the sample lives in the parish of St. John as compared to 59 per cent of the larger population. The parishes of St. Mary and St. George are slightly overrepresented as 12 per cent of participants reported living in St. Mary (as compared to nine per cent of the larger population) and 17 per cent in St. George (as compared to nine per cent of the larger population). The parishes of St. Peter, St. Phillip and St. Paul are slightly underrepresented with two per cent of the sample living in each of St. Peter and St. Phillip and six per cent living in St. Paul (as compared to the larger population in which seven per cent of the population lives in St. Peter, five per cent in St. Phillip and six per cent in St. Paul).

92 per cent of the sample is currently employed in the paid labour market while six per cent is retired and two per cent report being a student. Of those currently employed, 27 per cent work for the government in some capacity, which accurately reflects the 25 per cent of residents in Antigua and Barbuda who are employed by the government. Additionally, 33 per cent of the sample work in service oriented jobs, eight per cent work in clerical or administrative jobs, and six per cent worked in lower wage jobs such as domestic work or security.

With respect to the major racial groups, the sample reflects the diversity of the larger population with 85 per cent of respondents identifying as Black (as compared to 91 per cent of the larger population) although White participants are overrepresented (10 per cent as compared to two per cent) as well as those identifying as Syrian or Lebanese (4 per cent as compared to .6 per cent). The sample is more female than the larger population (71 per cent as compared to 53 per cent) and is comprised of more Antiguan nationals (85 per cent) than the larger population (70 per cent). With respect to age, the sample accurately reflects the proportion of those over 60 (17 per cent versus 16 per cent) although it significantly overrepresents those between the ages of

30 and 59 (63 per cent versus 38 per cent) and may slightly underrepresent younger residents between the ages of 18 and 29 (19 per cent as compared to 24 per cent<sup>4</sup>). Additionally, the proportion of interviewees who reported being a victim of crime between 2009 and 2010 was in line with the UNDP crime survey (13 per cent compared with 11 per cent respectively).

Each peer group discussion took place in a venue of the group coordinator's choosing and lasted between forty and 90 minutes. Most discussions took place in either a participant's home or a more institutional space in which the participants were accustomed to meet and discuss personal matters. Other venues selected by group leaders included the beach and a popular restaurant. In keeping with ethical research standards (Kvale 2009), at the beginning of each discussion I informed participants of the purpose of the study and explained to them that as part of the study I would likely publish the transcripts of the discussion in whole or in part. I reminded the participants that their participation was completely voluntary and they could withdraw their participation at any time without penalty. I assured the participants that their identities would remain confidential and that I would use pseudonyms in order to preserve their anonymity but that time constraints may force me to use a transcription service to assist me with transcription so there may be at least one other person who has access to the raw data. Lastly, I asked the participants for their permission to record the discussion with a digital recording device. In order to analyse the data, I personally transcribed each peer group discussion, which resulted in 88,000 words of data.

### ***Qualitative Data Analysis***

Qualitative data analysis involves coding the data, dividing the text into small units, assigning a label to each unit and then grouping the codes into themes (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). I analysed the qualitative corpus of this study – all of the collected qualitative data – with two goals in mind: to track the frequency of selected crime frames and to capture frames that spontaneously emerged in the documents I examined as well as the interviews and peer group discussions that I conducted. This method allowed me to analyse the data both deductively and inductively in two separate stages.

I first read and reread the corpus in order to gain intimate familiarity with its contents. As Saldaña (2011) explains, by reading and rereading the corpus, you gain

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<sup>4</sup> This category is difficult to compare because the census statistics report 24 per cent of the population being between the ages of 15 and 29 while I asked people whether they were between the ages of 18 and 29.

intimate familiarity with its contents and begin to notice significant details as well as developing new insights about their meanings. Patterns, categories and interrelationships become more evident the more you know the subtleties of the database. I then conducted the initial data analysis using a deductive approach. With respect to the documents and focused interviews, I coded the text as displaying a positive version of a particular frame if it expressed at least one component of that frame to characterise Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation or as a solution (Sasson 1995). Because each discussion rather than individual is the unit of analysis, in analysing transcripts of peer group discussions, where participants expressed unanimous support for a frame, I coded that frame's performance as 'strong'. Where participants disagreed with one another over a frame's merits, I coded that frame's performance as 'mixed' and where participants were unanimous in their rejection of a frame, I coded that performance as 'weak'.

During the second phase of this data analysis, I used a more inductive approach. I allowed additional crime frames to emerge organically. While I used descriptive codes (Miles and Huberman 1994) during this stage of analysis in order to help categorise and index the data corpus' basic contents (Saldaña 2011), I also employed values coding (Saldaña 2009) to identify the participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs. Values coding infers the 'heart and mind' of an individual or group's worldview as to what is important, perceived as true, maintained as opinion and felt strongly (Saldaña 2011: 105). During this phase of the analysis, two new frames emerged from the data: *Criminal Culture* and *Foreign Cultural Influences*.

While I first coded the data manually, I later used NVivo software in order to exploit the benefits of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis ("CAQDAS"). I chose to use NVivo because it made the coding and retrieval process faster and more efficient, it allowed me to relate coded text to demographic information and I thought it would enhance the transparency of my analysis (Bryman 2012; Bazeley 2009). Additionally, using NVivo allowed me to quantify my data corpus and count the frequency of themes and codes thus helping me to recognise patterns and idiosyncrasies, document analytic moves, and verify interpretations (Sandelowski et al. 2009: 3).

As a result of this data analysis I found that six crime frames comprised Antigua and Barbuda's catalogue of crime frames:

**Faulty System:** Crime stems from the failure of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish offenders. It's no wonder there's so much crime, criminals know they can do whatever they want to do and get away with it. If we're serious about fighting crime then the police need to get 'tough'. Only when more criminals are made to do hard time will the message get out that 'crime doesn't pay'.

**Blocked Opportunities:** Crime stems from poverty, unemployment, poor education, bad housing and class discrimination. Kids come from places like Gray's Farm and Point turn to crime when they don't see any opportunities for legitimate work. If we're serious about fighting crime, we need to create more opportunities for disadvantaged kids. We'll only make progress in the fight against crime when we begin to seriously address these 'root causes'.

**Social Breakdown:** Crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community. In the past there was less crime because neighbours looked out for one another and parents supervised and disciplined their children. The best way to fight crime is for neighbours, in partnership with the police, to band together to restore order to their communities.

**Poor Immigration Control:** Crime stems from poor immigration control. Most of the crime that occurs is committed by 'non-nationals'. If we're serious about fighting crime, we need to crackdown on the number of non-nationals that come into this country – especially those from Jamaica and Guyana.

**Criminal Culture:** Crime stems from excessive contact with systems and authorities that send pro-crime messages. It's no wonder there is so much crime, when there is widespread corruption among government officials, prominent business people and in government institutions, and when the justice system treats people differently based on who they are and who they know, people feel justified in cutting corners and breaking the law themselves. If we are serious about fighting crime, we need to stamp out corruption, in all of its forms, wherever it occurs and maintain a transparent justice system that treats everyone equally irrespective of wealth or status.

**Foreign Cultural Influences:** Crime stems from foreign cultural influences. Most of the crime that occurs reflects patterns of criminality that are not indigenous to Antigua and Barbuda. If we are serious about fighting crime we need to protect our culture from outside influences that have crept into our society through the Trojan Horse of criminal deportees returned from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as the Internet, American cable television, music and Caribbean immigrants.

I then grouped these frames into larger themes for the purposes of discussion. As such, chapters five, six and seven of this study are built around the themes of 'Socioeconomic Factors', which includes *Blocked Opportunities* and *Social*

*Breakdown; ‘Alien Influences’, which includes Foreign Cultural Influences and Poor Immigration Control; and ‘Governance, Crime, Culture and Control’, which includes Criminal Culture and Faulty System.*

### ***Trustworthiness and Authenticity***

Some qualitative researchers have employed the terms reliability and validity in ways very similar to quantitative researchers. That is, they have used reliability to indicate the degree to which a measure of a concept is consistent and validity to refer to the integrity of the research – whether the research actually accomplishes what the researcher intends it to accomplish (Bryman 2012). However, with respect to assessing the quality of qualitative research, the central focus has increasingly become ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’ (Bryman 2012).

I took several steps to enhance the trustworthiness and authenticity of my research. First, on obtaining permission from my participants, I recorded each interview and peer group discussion fully transcribing each session. Where there was ambiguity in meaning or sense, I contacted the relevant participant to seek clarification. This clarification strengthened the overall credibility of my interview and peer group discussion data. Second, I enlisted two academics to review my instrument and data collection strategies. Lastly, I documented my procedure with an aim towards transparency. The use of more than one method – the documentary analysis, focused interviews and peer discussion groups – allowed for triangulation, whereby multiple methods of investigation and sources of data are used in order to bolster the research’s credibility. In reporting my findings I sought to create ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973), or rich accounts of the details of the culture such that readers have a database for making judgments about the possible transferability of my findings to other contexts (Bryman 2012). Put differently, I sought to create an account of the Antiguan and Barbudan crime situation that ‘goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances’ and ‘presents detail context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another’ (Denzin 1989: 83).

While my research is an important contribution to the body of crime literature focused on the social construction of crime generally and Antigua and Barbuda specifically, I recognise that it does have limitations. In section III I will discuss those limitations.



### III

#### **Limitations of the My Research**

Because of constraints with respect to time, funding and other resources, in conducting this research I have had to make difficult decisions and less than ideal compromises. Specifically, in an ideal world I would have liked to travel to Barbuda to conduct research on that island as well. Barbuda is often marginalised in the country's national discourse and while it does not represent a significant percentage of the population, Barbudans share different cultural realities, sensitivities and lived experiences. My research would have benefitted from including Barbudan perspectives.

A second limitation of my research pertains to the sample of media discourse used for the newspaper analysis. Because there were missing issues, albeit fewer than might have been missing using other sampling techniques, it is possible that my analysis does not include every relevant article or commentary expressing a crime frame. Additionally, if I had a team of researchers and more time I would have expanded the newspaper sample to include other months as well as other types of media discourse. For example, Antigua and Barbuda has a vibrant radio culture. Indeed, many people receive their news and information from popular radio shows. It would have been interesting to include radio in the media discourse for analysis.

Additionally, my research raises a question concerning the extent to which the interview sample represents the population of Antigua and Barbuda. Because the interview sample is somewhat skewed towards a more diverse middle-aged female population one might argue that the concerns expressed in the study better reflect white or Syrian middle-aged female angst rather than the concerns of the typical Antiguan. After all, scholars such as Jackson (2009) have found that women report higher levels of 'worry' or 'fear' with respect to victimisation and middle-aged people 'worry' about crime more than the elderly. But, although there are groups that are overrepresented in the interview sample, I am confident in the findings of this research as they do not differ significantly from the findings of the 2012 UNDP crime study that relate specifically to Antigua and Barbuda. Moreover, a 2002 crime study of Barbados, a Caribbean country very similar to Antigua and Barbuda culturally and geographically, found that views and beliefs with respect to the country's crime situation are quite homogenous. Nuttall et al. (2003) explain that given the limited

number of media outlets and the size of the island this homogeneity ought not be surprising. In Barbados, there was very little difference in views based on age, gender, education, income level or race (Nuttall et al. 2003).

### **Role of My Subjectivity**

Good qualitative research is typified by reflexivity, or the researcher's systematic reflection on her role in the research and her sensitivity to how her personal biography shapes the study (Creswell 2009). This, according to Creswell (2009), represents honesty and openness, acknowledging that all research is value-laden. As a means of clarifying their role in the research, researchers commonly position themselves as either 'insiders' or 'outsiders' to their research domain. Insiders are those who study a group or context to which they belong while outsiders are those who study a group or context to which they do not belong (Breen 2007). Like Breen (2007), I find this insider-outsider dichotomy simplistic and reject it on the basis that it fails to recognise that we all have multiple identities, which often interact and operate on multiple levels simultaneously (see for example Crenshaw 1991). I am a Black female citizen of Antigua and Barbuda with strong ancestral ties to the country. I was raised in the United States, educated at 'elite' universities, and in addition to Antigua and Barbuda, I have lived elsewhere in the Caribbean, Africa, the United Kingdom and the South Pacific. I have travelled to 70 countries across all seven continents. The insider-outsider dichotomy does not capture my complex and multi-faceted experiences. While I self-identify as an Antiguan, I am neither a total insider nor a total outsider with respect to the subject of my research. And, throughout my field research I emphasised different aspects of my multiple identities according to context and audience. My shifting identities were even more apparent to me when peer group and interview participants in one breath would include me when using language like 'we' or 'us' or speak to me in local dialect or assume shared cultural references but then in the next breath reference my Harvard education or my exposure to North American culture. In certain instances peer group discussion and interview participants referenced their own time spent living or studying in North America to highlight what they saw as issues in Antigua and Barbuda and they would assume I understood their reference. For example, these participants drew comparisons with respect to the education and training levels of police officers, penalties for official corruption, and lack of professional opportunities for Antiguan and Barbudan athletes. Thus, I believe my role of researcher is better conceptualised along a continuum – in terms of degrees

of remoteness from diametrical poles representing familiarity with my research domain and unfamiliarity with my research subject (Hodkinson 2005).

As an Antiguan I was able to exploit the advantages of my familiarity with Antiguan and Barbudans and the country's sociocultural realities. For example, I used my familiarity with the culture to gain access to senior government officials and key civil servants, I was able to interact naturally with my peer group discussion and interview participants, and I was able to establish trust and achieve greater relational intimacy (Breen 2007). For example, I called on family and friends to make initial contact with senior government officials and because I understood the social capital my educational institutions would carry in Antigua and Barbuda, I emphasised my institutional connections. Additionally, during interviews and peer group discussions I often used Antiguan colloquialisms, words specific to Antiguan and Barbudan dialect, and I made broad cultural references. However, I was able to avoid some of the pitfalls traditionally associated with such familiarity since in many ways there were barriers to my complete familiarity. I recognise that there may be observations I may have overlooked or assumptions about social behaviour that I took for granted but I was careful not to make assumptions based on my prior knowledge and experience and I never lost sight of my primary role as a researcher. Similarly, as an Antiguan who was raised outside of Antigua and exposed to myriad foreign cultures, I benefited from the assumption that I was independent (especially with respect to political affiliation), unbiased and objective. Additionally, like Breen (2007), a degree of unfamiliarity allowed me to better identify key players, power differentials and dynamics that may have been overlooked by a researcher with a much greater degree of familiarity than me.

In acknowledging my role as researcher, I believe my work makes an even stronger contribution to literature on Antigua and Barbuda because I have a greater degree of familiarity with the country and the culture than those who have conducted much of the existing research. Some researchers are described as parachuting into people's lives and then simply vanishing. Caribbean academics warn of the 'tourist criminologist' who comes into the region, gathers data and then leaves the region to analyse and document findings that lead to policy recommendations that could lead to adverse conditions for Caribbean countries (see for example Jones 1999). My sensitivity to, and on-going relationship with, the Antiguan and Barbudan context mitigates this problem.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have outlined my mixed methods approach and associated issues, including tensions between the various epistemological tenets of the study, data selection and collection and my methods of analysis. I have also discussed the strengths and limitations of both my research design and my actual research. Lastly, in acknowledging my role as researcher and the role of my own subjectivity I have lent to my work clarity, coherence, significance and validation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE ‘REAL’ CRIME SCENE

### Introduction

Because historical police data is largely inaccessible there is very little analysis of crimes recorded by the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (the “RPF”) prior to 1994. Where such analysis does exist, gaps in the data are common and Antigua and Barbuda is discussed within the broader context of the English speaking Caribbean (see for example de Albuquerque and McElroy 1999; Deosaran 2004; Maertens and Anstey 2007). Moreover, there is not much discussion of crimes recorded by the police during the years of associated statehood, leading up to Antigua and Barbuda’s full independence from Great Britain in 1981. As such, this chapter attempts to fill some of these gaps. This chapter aims to provide an account of crime in the twin-island nation that is more comprehensive than anything that has been written to date and to this end it will provide empirical data where none existed previously. This chapter will also unearth patterns of violent crime. Here, crime in Antigua and Barbuda will be discussed within the context of socio-political realities that the official crime data cannot possibly capture. This chapter is intended to ignite meaningful dialogue that has at its heart a premise steeped in some form of empirical data rather than one steeped in romanticised notions of a utopian era that the data suggests never really existed – that time when ‘...Antigua was a much different place. [When] a murder a year...was sensational news’.<sup>5</sup> Most importantly, this chapter is meant to serve as a basis of comparison between what we think we ‘know’ empirically about crime in Antigua and Barbuda and what the media, ordinary citizens and local politicians regularly say.

Using recorded police data for the 40-year period between 1970 and 2010, as well as secondary research, this chapter is intended to establish – as best we can – for Antigua and Barbuda what Maguire (2007: 255) calls the ‘basic contours of crime’. That is, the overall scale of crime and the relative incidence of different types of offences, trends in crime over time, and its geographical distribution. First, a description of the socio-political environment in which these crimes occur is set out

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<sup>5</sup> Quotation taken from peer group discussion Darkwood Beach Lime, June 6.

followed by a discussion of the actual crime data and associated methodological issues. Finally, information from semi-structured interviews with key civil servants, as well as data from government and non-governmental agencies, is used to discuss hidden patterns of crime and supplement the empirical findings.

## II

David Garland (1996; 2000; 2001) has argued that high rates of property crime and violent crime have become a standard feature of the late modern social experience. Although crime typically has an uneven social distribution and high-risk victimisation is a concentrated phenomenon, high crime rates and the threat of crime have so seeped into the modern consciousness that they have become a ‘taken for granted element’ of late modernity (Garland 1996). While Antigua and Barbuda may not be what Garland envisioned as a late modern society, the features that it shares with such societies (globalisation for example) means that it is not excepted from this development. In Antigua and Barbuda increased rates of property crime and violent crime are no longer an anomaly and crime is viewed as the ‘most serious challenge facing the country’ (Maertens and Anstey 2007: 1). The UNDP (2012: 19) crime survey found that 54 per cent of respondents feel insecure because of crime and security. But, in deconstructing Antigua and Barbuda’s actual crime rates and understanding how crime has changed over time, it is important to first understand the social, economic, political and cultural context in which these crimes occurred. As Reiner (2000: 80) argues, the cultural and socio-economic context facilitates a broader understanding of the circumstances in which offenders have acted and their experience of these circumstances as pressures and temptations to commit crimes. Moreover, the cultural and socio-economic context can shed light on shifts in the availability of means and opportunities to commit crimes and associated social controls. The discussion below aims to describe Antigua and Barbuda’s social, economic, political and cultural context in order to facilitate a broader understanding of the police recorded crime figures.

### **Cultural and Socio-Political Context**

By the late 1960s sugar, Antigua and Barbuda’s cash crop, could no longer sustain the economy. Unlike other Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda did not rebuild its agriculture sector around a second cash crop. Instead, the country focused on developing small farmers and small-scale food production for the local market. As a

supplement to this restructured agriculture sector, the country looked to tourism, related construction, and light manufacturing as a way to diversify its economy (Knight 1989; de Albuquerque and McElroy 1995; Caribbean Development Bank<sup>6</sup> 2007a). Most of this diversification occurred during the 1980s when the total number visitors to the island, as well as hotel rooms doubled. Also during this time, electricity production tripled as did the number of telephones and vehicles, the value of construction permits rose seven times and the average annual gross domestic product (“GDP”) grew approximately seven per cent. Per capita real GDP more than doubled and the country’s strategic location enabled Antigua and Barbuda to become a major hub for regional and international travel. By extension, the international airport became a service point for aircraft serving the region thus creating employment and income growth in the transportation sector. Indeed, by 1993 agriculture’s share of the country’s GDP had fallen to 3.7 per cent while tourism simultaneously grew to account, directly and indirectly, for 50 per cent (de Albuquerque and McElroy 1995; CDB 2007a). Tourism dwarfed agriculture and manufacturing and emerged as the backbone of the economy. Antigua and Barbuda enjoyed income levels that made it one of the better-off countries in the Caribbean and the developing world (CDB 2007a).

As much of the tourism boom of the 1980s was facilitated largely by foreign debt, the turn of the decade ushered in new economic realities for Antigua and Barbuda as well. During the 1990s, growth declined to less than half of the 1980s growth rate and the country was forced to struggle with high debt and growing arrears. Economic difficulties were further exacerbated by five major hurricanes, a volcanic eruption in neighbouring Montserrat and a ruling by the World Trade Organization (the “WTO”) that threatened the banana industry in Dominica, a country whose economy is inextricably linked to that of Antigua and Barbuda. In fact, the WTO’s ruling on the banana trading practices affected the very stability of the Eastern Caribbean Dollar – Antigua and Barbuda’s currency. Fiscal imbalance, or the imbalance between revenue generation and expenditures, widened and declining credit worthiness prevented access to regular financing. The practical implications of these new economic realities included the postponement of necessary public investment, labour market distortions that made government the single largest employer in the country and overreliance on tourism as the mainstay of the economy (de Albuquerque

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<sup>6</sup> Referred to hereinafter as “CDB”.

and McElroy 1995; *The Daily Observer* 1995; Robinson and Cashin 2006; WTO 2005).

These new economic realities also served to restructure the nature of poverty in the country as a growing number of women and new immigrants became dependent for employment on seasonal low skilled and low paying jobs in the hotel and restaurant sectors. These low paying jobs were hypersensitive to such exogenous events as natural disasters and fluctuations in European and North American economies. For example, after hurricane Luis in 1995, between 4000 and 7,000 hotel and tourism jobs – approximately 15 to 25 per cent of the workforce – were lost (Griffith 2004). Similarly, men flocked to low paying low skilled work in the construction industry, which was often tied to the tourism industry. Because government became a significant employer for the poorest segment of the population, once public sector cuts began, it was the poorest segment of the population that was disproportionately affected (CDB 2007a). As in other parts of the region (see for example Harriott 2000), the face of poverty in Antigua and Barbuda was rapidly becoming that of a low skilled worker with full-time employment in the formal labour market.

Consequently, rather than turn to the IMF for assistance, the government developed and implemented its own voluntary ‘homegrown’ structural adjustment programme in consultation with the Caribbean Development Bank, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (see for example Government of Antigua 1995). This homegrown programme was designed to diversify the economy, rein in spending, cut public sector employment, and raise revenues through indirect taxation (Government of Antigua 1995; Government of Antigua 1996). However, according to reports and assessments, this structural adjustment programme never fully achieved intended results (see for example CDB 2007a). Public sector employment was not cut as much as it should have been and attempts to diversify the economy through financial services and the creation of a gaming industry were largely thwarted by the United States. Tourism remained the lifeblood of the economy. As such, economic woes were further exacerbated by the 2001 terrorist attack on the United States. The attack led to an immediate decline in tourist arrivals as North American air travel decreased by as much as 20 per cent even after North American air space reopened following its immediate closure for several days after the attack (see Bhadra and Texter 2004). This decrease severely impacted Antigua and Barbuda’s macro and micro economies.



Raising revenue through indirect taxation, a key component to the government's structural adjustment program, also proved problematic. The government had long held that direct taxation would rob citizens of disposable income that, when spent, could stimulate the economy. As such, the focus was instead on raising revenue through customs duties and other indirect taxes (see for example Antigua Labour Party Manifesto 1999). While there may have been some merit to this approach in theory, in reality relying on indirect taxes had the effect of further entrenching inequality – the gap between the middle class and the poor – which persisted into the 2000s (CDB 2007a). It is unclear that a 2004 change in government made any immediate difference in this respect. As compared to other Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda continues to have a relatively high level of inequality. With respect to consumption expenditure, in 2007 the poorest quintile, consumed less than five per cent of total expenditures while the wealthiest quintile consumed 56.3 per cent of expenditure – more than 10 times that of the poorest quintile. Similarly, it is unclear that the 2004 change in government and new macroeconomic policies aimed at fiscal debt reduction, direct taxation and reducing the public sector wage bill through a voluntary severance and early retirement scheme (see for example IMF 2006), had any appreciable effect on the patterns of poverty that emerged with the labour market distortions of the 1990s. By 2007 28.3 per cent of Antiguan and Barbudans were estimated to be vulnerable (10 per cent), poor (14.6 per cent) or indigent (3.7 per cent) and the vast majority of this population was employed in the formal economy (CDB 2007a).

Though inequality and poverty were hardly foreign to Antigua and Barbuda as a former British colony, the way in which people dealt with them evolved with the country's growth and development. These coping strategies affected the availability of means and opportunities to offend. Some of the same conditions that facilitated economic prosperity in the 1980s (i.e. use of the country as a regional and international travel hub and a thriving tourism sector) simultaneously facilitated the flourishing of a nascent underground economy built around drug running, prostitution and human trafficking. Through its international connections, this underground economy eventually became attractive and rewarding enough to serve as a counterpoint to participation in the formal economy (see Bowling 2010). Moreover, evidence suggests that there is no longer a social stigma associated with participation in this underground economy and a growing number of people – especially marginalized young people – move fluidly between it and the formal economy. Not

only have young people admitted to running drugs to survive, a 2001 survey discovered that 20 per cent of secondary school students would engage in the sale of drugs if given the opportunity (CDB 2007a).

A flailing formal economy and the pervasiveness and institutionalisation of Antigua and Barbuda's underground economy have had a profound effect on the structure of crime. Beyond the fact that drugs and prostitution are themselves illegal, the infrastructure required to support them is criminogenic and antithetical to the safety and security of residents of Antigua and Barbuda. For example, while drug running necessarily required established spaces that could facilitate drug activity, these spaces also provided convergent opportunities in which predatory crimes could occur thus compromising the safety and security of the communities in which they were located (Crotts 2003). Drug running also required a ready supply of firearms and ammunition to protect the drugs and drug operatives (Agozino et al. 2009; see also Klein 2008 for discussion of the link between drugs and development). Such 'protection' often included robbery and narcoterrorism, the intimidation of clients and attempts to deter disloyalty by fellow operators through the use of violence (Griffith 1997). Indeed, a 2007 study found that Antigua and Barbuda had become a country with indications of increased use and availability of small arms (Maertens and Anstey 2007). Similarly, because official police and other government data from the Bureau of Gender Affairs suggest that the vast majority of recorded cases of prostitution involve immigrant female prostitutes, as prostitution became a more prominent fixture of the underground economy, it required greater cooperation by immigration and senior officials who were often bribed to allow into the country, or extend the stay of, foreign women who were brought to Antigua and Barbuda to ensure a steady stream of employees for various houses of prostitution. According to records from the Bureau of Gender affairs, prostitution quickly led to the trafficking of women.

Between 1995 and 2000 the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom each adopted a stricter stance towards foreign-born criminal offenders and enacted legislation lowering the threshold of criminal activity that would trigger deportation. From 1998 to 2006 all three of these countries combined deported to Antigua and Barbuda 283 criminal offenders. Of the 283, approximately 40.6 per cent were repatriated for drug related offences, 15.7 per cent for robbery, burglary or larceny, 6.0 per cent for illegal firearms and 3.6 per cent for murder or manslaughter (Barnes et al. 2008). Although the absolute number of deportations may not seem significant, per 100,000 inhabitants, Antigua and Barbuda had a rate of deportation higher than

Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. While the data does not support theories that deported criminal offenders are primarily responsible for most of the country's increase in serious crime, a 2008 CARICOM<sup>7</sup> study on criminal deportation in the Caribbean found that even small numbers of deported criminal offenders might result in a disproportionately negative effect on the society to which they returned (Barnes et al. 2008). Interviews with senior members in the RPF confirm the data. According to officers in the RPF, it is not that criminal deportees are responsible for surges in crime that occur, but to the extent they do reoffend in Antigua and Barbuda, they introduce ways of offending never before seen in the country. This is allegedly true with regards to 'hi-tech' fraud crimes. Furthermore, members of the RPF believe that exposure to this level of criminal sophistication, whether through media reports or otherwise, have served to increase the sophistication of Antigua and Barbuda's homegrown criminal offenders as well.

Growth and development, tourism, inequality, poverty, and criminal deportation all interacted to play a significant role in driving Antigua and Barbuda's crime trends and patterns. In the following section these crime trends and patterns are discussed more fully, along with associated methodological limitations.

### III

#### **Limitations of the Police Data**

According to Deosaran (2004: 114), the existing databases and methods of collecting crime data in commonwealth Caribbean countries are deficient and even archaic. Consistent with this observation, Antigua and Barbuda does not have a database designed to capture incidents of crime reported to and recorded by the police. Incidents of crime are recorded by hand and entered into a word processing document. Indeed, prior to 1994 incidents of crimes recorded by the police were not computerised at all. During this time, crime reports were handwritten in notebooks by police officers at various stations across the country and the content of those reports were collated at the main police station in St. John's. At the St. John's police station all of the reports from the various stations, coupled with reports made to the St. John's station, were recorded in yet another notebook, and eventually filed away. For most of the 1970s and 1980s the compiled crime data was published annually in a series,

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<sup>7</sup> CARICOM is an abbreviation for Caribbean Community and Common Market, which is a collection of fifteen mostly English-speaking Caribbean countries and territories.

which has since been discontinued, entitled the *Annual Report on the Organisation and Administration of the Royal Police Force and Fire Service of Antigua and Barbuda*.

Although police records were increasingly computerised after 1994, the fundamental process employed by police officers of collecting and compiling crime data remains largely unchanged. However, when all of the crime reports are recorded at the St. John's police station, an officer attached to the Criminal Investigation Department ("CID") now enters the compiled data into computerised frequency charts, which are stored electronically. Despite this technological development, there is still no easy way to extract or manipulate this crime data because the data is not entered into a database but in a basic word processing document with very limited functionality.

Despite the anachronistic manner in which the RPF compiles national crime data, resulting flaws are not inherently different from those associated with crime data collected in jurisdictions where data is collected by more sophisticated means. While the RPF's method of compiling national crime data may allow for more leakage than jurisdictions with fully computerised databases and automated tracking, widely accepted perils of using police data to talk about the overall scale of crime and associated crime trends persist. As such, there is likely a disconnect between the amount of crime that has been reported to and recorded by the RPF and that which actually occurs in Antigua and Barbuda.

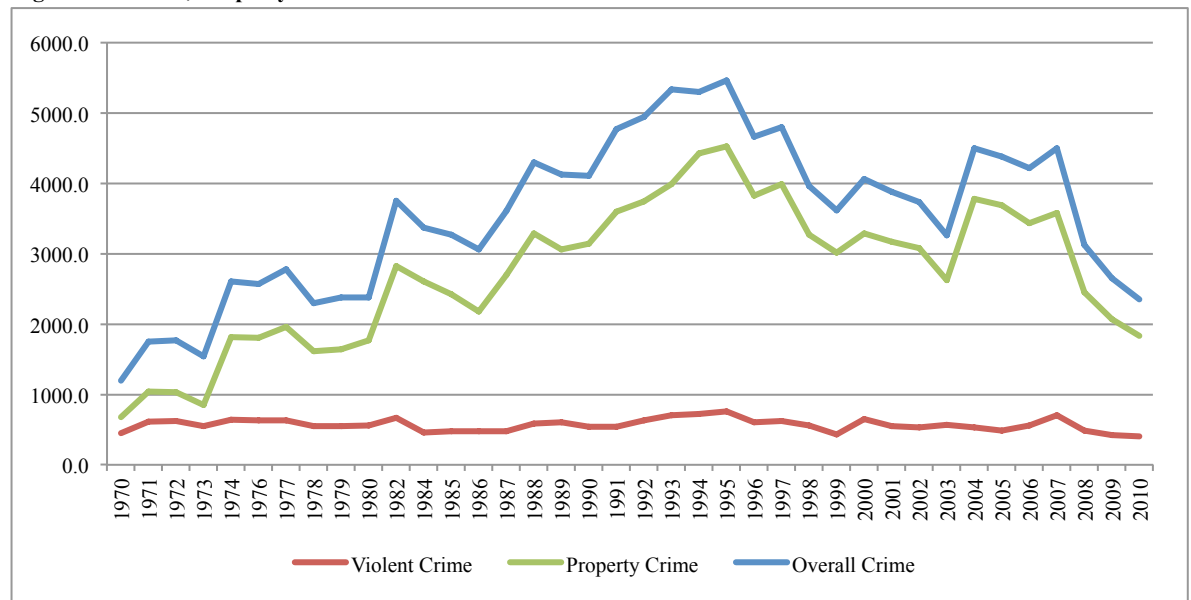
Nevertheless, the discussion below outlines what we believe we 'know' about crime in Antigua and Barbuda.

### **Reported Crime Trends**

Unlike other parts of the Caribbean, trends in the crimes reported to the RPF are not easily discernable (*cf.* Maertens and Anstey 2007; Harriott 2000). Given Antigua's small population of between 60,680 and 90,80 for the period of review, 1970-2010, crime trends often appear erratic since a relatively small number of incidents in any particular year can lead to dramatic increases in corresponding rates. Nevertheless, it is clear that as a percentage of total reported crime, the vast majority of reports have always related to property. The data also suggest that the nature of violent crime – murder, rape, shooting, wounding and robbery – appears to be changing and that there is a relatively high amount of sexual violence in the country. As of 2010, however, the rates of both property and violent crime appeared to be on a downward trend.

Reports of property crime outstrip those of violent crime. From 1970 to 1995 the rate of property crime increased from 677 to 4,525 per 100,000 people, before decreasing to 1,829 per 100,000 [Figure 3]. As a percentage of total crime, property crime increased from 56.6 per cent to 77.7 per cent of total crime reports. During this

**Figure 3: Violent, Property and Overall Crime Rates 1970-2010**



SOURCE: RPF Criminal Records Office

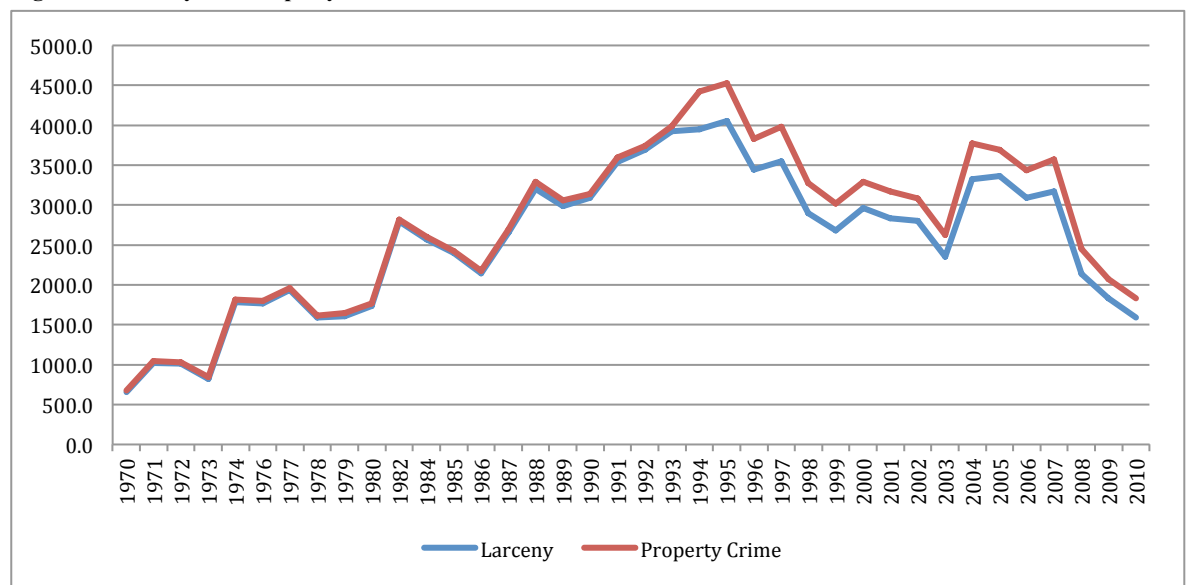
time, the ratio of reported property crime to violent crime fluctuated between 2:1 and 8:1. Since 1982, Antigua and Barbuda's first year of full independence from Great Britain, property crime has comprised at least 70 per cent of all crime reports, peaking at 84.3 per cent in 2005. That the vast majority of reported crime has been property related is not surprising and is consistent with crime patterns emerging from official police data in most developing countries (Buendia 1989: 415), England and Wales (Maguire 2007: 255) and other countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean (Harriott 2000: 9-10; UNDP 2012: 20). What is perhaps more surprising, however, is that from 1970 to 2010 the ratio of property crime relative to violent crime has generally increased rather than decreased. This apparent trend defies the trajectory of reported crimes elsewhere in the Commonwealth Caribbean where the ratio of property crime relative to violent crime has decreased (see Harriott 2000: 9-10; UNDP 2012: 20). This trend also defies much of the public discourse surrounding crime in Antigua and Barbuda and seems to cast doubt on the characterisation of Antigua and Barbuda's crime as mostly violent. One possible explanation for this counterintuitive trend is that over time the reporting behaviour of the public changed with respect to property crime. Over the first 25 years of the period, for example, as property insurance may

have become a more prominent feature of society, there would have been a greater incentive to report property crimes to the police in order to support insurance claims. As such, the growing proportion of property crime reports during this time might actually represent a decline in the overall number of property crime reports that were never brought to the attention of the police. The discussion below further explores Antigua and Barbuda's crime trends with respect to reported property crime.

### ***Property Crime***

For much of the 1970s and the 1980s Antiguan and Barbudans left their belongings unsecured (see for example see for example Antigua and Barbuda 1979, 1982, 1984, 1987, 1989). It was not uncommon for people to leave running cars unattended, homes unlocked or businesses improperly secured. These routine activities created opportunities for crime such that reports of larceny, which also includes RPF categories of 'breaking', 'breaking and larceny', 'burglary', 'housebreaking', 'store-breaking', 'thefts and other stealing', collectively accounted for almost 90 per cent of all property crime reports and as such tracked very closely the patterns of overall property crime reports [Figure 4].

**Figure 4: Larceny and Property Crime Rates 1970-2010**



SOURCE: RPF Criminal Records Office

Additionally, the literature suggests that the increases that occurred in reports of larceny during the latter part of the 1980s into the 1990s were driven, in part, by increased drug abuse, which is generally associated with increased property crime (see for example de Albuquerque and McElroy 1999; Maertens and Anstey 2007), and five major hurricanes in 1995. Between 1982 and 1995 official police records suggest that

much of the theft reported to the police was committed by individuals who sought to support their drug habit or intended to ship stolen goods – often electronic equipment – overseas in exchange for drugs. During this time, use of crack and cocaine increased and marijuana cultivation was prevalent (see for example Antigua and Barbuda 1982, 1984, 1987, 1989). That government formally acknowledged increased drug use, formed a national drug council and publicly pledged to strengthen drug education in schools, underscores the extent to which drug abuse was perceived as a problem during this time (Antigua and Barbuda 1995).

Furthermore, five major hurricanes exacerbated rates of property crime in 1995. Evacuated or damaged houses and retail establishments as well as damaged or abandoned vehicles provided increased opportunities for property crime. Police records claim that notwithstanding military patrols and a declared curfew in parts of St. John's, after Hurricane Luis extended power outages invited increased larceny, especially in the tourist areas of downtown St. John's. In addition, reported incidents of fraud increased 50 per cent in 1995 as reports of false insurance claims and other insurance related fraud became more prevalent.

Between 1995 and 2010, however, reports of larceny and overall rates of reported property crime declined by 42 per cent. This decline is likely due to a complicated mixture of several disparate factors. First, the perception of increased crime and greater awareness may have led many to take greater precautions in securing their belongings. Official police records document education and outreach to members of the public with respect to securing their belongings. These initiatives also included visiting business establishments to discuss more effective security devices. Second, it is not likely that the reports of larceny and property crime directly associated with the hurricanes in 1995 would have persisted past that year. Levels of looting would have likely decreased as would the opportunities that evacuated homes and abandoned property would have provided.

Third, beginning in 1996, the Minister of Finance increased budgetary spend to support measures aimed at both supply and demand reduction of illicit drugs. Government introduced new legislation targeting drug offenders and created a new Drug Enforcement Unit, which had responsibility for creating a national drug reform programme. The Prime Minister appointed a "Drug Czar" as well as a Cabinet sub-committee to deal with drug issues (Antigua and Barbuda 1997). In 1998, musician Eric Clapton established a state of the art drug treatment facility, which is the country's sole rehabilitation centre. Given that these measures coincided with

increased drug seizures and arrests, it is plausible that these measures had an effect on drug activity known to the police. That is, it is plausible that property crime reports decreased because these efforts ensured that there were fewer individuals who sought to support their drug habit or barter property for drugs. Additionally, seizures of nearly all drugs in 1996 were up on the previous year and from 1995 to 2003 seizures of cannabis plants increased dramatically thereby affecting the local marijuana supply [Table 2]. If drug activity did in fact decrease after 1996 it is likely that associated property crime would have also decreased. A study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research explains that although marijuana consumption, as compared to other illicit drugs, does not typically produce compulsive patterns of criminal behavior among users and is not as expensive as other illicit drugs, marijuana involvement is significantly correlated with higher rates of offending for acquisitive or income-producing property crimes (Pacula and Kilmer 2003). According to Pacula and Kilmer (2003), frequent marijuana use was found to have a larger effect on participation in property crime than frequent alcohol use or any other illicit drug use. Similarly, in his study of youth crime, Baker (1998) finds that frequent marijuana users were almost five times more likely to report participation in acquisitive property crime than non-users, even after controlling for individual characteristics, family background, and other substance use.

**Table 2: Drug Seizures and Arrests 1995-2003**

<b>Substances Seized</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Cannabis (kg)	204	1485	628	105	75.25	66.70	756	1257	359.38
Cannabis Plants	294	2464	3556	2107	23384	8416	69498	4540	7203
Hashish (kg)	2	32	0	0	1000	0	0	0	0
Cocaine (kg)	88	6	126	1	21.5	24.36	6	59.8	62.27
Crack Cocaine (pieces and ounces)	132 8oz	290	149 .74oz	81	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Persons Arrested</b>									
Males	63	66	185	185	122	201	150	101	107
Females	19	13	37	22	25	20	15	27	30
Juvenile Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
Juvenile Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	82	79	222	207	147	221	166	131	137

SOURCE: RPF Criminal Records Office

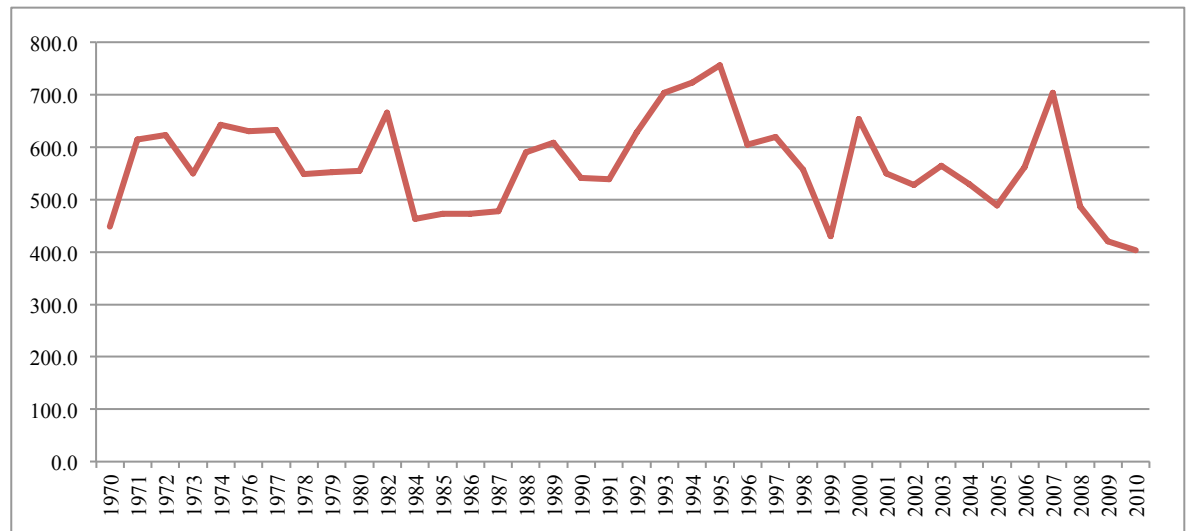


Fourth and perhaps most interesting, there is evidence that as reports of property crime were decreasing the informal or ‘underground’ economy was growing. Harriott (2000) suggests that in some cases it may be possible to attribute declining reports of property crime to a decrease in reports of larceny, which might in turn be the result of would-be offenders turning to the underground economy. Harriott (2000) contends that in Jamaica increased fraud and decreased larceny points to a qualitative shift in the illegal modes of adaptation to societal conditions. New income-generating activities in the underground economy now offered higher income and status and lower risks than traditional forms of property crime. It may well be that this same phenomenon has played out in Antigua and Barbuda. Although it is very difficult to measure with any precision, there is some evidence that over time the underground economy has grown becoming an increasingly institutionalised and socially accepted part of Antiguan and Barbudan society (see for example CDB 2007a). Furthermore, limited resources for policing have reduced the risks of operating in this sphere. A 2007 poverty assessment of Antigua and Barbuda provides evidence of the role of the underground economy as well as underground economic activities in the lives of poor people in Antigua and Barbuda. According to the assessment, participants in the study admitted to ‘surviving “by any means necessary” saying that men may resort to “hustling” and to “drug trafficking”, and women to “prostitution”’ (CDB 2007a: 84). Additionally, similar to the Jamaica case, in Antigua and Barbuda both blue-collar and white-collar fraud increased. For example, between 1995 and 2001 the rate of blue-collar fraud reports increased 25 per cent and in the private sector, insider trading and overbilling on state contracts were pervasive. One example of white-collar fraud is the Medical Benefits Scheme scandal in the late 1990s in which a number of persons and businesses (including a government minister) were charged with defrauding the government of millions of dollars using forged cheques, using inside information for personal gain and deliberately overbilling the government for goods and services rendered. A commission of inquiry was subsequently formed and criminal charges were filed in 2004.

## ***Violent Crime***

Over the past 40 years, the underlying rate of violent crime reports has remained relatively stable despite marked fluctuations over short periods [Figure 5]. In 1970 there were 448 violent crimes recorded per 100,000 people and 403 in 2010. There

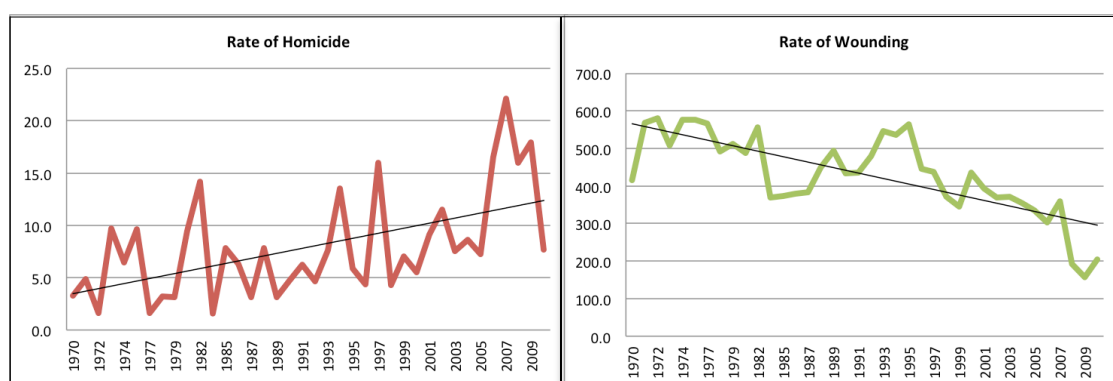
**Figure 5: Rate of Violent Crime 1970-2010**



**Source: RPF Criminal Records Office**

are, however, some curious trends in the structure of violent crime reports. Homicide rates is one of the best indicators of violent crime rates because it is the least affected by the recording and reporting limitations that affect most other crimes. In Antigua and Barbuda, homicide rates have fluctuated but have trended mostly upward. Since the early 1980s, but more consistently since the mid-1990s, robbery has become a larger proportion of all violent crime reports. In 1990 the rate of reported robberies was 30 per 100,000 and this comprised roughly 6 per cent of violent crime reports. However, by 2010 rates of reported robbery increased 340 per cent to 132 per 100,000 people accounting for 33 per cent of violent crime. In 2009 robbery reports accounted for nearly half of the country's reported violent crime. As gun crime has become significantly more prevalent throughout the region, since 2004 reports of shootings have featured more prominently among all violent crime recorded by the police (see Agozino et al. 2009 for discussion of the 'pistolization' of the region). It is plausible that the alleged increase in gun violence has facilitated increased homicide rates and declining rates of wounding. Figure 6 below juxtaposes the increasing rates of homicide reports and the decreasing rates of wounding reports. It is possible that the increased use of guns has had deadlier outcomes in situations where wounding or grievous harm would have otherwise resulted.

**Figure 6: Rates of Reported Homicide as Compared to Rates of Reported Wounding**



SOURCE: RPF Criminal Records Office

Table 3 below shows the annual incidence of homicide, sexual violence, shooting, wounding and robbery reported to the RPF. While per capita rates are useful in describing crime trends because they provide a basis of comparison across disparate jurisdictions and time periods, raw numbers can be helpful in understanding how people understand and experience the levels of violence in their communities, especially as media reports tend to focus on individual occurrences.

**Table 3: Incidence of Violent Crime**

Year	Violent Crime	Homicide	Sexual Violence	Shooting	Wounding	Robbery
1970	272	2	10	0	252	8
1971	376	3	22	0	348	3
1972	383	1	17	0	357	8
1973	339	6	10	0	313	10
1974	397	4	16	0	356	21
1975	--	--	--	--	--	--
1976	393	6	13	0	360	14
1977	396	1	22	0	355	18
1978	345	2	19	0	309	15
1979	348	2	16	0	323	7
1980	351	6	26	0	308	11
1981	--	--	--	--	--	--
1982	422	9	31	0	352	30
1983	--	--	--	--	--	--
1984	294	1	32	0	235	26
1985	301	5	33	0	238	25
1986	301	4	36	0	242	19
1987	304	2	30	0	244	28
1988	376	5	49	0	286	36
1989	388	2	44	0	315	27
1990	345	3	46	0	277	19
1991	344	4	36	0	278	26

Year	Violent Crime	Homicide	Sexual Violence	Shooting	Wounding	Robbery
1992	406	3	53	0	311	39
1993	461	5	49	0	358	49
1994	480	9	51	0	356	64
1995	511	4	51	0	382	74
1996	415	3	54	0	306	52
1997	427	11	46	0	302	68
1998	389	3	51	0	260	75
1999	305	5	36	0	245	19
2000	473	4	96	0	315	58
2001	423	7	73	0	303	40
2002	413	9	54	0	289	61
2003	450	6	55	0	296	93
2004	430	7	41	15	289	78
2005	405	6	38	10	278	73
2006	474	14	43	13	256	148
2007	605	19	44	35	309	198
2008	426	14	58	33	168	153
2009	375	16	40	11	140	164
2010	366	7	20	22	186	120

SOURCE: RPF Criminal Records Office

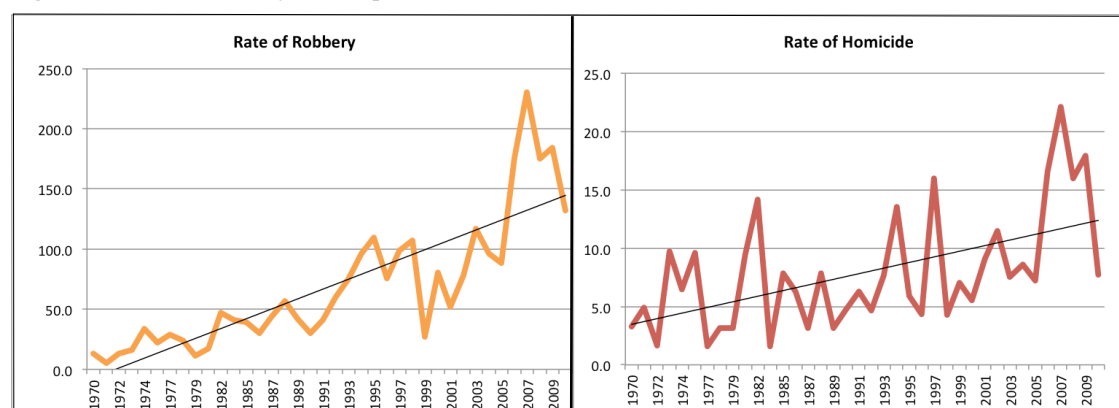
### Robbery and Homicide

In 2007 the rate of reported robbery peaked at 230.5 per 100,000, up from 13.2 in 1970 [Figure 7]. As already noted, some of this increase has been associated with the rapid rise in drug use in the 1980s and 1990s as some addicts used robbery to support their addiction (de Albuquerque and McElroy 1999). Much of the increase, however, can be directly attributed to the growth of the underground economy. Associated with this growing informal sector is the proliferation of arms and ammunition as gangs seek to protect their turf and goods, maintain their dominance and manage rivalry (Montoute and Anyanwu 2009). For example, in 2007 the Office of National Drug Control and Money Laundering Policy (“ONDCP”) disrupted the illegal drug trade by successfully executing six major operations that resulted in seizures of 6,824 pounds of cannabis and five kilograms of cocaine worth EC \$22,950,200 (US \$8,442,583) (ONDCP 2008). The decrease in supply set off a drug war, which led to a record number of robberies and at least eight drug-related murders (ONDCP 2008). Similarly, robberies increased slightly in the mid-1990s when local authorities increased supply reduction efforts. According to Montoute and Anyanwu (2009) it is important to understand that Antigua and Barbuda has a lucrative marijuana trade that is under-researched. In explaining the significance of this trade, these scholars quote a

regional expert who says, ‘a pound of high potency organic [marijuana] fetches more than a pound of cocaine’ (Montoute and Anyanwu 2009: 75).

Police reports suggest that of those robberies known to the police, increasingly they have been committed in bold fashion during the day, by masked assailants and with the assistance of firearms (Montoute and Anyanwu 2009; de Albuquerque and McElroy 1999). Because of this change in the manner in which robberies are committed, most notably the increasing use of firearms, it is not surprising that empirically, reports of robbery appear to be positively correlated with reports of homicide [Figure 7]. Since the 1990s and more consistently since 2004, a growing number of homicides were committed during the commission of a robbery. For example, in 2004 close to 30 per cent of the homicides reported to the police took place in the commission of a robbery. Two incidents garnering widespread national and international attention exemplify the point. In 1995, a gunman, in broad daylight, shot in the chest and killed a Canadian woman picnicking on a quiet beach as she resisted the gunman’s attempt to steal her handbag. Similarly, in 2008 British newlyweds on their honeymoon were murdered in their hotel room in what the RPF has ruled a robbery gone awry. The female victim was shot in the head and died instantly while her husband was shot in the neck and died a week later. In 2010 homicides that occurred in the context of robberies represented 57.1 per cent of all homicides and have contributed to the erratic nature of Antigua and Barbuda’s homicide rate, which has ranged from a low of 3.1 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1989 to a high of 22.1 in 2007 – the year of the alleged drug war.

**Figure 7: Rates of Robbery as Compared to Rates of Homicide**



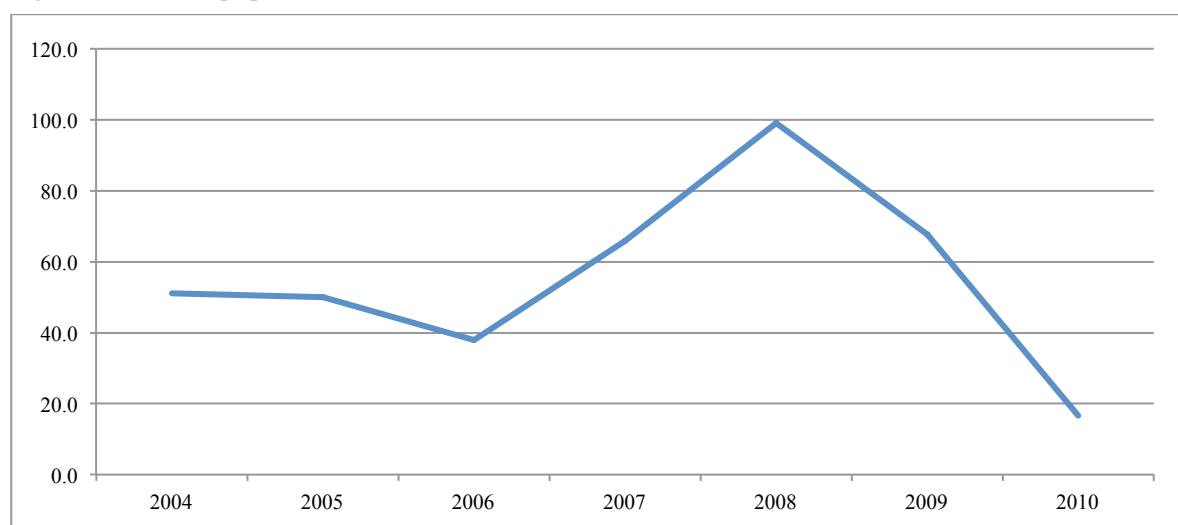
SOURCE: RPF Criminal Records Office

### Rape and Indecent Assault

Recorded rates of sexual violence against women are high across the Caribbean, with all commonwealth Caribbean countries showing higher per capita rates than the global

average. More particularly, there exists a culture of coerced sex in the region such that almost 50 per cent of the region's adolescent girls' first sexual experiences were forced (Sealy-Burke 2009). Indeed, for much of Antigua and Barbuda's history, the reported incidence of rape, indecent assault and unlawful sexual intercourse has remained high. From 1970 to 2010 the rate of reported sexual violence fluctuated between 16.5 and 132.8 per 100,000 inhabitants. Rape and indecent assault have accounted for as much as 20 per cent of the country's violent crime.

**Figure 8: Rate of Rape per 100,000 Females 2004-2010**



SOURCE: RPF Criminal Records Office

It is generally accepted that reports of sexual offences are lower than the actual rate of occurrence due to non-reporting. A task force on sexual violence and sexual assault in Antigua and Barbuda found that the perceived lack of privacy and confidentiality within the health sector was one of the most significant barriers to reporting such offences. Additionally, the perceived inefficacy of the police is thought to contribute to underreporting. Against this backdrop, Antigua and Barbuda's high levels of reported sexual violence are even more disturbing as it is likely that there are even more incidents that actually occur that are never reported to the police.

However, data on rates and incidence obscure important changes in the manner in which rape is committed. Historically, the perpetrator was someone known to the victim. But, now, according to records at the Bureau of Gender Affairs, rape is said to be increasingly committed by strangers (see also de Albuquerque and McElroy 1999). An extreme example of this new trend is the spate of rapes that occurred in late 2007 continuing into early 2009, which were linked to an alleged masked 'serial rapist' who was said to break into the homes of women and rape them at gunpoint. This spate of rapes was the driver of the 2008 rape rate of 99 per 100,000 females [Figure 8]. While

this alleged ‘serial rapist’ was never formally caught or charged for these rapes, in concealing his identity and using a firearm he helped to further entrench the increasingly anonymous nature of rape in Antigua and Barbuda. The Executive Director of the Directorate of Gender Affairs explains that as early as 2000 in a small section of St. John’s women were being raped by a masked person or persons at gunpoint but these rapes went largely unnoticed and unsolved. The alleged masked ‘serial rapist’ is therefore thought to be the personification of a trend that was slowly creeping into Antiguan and Barbudan society. Indeed, professional profilers hired by the government have long suspected the rapes were likely committed by more than one person and not a single ‘serial rapist’ as commonly reported in the media and discussed in the public domain. Although sexual violence has always been prevalent in Antigua and Barbuda, the rates of rape during this time led to heightened rates of anxiety. Even after the rapes subsided in 2009, women are still fearful of being raped and many have changed their daily patterns and behaviour as a result. Indeed, the UNDP crime survey suggests that 19 per cent of both women and men feared being sexually assaulted in some fashion. This percentage is nearly twice that in any other Caribbean country (UNDP 2012). Much of the reason for this fear is the seemingly random nature of the attacks. While further entrenching the anonymous nature of rape in Antigua and Barbuda, the masked serial rapist had a profound effect on the national consciousness with respect to crime and security.

### **The Geographical Distribution of Crime in Antigua and Barbuda**

While the vast majority of crime and violence in Antigua and Barbuda occurs in the capital city of St. John’s and its surrounding areas, it is not distributed evenly across this area. As the former Assistant Commissioner of Police explained in an interview for this study, much of Antigua’s property crime occurs on the three streets in downtown St. John’s where tourists most frequently travel. This is consistent with research pointing to a link between property crime and tourism. Scholars such as de Albuquerque and McElroy (1999) and Ryan (1993) have long argued that visitors represent attractive targets and are often less guarded.

In contrast, a disproportionate amount of recorded violent crime occurs in the Gray’s Farm area of St. John’s [Figure 9]. Approximately four square miles, this area is one of the most economically depressed areas of the country. Much of the Gray’s Farm area is characterised by poor housing, small dwellings in need of repair and overcrowding (CDB 2007a). Although there is access to electricity and water, these

utilities are prohibitively expensive for some households and as such some houses do not have indoor toilet facilities. In the Gray's Farm area, both the youth unemployment and overall unemployment rates are high and there is a stigma attached to the community, partly because there is a general perception that crime and violence are prevalent there. For example, the overall unemployment rate for Gray's Farm proper is 18.6 per cent and for three of its surrounding areas – Nut Grove, Greenbay and Cooks Hill – the unemployment rate is 19 per cent, 21 per cent and 21 per cent respectively. These rates are high as compared to the overall unemployment rate of wealthier areas such as Marble Hill (3.9 per cent), Coolidge (2.53 per cent) and Paradise View (6.67 per cent). The unemployment rate as of 2007 was estimated at approximately 4 per cent (CDBa 2007a). Moreover, visible drug dealers, domestic violence, prostitution and teenage pregnancy have all been associated with this area (see for example CDB 2007b).

**Figure 9: Gray's Farm, Antigua and Barbuda**



SOURCE: Google Maps

According to RPF statistics for the period between 2008 and 2010, 25 per cent of all homicides occurred in the Gray's Farm area. Additionally, with the exception of the rest of the parish of St. John's, which covers a much larger area, Gray's Farm and its surrounding area is the site of most rapes and robberies.

## Summary

In this chapter I used recorded police data for the 40 year period between 1970 and 2010 as well as secondary research in an attempt to establish some empirical account



of crime in Antigua and Barbuda. Although recorded police data is more a reflection of the crimes reported to the police than a precise measure of the crime that actually occurs in the country, such data is the best information available to provide a basic sense of what we think we know about the overall scale of crime, the relative incidence of different types of offences, trends in crime over time, and its geographical distribution. From this analysis it appears that unlike other parts of the Caribbean, property crime reports still comprise the vast majority of crimes recorded by the police and both violent crime and property crime reports were declining as of 2010. Additionally, despite assertions to the contrary, the overall rate of violent crime reports in Antigua and Barbuda has remained relatively stable from 1970 to 2010. However, although the overall rate of violent crime has remained stable, the nature of violent crime has changed. That is, homicide and robbery seem to be trending upward as wounding trends downward. Moreover, from all accounts violent crime is more frequently occurring in public spaces now involving tourists and firearms. In this chapter I also provided a description of Antigua and Barbuda's socio-political environment in order to contextualise the crime data. Finally, I supplemented the empirical findings with information from semi-structured interviews with key civil servants, as well as data from government agencies. This chapter serves as the empirical basis on which the claims made by members of the public and the news media will be assessed. The following chapter is the first of three chapters that report the public and news media perceptions of Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

*'I totally disagree...the reason I don't agree right, is because of this, Antigua is a very small society. We're not big enough in terms of land space and numbers to have an underclass that is marginalized. Education is free to everybody in Antigua. It's free to everybody in Antigua. And regardless to where you originated, you can move. Antigua is one of the few Caribbean societies in which our Prime Minister comes from Gray's Farm and lives in Gray's Farm. If that is not the power of education then what is it?'*



*'...up until the maybe mid 80s the um, rural areas in particular were more settled and people tended to know one another and people used to look out for their neighbours and so you basically could have left your doors open and go and ask your neighbour to look out. But there has been a transformation um, in these communities because of the influx of non- nationals and these non-nationals are not just coming in and settling permanently in the communities they, well should I say they're transient – they're mobile when they come in. So they move, they may come to Jennings and they go elsewhere. And so people are much more um, people tend not to know each other that well or relate to each other as a sense of community which we had in the 60s, 70s and early 80s and so it presents, I believe, more opportunities for crime'.*

### Introduction

This chapter is the first of three chapters that reveals how the news media and members of the public describe and discuss crime and criminal justice policy. More specifically, this chapter explores how newspaper articles and participants in the peer group discussions articulate the connection between social conditions and crime. The data show that while neither the newspaper articles nor the peer group participants fully embrace the notion that crime stems from such structural impediments as poverty, unemployment and class discrimination, they are more likely to assert that crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community.

Informed by a Mertonian understanding of anomie and strain theory as well as The Chicago School's disorganisation theory and Hirschi's theory of social control, this chapter is divided into two sections organised around two distinct frames – section I focuses on Blocked Opportunities and section II focuses on Social Breakdown. In section I I will articulate the various components of the Blocked Opportunities frame, discuss their theoretical underpinnings and report the frequency with which these components were found in newspaper articles. Additionally, I will describe the reactions to the Blocked Opportunities frame by participants in the peer group discussions by describing the supportive and rebuttal arguments. Similarly, in section II I will focus on the Social Breakdown frame articulating the various components of

the frame along with their theoretical underpinnings. Additionally, I will report the frequency with which the components of the frame were found in newspaper articles as well as peer group discussion participant reactions to the frame. Lastly, in section III I will summarise the findings of the two frames and discuss their implications.

## I

### **Blocked Opportunities**

Although Émile Durkheim is credited with the birth of anomie theory, it is Robert K. Merton's reformulation of anomie that is most applicable to the crime discourse in Antigua and Barbuda. In his 1938 essay 'Social Structure and Anomie' and 1957 classic *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Merton redefines anomie as a structural disjunction between culturally prescribed goals and socially prescribed means of attaining those goals. The thrust of Merton's argument is that anomie ensues when wealth and material gain are communicated to all members of society as cultural symbols of success yet legitimate opportunities to achieve these goals are not available to everyone. Put differently,

the cultural demands made on persons...are incompatible. On the one hand, they are asked to orient their conduct towards the prospect of accumulating wealth, and on the other, they are largely denied effective opportunities to do so institutionally (Merton 1938: 679).

The consequence of this structural disjunction, according to Merton (1938), is a 'definite pressure,' or what he (1968) and subsequent theorists would later characterise as 'strain', exerted upon persons in the society (see for example Agnew 1992). To adjust to this pressure or strain, persons employ one of five possible 'modes of adjustment' (Merton 1938: 676). These modes of adjustment include *conformity*, which occurs when individuals both embrace conventional social goals and have the means to attain them, *ritualism*, which occurs when individuals have acquired the tools to accumulate wealth but reject established cultural goals, *rebellion*, which occurs when individuals substitute an alternative set of goals and means for conventional ones, *innovation* and *retreatism*. Only the latter two modes of adjustment – *innovation* and *retreatism* – however, are closely associated with criminal behaviour and thus germane to the crime discourse in Antigua and Barbuda.

*Innovation* occurs when an individual has subscribed to the virtues of achieving wealth and material gain without equally internalising the institutional

norms governing the means for their attainment. As such, in a society that places a high premium on these goals and social ascent, when legitimate channels of vertical mobility are closed or narrowed, the individual logically responds by employing illegitimate or illegal means to achieve them. American gangster Al Capone is Merton's quintessential innovator as Capone 'represents the triumph of amoral intelligence over morally prescribed "failure..." as (1938: 679). *Retreatism* on the other hand is an escape mechanism that allows individuals to be 'in the society but not of it'. Retreatists reject both the culturally defined markers of success and the means for their attainment. Unable to succeed through socially approved institutional norms and unwilling or unable to employ one of the other five modes of adjustment, the retreatist simply 'drops out' of society. Those who employ this mode of adjustment typically include 'psychotics, psychoneurotics, chronic autists, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps, chronic drunkards and drug addicts' (Merton 1938: 677). It is the drug addiction that is most closely associate with criminal behaviour.

Building on Merton's work, Robert Agnew's general strain theory offers a more general explanation of criminal activity (Siegel 2011). For example, Agnew (1992) argues that strain may result not only from the failure to achieve positively valued goals but also from the failure to achieve legitimate expectations and the failure to achieve an equitable outcome. According to Agnew, the frustration and disappointment that an individual may feel when he or she is somehow blocked from achieving the goals of wealth and material gain may be the same or even greater if that individual's past experience or knowledge of similarly situated persons suggests that he or she should have achieved those goals. Similarly, the frustration and disappointment may be the same or greater if an individual fails to achieve wealth and material gain and also feels that his or her failure is unfair or unjust. Additionally, Agnew more precisely specifies the relationship between strain and delinquency by pointing out that strain is likely to have a cumulative effect on delinquency after a certain threshold level is reached (Agnew 1992)

Although Merton developed his theories with particular regard to the United States and did not assume that they automatically applied elsewhere, general strain theory and anomie are critical to understanding the message of the Blocked Opportunities frame that is identified in Antigua and Barbuda's news media and public crime discourse because the frame posits that crime stems from such strains as poverty, unemployment, poor education, bad housing and class discrimination. And, like Merton's quintessential innovator, youth from economically depressed areas such

as Gray's Farm and Point turn to crime when they are constrained in their opportunities for legitimate work. In keeping with this line of thinking, the solution lies in creating more opportunities for disadvantaged young people. Of all six crime frames, *Blocked Opportunities* is the most heavily contested although the public discourse reflects more nuanced understandings and is more supportive than the newspaper discourse. The remainder of this section will discuss these findings in greater depth.

### ***Blocked Opportunities in the News***

Components of the Blocked Opportunities frame appear in only 7.4 per cent of the 68 newspaper articles included in this study. Where the Blocked Opportunities frame is evident none of the articles explicitly argue that crime stems from poverty unemployment, poor education, bad housing or class discrimination. Rather, these articles draw on the frame in order to reject its fundamental premise. For example, in a 1995 court news report entitled 'Commentary on Crimes of Violence' the writer laments:

We are advised and are alarmed that even in the nation's best schools, pupils from privileged backgrounds are turning up armed with handguns, knives and ice picks at the ready, to do serious injury to their schoolmates and the wider public at the slightest provocation and sometimes without any provocation at all (*The Daily Observer* 2/23/1995: 7)

Similarly, in a 2000 editorial entitled 'Courts Should Impose Appropriate Sanctions' a judge adjudicating a case is quoted as telling a young first-time offender, '[y]ou come from a good home, a good background. You are supposed to set a good example...' (*The Daily Observer* 2/28/2000: 2) And, in a 2006 front page article entitled 'Gang Members Tell Tales,' reporter Nasheta Richards quotes an anonymous female gang member pondering the involvement of certain other female gang members in an illegal prostitution ring saying, 'some of [the girls] from private schools don't even need the money, cause their parents have plenty' (*The Daily Observer* 2/13/2006: 1). Although the surprise that is articulated in each of these examples suggests an underlying assumption that criminal behaviour is the domain of those who do not have access to the best schools, are not from privileged backgrounds and are not from 'good homes', it is an assumption that is directly being challenged.

Components of the Blocked Opportunities frame are explicitly refuted in only one article. A 1998 editorial entitled 'Stemming the Rising Tide' suggests that crime

is divorced from poverty and other social conditions because ‘in bygone days...without affluence, nay, even amid excruciating poverty and oppression, children were raised to become decent and law-abiding citizens of the land’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/10/1998: 2). Here, the editorial writer appears to argue that there is not a causal relationship between poverty, oppression and crime. This is a common retort that Merton (1938) himself addresses in his argument that poverty and limited opportunities alone are not sufficient to induce high rates of criminal behaviour. Similarly, in discussing the validity of strain theory, scholars such as Reiner (2012) and Braithwaite (1979) acknowledge that the relationship between economic deprivation and crime is complex and cannot be reduced to a simple causal formulation. This rebuttal argument, which is prevalent throughout the peer group discussions, highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between crime and poverty. In the analysis below, before I address the rebuttal argument, I will consider the overall performance of Blocked Opportunities in the peer group discussions and then focus on the few supportive arguments that emerged in discussing the frame.

### ***Blocked Opportunities in Peer Group Discussions***

In all ten peer group discussions, the overall performance of the Blocked Opportunities frame is relatively weak. In half of the peer group discussions there is a ‘mixed’ reaction to the Blocked Opportunities frame, meaning that in these discussions, at least one group member articulates a cogent position contrary to the other group members when discussing the merits of the frame. In the remaining half, there is a ‘weak’ reaction to the Blocked Opportunities frame. In these discussions there is unanimous rejection of the frame. None of the peer group discussions gave ‘strong’, or unanimous, support for the idea that crime stems from poverty, unemployment, poor education, bad housing and class discrimination or that young people from places like Gray’s Farm and Point turn to crime when they do not see any opportunity for legitimate work.

### **Supportive Arguments**

In the peer group discussions where at least one participant articulates a cogent position in favour of the Blocked Opportunities frame, they do so by making one of three arguments: crime is born of necessity, stressful life events have a cumulative effect on a person pushing him or her towards deviance or accumulation of wealth and material gain are so important that they must be attained by any means necessary

irrespective of whether the means is legal. In the analysis below each of these arguments are discussed in turn.

***Supportive Argument 1: Crime is Born of Necessity***

The implicit association between crime and socioeconomic conditions appears in four out of five peer group discussions in which at least one participant supports the Blocked Opportunities frame. For example, when asked who they thought were committing the crimes, members of one peer group conveniently called the ‘Redcliffe Street’ discussion group for purposes of this analysis, constructed the offender in clear Mertonian terms:

***Group: Redcliffe Street***

***Participants:***

*Lavern, a Black Guyanese programme officer in her 40s*

*Peaches, a Black Antiguan clerical assistant in her 30s*

*Tia, a Black Antiguan social development practitioner in her 20s*

*Judy, a Black Antiguan security officer in her 30s*

*Janet, a Black Dominican janitor in her 20s*

*Tia:* I think um, we have we have a growing community of people who are I don’t know if they’re desperate I don’t know if they’re drug users or –

*Judy:* They’re desperate, unemployed

*Peaches:* Mainly unemployed people

*Tia:* Some sort of mental illness

*Judy:* They’re frustrated and they don’t know what to do

*Tia:* Some – all kind of combination – yeah – so there’s this kind of frustrated group

*Judy:* They really want – some people really want to play their part in the community and to really work but jobs are really hard to find because of the economic problems. So people are frustrated and they want to survive so then some people just break your house just to get something to eat. And, you know before times people have not been doing these things. If you really find people doing these things it’s like the drug abusers and stuff like that. But, these days, you know people are so desperate to get something to eat they’ll break your house just to get something to eat.

In response to the same question during a peer group discussion that will be referred to herein as the ‘Darkwood Beach’ discussion group, Ronald, a Black Antiguan educator in his 50s, said, ‘I think [it is] the jobless youth...it’s unemployed young people’.

Illustrating this point further is Regine, the only participant in what is referred to herein as the ‘Cedar Valley’ discussion to agree with the Blocked Opportunities frame. Regine makes the case for the connection between deprivation and crime:

***Group: Cedar Valley***

***Participants:***

*Regine, a Black Antiguan banker in her 40s*

*Precious, a Black Antiguan retiree in her 60s*

*Oliveen, a Black Antiguan senior legal secretary in her 30s*

*Toya, a Black Antiguan attorney-at-law in her 50s*

*Regine:* I agree [with the prompt for the Blocked Opportunities frame].

*Precious:* That's kind of hard.

*Facilitator:* You don't agree?

*Oliveen:* Some kids from Gray's Farm and Point – some want to come out of there and make a better life for themselves and a lot of them do.

*Toya:* And many do.

*Regine:* But again, because of their impoverished environment they just don't have a choice. Sometimes they're coming back to maybe the at home prostitution, their parents – their mother – whatever it is gone away since last night, don't return home. So, there is no every day encouragement, you have to go to school or whatever it is – looking about the children properly to go to school. So they're kind of just left on their own and then they form their own habits.

Similarly, Wayne, a Black Antiguan police officer in his 30s who participated in what will be called the 'Longford' discussion group argued:

...Wherever there is poverty, there is always an increase in crime. And where there is underprivileged persons, because once you're marginalized and you feel that everything is against you, you always tend to find some way to be seen and if that's how you will be seen, turn to crime. Now we have, we're human beings and we have certain survival instincts. If they can't survive poverty they'll turn to crime.

In each of these examples, the offender is said to turn to crime as a survival mechanism – to eat, to provide for him or herself and/or his or her family. As Sasson (1995) found, the easiest way to understand this construction of offending is that sometimes crime is simply born of necessity. It is worth noting, however, that this construction of offending is contradicted by most studies conducted in the United States on offender decision-making. For example, Cromwell (2006) has found that crime is not used to meet subsistence needs, instead it is used to fund 'partying'.

***Supportive Argument 2: Stressful Life Events Have a Cumulative Impact on a Person***

As previously discussed, Agnew (1992) expands the parameters of Merton's theory in part by pointing out that strain is likely to have a cumulative effect on delinquency



after a certain threshold level is reached. Quoting Linsky and Strauss (1986: 17), Agnew (1992: 62-63) argues, “it is not so much the unique quality of any single event but the *cumulation* of several stressful events within a relatively short time span” that is consequential’. Alluding to the recent difficulties in the Antiguan and Barbudan economy and alleged exploitation of undocumented immigrants, Jennifer speaks in language reminiscent of Agnew’s general strain theory in the excerpt below:

***Group: Lower Nevis Street***

***Participants:***

*Timothy, a White British missionary in his 50s*

*Malcolm, a Black Antiguan pastor and police officer in his 40s*

*Sam, a Black Antiguan executive director in his 60s*

*Cynthia, a Black Antiguan Nurse in her 50s*

*Renee, a Black Guyanese Nursing Assistant in her 20s*

*Jennifer, a Black Antiguan cashier in her 40s*

*Freida, a Black Dominican domestic in her 50s*

*Shana, a Black Antiguan vendor in her 40s*

*Jennifer:* There are many reasons why people do what they do. And, a lot of us, we tend to look at the criminal and the act that they have committed. We forget those who are behind the scenes who cause these people to commit these criminal acts.

*Facilitator:* Such as who?

*Jennifer:* Such as when a man goes out to work ok, and he works for you months – 3 weeks, 3 months – and 6 months and you don’t pay that man, what are you doing to that person? Right? I know of cases, lots of cases, a lot of cases where these things happens. As a matter of fact, one time I was at work and two guys came in and they were going to shoot up this man, so I asked, why are you going to shoot up the man? Have you stopped to think that when you shoot him you’re going to sit down behind the prison bars for a period of time? And we were able – another guy and I – we were able to calm them down and they went and we told them how they can go and deal with the man, right. But now, if you work for a person and they don’t pay you, there are legal avenues but if you don’t pay a person, how are they going to pay lawyers or whoever to fight a case for them. So, I think this is one of our biggest concerns. When somebody work for you, you pay them if you can’t afford to pay them let them go get job other way. Don’t have people working for you and they have families to feed they have to earn somehow and this is how they take it back and honestly, I have come across a lot of people who are, I mean, really –

*Facilitator:* Are these government workers?

*Jennifer:* Government workers, a lot of the security here in Antigua, I mean these families are going through a lot of crisis

because of the fact they are working and they're not being paid. Government workers, private firm workers, security workers – especially security workers and government. A lot of these people because they are not from here, they come you take them to work and you work them, you lay them off and you take on some more. I mean, all this is not right. And, say one say two, a lot of us are angry but we have to be angry with who? With ourselves and the systems...too, right?

Jennifer constructs the offender as an otherwise law-abiding person who works and works without receiving compensation, cannot support his or her family and finally reaches a breaking point.

### ***Supportive Argument 3: The Ends Justify the Means***

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Merton (1938) redefines anomie as a structural disjunction between culturally prescribed goals and socially prescribed means of attaining those goals. When there is a higher premium on success than there is on the way in which it is attained, some members of society are likely to resort to achieving success by any means necessary. Put simply the ends will always justify the means. In the Darkwood Beach discussion Terrance, a Black Antiguan dental surgeon in his 50s, translates Merton's anomie theory in a real-life way:

Many of the youth are looking in society and realizing that their parents and even some of them who are in their 30s and their 20s went to school with people who were far less able with them in the education system but yet still they walked into an establish business and their people are just riding high on the hog...the other thing too is that these people are living in a different lifestyle altogether seeming to make quarter of the effort of what the average person is doing. And I guess what I'm hinting at here is that we have a very corrupt society. Right, and, a lot of the business men are involved in fraudulent transactions and the drug trade whether it's drugs, whether it's arms, whether it's defrauding the government of its revenue right, and therefore you end up with a class in society that projects serious wealth that really don't patronize the education system and the youth are looking like and saying hey why do I need to go to school when the man up on the hill that has the big house. He didn't knock up his head with no education, he just cut corners. So it's a message that we as a society sending out to the youth, they not looking at the doctor who struggled and did his do and now can come back and buy his vehicle and build his house what have you. They're looking at the classmate of theirs who didn't go anywhere and he's making money hand over fist and he's not even in the league of the doctor he's way ahead of the doctor. So why I need to emulate him? I need to emulate

that big man and that big man is one of the biggest crime lords in the island.

Of those peer group discussions that show support for *Blocked Opportunities*, three out five are infused with talk of anomie, emphasising the premium placed on the cultural symbols of success or the inability to achieve success through socially prescribed means. For example, when asked whether young people from economically depressed areas turn to crime when they do not see any opportunities for legitimate work, Pericles, a Black Antiguan consultant in his 40s, who participated in what will be referred to as the 'Cassada Gardens' discussion group, focuses on the symbols of success:

...to some extent yes but there is emerging a group of young people who are not, could not really fit that description...I think the pressures of society in terms of the way they want to live, they don't see [how] holding a 9-5 job is going to give them the sports car that they want or build them whatever.

Similarly, Terrance from the Darkwood Beach discussion group says:

The thing is, our youngsters – our youth, our young women and young men – are products of the electronic media too, of an instantaneous gratification mind set...and so you know, it is also partly due to the mind-set that there's not a lot of pleasure and happiness and fulfilment in doing the task as opposed to the end product of the task. Right? So, they're focused totally on the reward aspect of it. That instant gratification...

With regard to the socially prescribed means of attaining success, participants make one of three points: (i) that the educational system has failed to serve as an effective vehicle for success, (ii) opportunities do exist but because they are inaccessible or culturally stigmatised they are effectively non-existent or (iii) there is a cultural bias as to what types of opportunities are created. The excerpts below provide examples of each of these three points taken in turn. In the first excerpt Terrance makes the point that the national educational system has failed Antiguan youth.

***Group: Darkwood Beach***

***Participants:***

*Ronald, a Black Antiguan educator in his 50s*

*Toji, a White Antiguan online gaming operator in his 30s*

*Terrance, a Black Antiguan dental surgeon in his 50s*

*Franklin, a Black Antiguan heavy equipment operator in his 20s*

*Arnelle, a Black Antiguan banker in her 50s*

*Terrance:* I think one of the things too, that has happened, is that more and more we're producing young people through a much weaker educational system and therefore they get to a

certain age and they don't have any tools whatsoever and then total frustration sets in and anything can happen there.

*Arnelle:* And poor parenting too.

*Terrance:* ...poor parenting too, but I venture to say that in the 1980s, the late 80s – middle, late 80s – and definitely the 90s, a significant number of our teachers were Guyanese and Jamaicans who were just looking for a job. As a result, they failed our educational system and they failed our youth.

Echoing this sentiment are Heather and Doreen who participated in the Crosbies discussion group:

***Group: Crosbies***

***Participants:***

*Patrick, a Syrian/Lebanese Antiguan retiree in his 60s*

*Indigo, a White Antiguan archivist in her 50s*

*Heather, an Antiguan student in her 20s who racially identifies as 'other'*

*Doreen, a Syrian/Lebanese cake decorator in her 20s*

*Heather:* You have the education then suffering because you don't have proper schoolteachers. You can't pay the schoolteachers. Children are not going to school...

*Doreen:* I'm sure as the crime went up, was around the same time when education in Antigua began to decrease so rapidly... I think that if there was a chart, as measured by CXC results, 'cause I remember Antigua Girls High School, Christ the King, St. Joseph's Academy and Grammar School always used to get recognition from the CXC council board or whatever. And I think if you were to have it on a chart like when crime started to increase, and when education started to go down, it would probably meet around the same time.

An exchange between Jennifer and Malcolm in the 'Lower Nevis Street' discussion group exemplifies the second point, that opportunities do exist but because they are inaccessible or culturally stigmatised they are effectively non-existent:

***Group: Lower Nevis Street***

*Jennifer:* ...we have a lot of outlets where help can be sought. Unfortunately, those who need the help most will not achieve it simply because the way in which it is offered...the person may be interested but does not accept the help because the level is not at the pace to assist that person.

*Malcolm:* I love when you say in terms of the whole aspect of they may not want to readily access it because at times it is put over for those who are dunce. 'They teach you to read'. So right away if I have any reading impediment that I would want to develop, I would not want to attend that class because the notion would be that I am illiterate, right, so

um, the few [opportunities] that are there, that is really what is portrayed.

It is important to understand how this argument differs from a similar argument that we will encounter, which is proffered to challenge the Blocked Opportunities frame. Here, Jennifer and Malcom agree that more opportunities for disadvantaged youth must be created because notwithstanding the fact that certain limited opportunities do exist, these opportunities are effectively non-existent because they are stigmatised and properly presented. This argument differs in its emphasis and orientation from the argument that we will soon see discussion group participants make when they claim opportunities are abundant, but because there may be a cultural stigma attached, people choose not take advantage of them to their detriment. These participants locate the problem within individuals rather than society as they refute the Blocked Opportunities frame by arguing that more opportunities do not need to be created, they just need to be used irrespective of stigma. Before we get to the rebuttal arguments, however, Ronald, from the Darkwood Beach discussion group, makes the final point, that existing opportunities are distributed unequally. Ronald says, ‘...I believe that if we’re living in a just society where people have equal opportunities I think crime would be diminished’. Ronald explains:

...I think given, in any circumstance, I think if you have a youngster and I know a lot of people say youngsters don’t like to work, but philosophically, I mean I have a problem with that. I think there is not equal opportunity in our society and any time you have an unequal system, that lends itself to circumstances where crime [occurs].

For Ronald, certain opportunities simply do not exist and are not created. Malcolm makes this point in the Lower Nevis Street discussion group, as does Franklin in the Darkwood Beach discussion group. Malcolm argues,

[i]f you look at our communities, there is no avenue for [young people] to do...not so much the theoretical but the craft – trade and that sort of think like a polytechnic, we don’t have that. And a lot of times, somebody many not be so good in terms of reading but they are skilled with their hands.

Similarly, Franklin argues that some young people who turn to violence and crime do so because:

...the government, they not assisting them in different ways because some of them don’t want an office job. They want to ride horse, they

want to run, they want to swim. But they don't encourage them because you would swim but you don't get no money for it. But in other Caribbean countries and in the United States, if you swim and you're a good swimmer, you get a lot of money for it 'cause like in St. Kitts horse racing is a big money making thing. In Antigua horse racing, you don't make nothing, it's out of your pocket. So it's the government need to help and assist people with different sports and the youths and come together as one.

Malcolm and Franklin acknowledge a cultural bias towards white-collar employment and opportunities for those who are more inclined toward traditional academic subjects. These participants call for not only more opportunities but for more diverse opportunities. This cultural bias is explored further in the analysis of rebuttal arguments below. In many of the peer group discussions where the frame was rejected, participants claim that opportunities abound, people simply choose not to take advantage of them.

### Rebuttal Arguments

Of all the frames, Blocked Opportunities is the most heavily contested. Participants in half of the peer group discussions unanimously reject the frame and even where the reaction is mixed, the vast majority of participants reject the frame's constituent claims. The remainder of this section is dedicated to the arguments that participants proffer in rebuttal, whether they were in a group that unanimously rejected the frame or a group that had a mixed reaction to it. The first argument discussed is the most prevalent. More than half of all participants argue that there are plenty of opportunities for those less fortunate, including opportunities for them to create their own opportunities. However, participants who make this argument do so in two slightly different ways. The first version of the argument is specific to 'native-born' Antiguan. Some participants argue that many 'native-born' Antiguan engage in a type of 'selective employment' whereby they eschew opportunities that involve manual labour. The second version of the argument applies more generally. Participants making this version of the argument say that some young people – 'native-born' Antiguan as well as immigrants – do not wish to work at all. Even if these young people are able to get a good job, participants claim that they simply will not take it. The remaining arguments made against the Blocked Opportunities frame focus on the frame's explicit connection between crime and poverty. Participants argue, in the same vein as at least one newspaper article, that it is not inevitable that

poverty and deprivation will lead to crime nor is it only young people from economically depressed areas who engage in criminal behaviour.

***Rebuttal Argument 1: If You Look For Opportunities They're There – They Are There***

***Version I***

In *Social Structure and Anomie*, Merton (1938) contends that cultural stigmatisation of manual labour coupled with the prestige of white-collar work can create a strain towards criminality. According to Merton (1938: 67), the low income associated with manual labour cannot compete 'in terms of conventional standards of achievement' with the high income associated with white-collar work. For slightly different reasons, one-third all peer group participants in three of the ten peer group discussions proffered an argument similar to Merton's. According to these participants, the cultural stigmatisation of manual labour coupled with the prestige of white-collar work forces some 'native-born' Antiguan to eschew potentially lucrative opportunities involving manual labour. Unable to gain access to more prestigious jobs, some are said to turn to crime in order to support themselves. For example, in the 'Blue Waters' peer group discussion Lynn describes what she terms 'selective employment' and ultimately explains that selective employment and the stigma associated with manual labour creates a strain towards criminality because those who forego these opportunities, 'still have the same needs as their peers who are earning well and living well – they've gone to school with them'. Here Lynn is expressing similar sentiments consistent with notions of relative deprivation, discussed by such scholars as Reiner (2012). The excerpt below provides additional insight:

***Group: Blue Waters***

***Participants:***

*N'Jaedr, a Black Haitian telecommunications engineer in her 40s*

*Elbee, a Black Antiguan civil engineer in his 60s*

*Lynn, a Black Antiguan public servant in her 60s*

*Mimi, a Black Antiguan retiree in her 60s*

*Bolivar, a Black Antiguan engineer in his 60s*

*Lynn:* There is an issue that I have had for years. It has to do with selective employment. In lots of places, when you don't have a job you take a job that's available until you get what you want. In this country, that is not the case particularly for nationals – for native-born Antiguan. They are not taking certain jobs but other people have come into the country they taken those

jobs and they have progressed beyond the native persons who can't be bothered to take a job. I saw this played out in the gas station business. When I came back from university, by and large gas station attendants were Antiguans. By the time I got back from Barbuda, 4 years later, nearly every person who was selling gas had an accent. It was no longer what Antiguans do.

*Facilitator:* So there is a sentiment that Antiguans just don't pump gas?

*Lynn:* You wouldn't find – and I'm going into some really strange occupations. You wouldn't find Antiguans particularly in the garbage collection business. You won't find them as grave diggers. Nearly all those people – I'm deliberately going to those places – nearly all those people are non-Antiguans who have come, have taken those jobs, and have moved on, progressed very rapidly as a consequence of their seeing opportunities which they can avail themselves of.

*Facilitator:* So you're saying that there are opportunities but people aren't taking advantage of them?

*Bolivar:* It seems to be more a class thing than an economic thing. Let me give you 2 examples. I have a friend whose son wanted to buy some equipment to car wash. I thought it was great because the youngster was a little bit troubled and I thought it was a great idea and his father just couldn't stand the idea. On the other hand, I want you to look at the Santo Domingans<sup>8</sup> in particular who cut grass. You can't tell me they're not getting rich.

*Lynn:* They are – they are!

*Bolivar:* Grass cutting is a lucrative profession, especially when 2 drops of rain come

*Mimi:* And they have their equipment

*Lynn:* Several years ago, I said to my brother who lives abroad, come home and do this, come and make yourself wealthy at home because I saw – remember when Nathaniel came here – helping out? And I realized that I was paying Nathaniel and then we got somebody else and then all of a sudden, the rate just went sky high. And I said to myself, but you know, this thing has money in it. And you think you can tell some parents this is a business you can easily help your son to get into.

*Mimi:* How about garbage collection?

*Bolivar:* Yeah, I must admit, the guy I admired was um, once when [the Prime Minister] had started this thing about young people, and a senior politician's son went to him and said I want a garbage truck and [the Prime Minister] was flabbergasted. What is wrong? It's a

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<sup>8</sup> 'Santo Domingans' is the designation that Antiguans and Barbudans ascribe to anyone from the Dominican Republic ('DR') irrespective of whether the person is actually from DR's capital city, Santo Domingo, or elsewhere in the country.



- business! You see we're not looking at things as business. We're looking at the stigma.
- Lynn:* Remember George and how people laughed with George because he had come home with Solid Waste?
- Bolivar:* Listen, car washing thing, you see all the amount of people gone into it? Power wash?
- Lynn:* I have a cousin who used to tell me, 'by the time I've bathed and cleaned my fingernails, and dressed I'm like everybody else'. So, you know, it's not a big deal. But it's getting that in the psyche of our young people

Lynn's theory of selective employment is shared and expounded upon by younger participants in what will be called the 'Russell's' peer group discussion comprised of members mostly between the ages of 18-29. For example, Ashley, a White Antiguan landscape designer in her 20s says:

Look at me for instance. I own a landscaping company, which could easily employ young very physical Antiguan men by they don't want to do the work. They do not want to do the work so I have a company that has 45 employees, which maybe 38 of them are Jamaican, a couple Dominicans and two Guyanese.

The excerpt below continues to unpack this notion of selective employment. It is interesting to note that despite the stark age difference, participants in the Russell's discussion group articulated similar sentiments to those hold by the Blue Waters discussion group.

***Group: Russell's***

***Participants:***

*Brock, a Black Antiguan human resources manager in his 30s*

*Betty, a Black Antiguan accountant in her 20s*

*Ashley, a White Antiguan landscape designer in her 20s*

*Mary, a White Antiguan environment officer in her 20s*

*Eryn, a Black Antiguan market officer in her 20s*

*Eryn:* They don't want to work period

*Mary:* It's the manual stuff I find

*Ashley:* No, Antiguan are too good to do the work. Any Antiguan I have hired, ok, think about it my starting salary for an employee who cannot read or write or anything, none of that factors into it is \$2300 EC a month.

*Mary:* That's just as good as a secretarial job within the government.

*Ashley:* They get paid \$2300 EC a month. Starting salary with me and they have no reading or writing skills whatsoever you know, they don't even have to... I pay for their work permit for them you know I give them – half of them get free tickets to go back to Jamaica once a year or whatever – I treat my staff really well, too well as [Brock] always tell me but at the same

time, those are the people who want to work. The Jamaicans come here and I agree, Jamaicans in Jamaica don't work. But Jamaicans in Antigua do work.

*Brock:* It's a different class. You can't go to a nice part of Jamaica and expect them to want to do any kind of physical work.

*Betty:* Clearly not, it's like my parents always say too, Antiguan may not work here but they go abroad and then work...

*Eryn:* Maybe it's just like a everybody thing...can't work at home.

*Brock:* Suppose I was out in the field working and then you know Mary and Eryn passing by. Every 2 seconds I'm ducking, you know.

*Betty:* You under the corn tree...

## ***Version II***

Arguing from a slightly different perspective, nine participants in three discussion groups hold the view espoused by John, a participant in the 'Cassada Gardens' peer group discussion who is a Black Antiguan personal/administrative assistant in his 20s. John believes that, 'a lot of [young people], they just don't want no work to do – plain and simple. If you approach them and offer them a job, they don't want work to do'. John argues this point fervently as he explains that:

[y]ouths in the country today even if you were to give them jobs, they don't want no jobs. They just want to sit down – especially [in one rural village] there. You have some guys, between there all they want [to do is] smoke...and you offer them a job, they don't want no job. They prefer to ask for money from you than to work. Even if you can get them a good job, they don't want no job.

In this discussion group, John and Pericles continue to illustrate the point.

### ***Group: Cassada Gardens***

#### ***Participants:***

*Pericles, a Black Antiguan consultant in his 40s*

*Senaa, a Black Antiguan executive secretary in her 50s*

*Dawn, a Black Antiguan district officer in her 30s*

*John, a Black Antiguan personal/administrative assistant in his 20s*

*Facilitator:* So, just so that I'm clear on the point that you are making, you are saying that you don't think that crime comes from the poverty and the unemployment, you think that there are people who could be employed who are not employed. Or don't want to be to be?

*John:* Well I know first hand of people that, you know you get them a job – like you get them a construction job today and [they] get pay Friday, they don't go back to work next week. Serious. They go and squander their money and the other week they don't show up. So sometimes you yourself you don't really want to look jobs for people cuz imagine you recommend a person to someone you know

for a job. They go for one week, two week, get pay then for the other week they don't show up. It makes you look bad.

*Pericles:* There is a fellow I can remember in Gray's Farm and he came to our church and gave a very eloquent testimony of what God has done for him. A fellow, they call him Gargamel...and at one point he was working with public works but he's so prone and he's such a kleptomaniac that he finds himself in prison and it's not because he can't find a job but he still need to fuel you know – because I remember that same Saturday he came to church he got monies from several people in the church but by the same weekend he had stole something from a member of his family and he ended up in jail. And I see him all the time, he's always begging money and so it's not sometimes because – but it's a thing that people as I was indicating earlier want to live beyond their means. I don't know if you'd really want to call that poverty but you know I would want to believe that even though some people are in poverty and they have a job they still engage in criminal activities because you know the expectations of society um are so much and if you want to keep up for example with the young fellas who want to impress the girls and they want to drive a flashy car but they don't have the money. So how else do you come to it. And so that is why I waver in terms of that statement...

Similarly, Mary argues that there are many opportunities:

***Group: Russell's***

*Mary:* There's a lot of opportunities...prime example is English Harbour. When it's in season you go down there to a bar or restaurant and probably 60 per cent of the workers there are illegal. They're all white people off the boats who come and get a job for a few months and then dip out and go again. And for me, I hate that because any Antiguan could do that job and our unemployment rates are high. There are opportunities for I find people without degrees, without formal education...you know you don't need a masters in education to do...

*Ashley:* But then it also comes down to like you have to take your life into your own hands. I only have a high school degree and I own my own company

*Eryn:* I guess we're just grafters

*Mary:* But it's true. If you take opportunities you can take them to the next level

*Ashley:* You have to create them for yourselves. Like you have to create. I believe that everyone has an opportunity to do whatever they want. I mean half of the billionaires in the world came from nothing. Half of them don't have high school degrees half of these millionaires out there. You know. But, they did it. It's just laziness. Laziness on this island is a huge problem

- Brock:* Indisciplined no motivation  
*India:* They need to bring back the bull bud<sup>9</sup>  
*Mary:* I find another problem is the... I find a lot of Antiguan have an expectation. An expectation that they should have because they are Antiguan  
*Brock:* Like they should be given stuff. Because they were spoiled from the ALP [Antigua Labour Party]

In short, Deege, a Black Antiguan participant in the ‘Golden Grove’ discussion group who appears in the epigraph of this chapter, sums up this version of the rebuttal argument as she insists there are other reasons for the crime situation but not lack of opportunity. Deege says, ‘...as an employer I know what I’m talking about employing young people who want a salary and not a job. It’s not because they can’t get a job. They got the job. But it’s not the job they want it’s the money’.

### ***Rebuttal Argument 2: Poverty And Deprivation Do Not Inevitably Lead To Crime***

In the Lower Nevis Street peer group discussion Timothy argues, ‘...it’s not inevitable that people who live in poor areas or have to [attend] poor schools or [have] no work will turn to crime...’ This is the argument that eight participants proffered against the Blocked Opportunities frame. Although this argument was not widely used, the suggestion that crime stems from poverty and deprivation aroused strong feelings. Contextually, this reaction is unsurprising. Given Antigua and Barbuda’s history as an agrarian slave colony and the country’s recent transition to a service economy, much of the growth of the Antiguan and Barbudan middle class has occurred within the past 35 years (see for example de Albuquerque and McElroy 1995). As such, many Antiguan are not that far removed from the experience of living on very little. For example, Sam in the ‘Lower Nevis Street’ peer group discussion makes the argument based on his own personal experience:

I’ve always said this, that we had a community of widespread poverty when I was growing up and yet crime was not prevalent in the community...there was no such thing as criminals in a poor area – I grew up poor. Without food to eat people running around with their shoes, short pants torn up and so on. We didn’t have any crime.

And, although Deege’s views were cross-coded as Social Breakdown because of the shift in cultural attitude that she describes, it is clear that she too decries the

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<sup>9</sup> Bull bud is an Antiguan and Barbudan colloquialism for a whip. The term refers to the stretched sun-dried penis of a cow that is used to hit someone or something.

connection between poverty and crime calling the connection ‘yet another excuse’. Using herself as an example, Deege argues in part that:

Most of us here but by and large most of us come out of the same cramped small circumstances because most of us come from villages. Right? We are one generation away from the village. And the villages – the houses – were small and cramped and your fence was abutting your neighbour’s fence and people were small and whatever...I find that we have given people again another set of excuses. I listen sometimes to the music that comes out of Jamaica and they talk about the down pressed and the sufferer and the people in the – almost as if well, because you born poor. Big deal. Plenty people born poor, right. It doesn’t mean that you have to stay poor. And you can be poor in pocket but not poor in spirit and I think that the spirit that took most of us up and out is what is lacking now...Poverty is a state of mind, yes. It’s not the amount of dollars you have in your pocket. I know there are times when if anybody attack me they would beat me for wasting their time to mug me because I never had enough. But, I was never poor in spirit, never.

Although empirical data casts doubt on Sam’s claim that crime was not prevalent in Antigua and Barbuda in the past, what he and Deege are employing is the theme of what scholars call relative deprivation – it is not poverty per se that causes crime but inequality.

### ***Rebuttal Argument 3: It’s Not Only Kids From Gray’s Farm and Point...***

In constructing the prompt for the Blocked Opportunities frame, I cited Gray’s Farm and Point as examples of two economically depressed areas of the country. I chose these two areas because in my preliminary research they were often associated with crime and I was interested in the reaction of peer group discussion participants to this association. In half of the discussions, 15 participants argue as Lavern argues in the Redcliffe Street discussion group, that it is ‘not only kids from Gray’s Farm and Point. That is stigmatising that community because [those who commit crime] come from all over. They come from Hodges Bay<sup>10</sup> too’. The excerpt below, taken from the peer group discussion conducted in Crosbies, an upper middle class community near Hodges Bay, underscores Lavern’s point:

#### ***Group: Crosbies***

*Facilitator:* You disagree with the idea that crime stems from a lack of opportunity and poverty and that kids from Grays

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<sup>10</sup> Hodges Bay is one of the wealthiest and most exclusive communities in Antigua and Barbuda.

- Farm and Point are the culprits? I believe you said earlier Indigo that it is not just kids from Gray's Farm and Point?
- Indigo:* No it's not. There are kids around the corner who have broken into houses.
- Doreen:* Look at [the ambassador's son]. [That boy] is so spoiled I blame his mother completely.
- Facilitator:* And who is [this person]?
- Doreen:* [The ambassador's son] is the one who went to jail for a year after firing off shots outside the white fete.<sup>11</sup> Even driving he's not supposed to be driving because he's written off over seven cars already. The last one he almost died in. But, he's so accustomed to his mom getting him out of everything because she's the ambassador to Columbia or whatever, you know.

Additionally, participants argue that middle class people commit crimes also but have the resources to either keep the matter quiet or out of the formal criminal justice system. For example, Nadine, a participant in the Golden Grove peer group discussion who is a Black Antiguan trust manager in her 30s warns:

in the general discussion of crime you should not forget the...middle class people who commit those crimes and the depth of their pockets that they can simply...do something to get it out of the way and so nobody knows that their child did something so that those things never crop up in the statistics.

Participants in the Cedar Valley peer group discussion echo this sentiment as Toya says, 'maybe it's what is played up because we don't hear of the crimes that occur in the other areas. And, there are children from upper class who commit more crimes than those persons [Gray's Farm or Point] but you don't hear about it'.

### ***Group: Cedar Valley***

- Toya:* And, it's reported more if that person is from [Gray's Farm or Point] for a couple reasons: when you look at that somebody commits a crime in those areas, they do not have the wherewithal to hire a lawyer. Once you hire a lawyer things get hush a lot of times. Ok, so if it's a well to do person, you might not hear about it. But, obviously if it's a poor person it's what the media is going to play up.
- Precious:* It's something like Black and White crime – it's something like that.
- Toya:* We had a robbery in this neighbourhood.
- Precious:* Nobody heard about that.
- Toya:* You're not going to hear about it. Three houses in here.

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<sup>11</sup> White fete is a popular party held during the carnival season.

*Precious:* Nobody heard about it, exactly.  
*Toya:* And the funny thing is it's the second time it was happening since I was here. The first time I didn't hear about it. And since then my neighbour has been robbed while I in my bed sleeping at 8:30 at night. But do you hear about it?  
*Regine:* Did you put it on the radio?  
*Toya:* No, I most certainly wouldn't.  
*Regine:* Because you are not in the category of the melee.  
*Precious:* And you expect it in Gray's Farm and those places. Only because like you say it's stigma. Yes, that's what it is.  
*Regine:* We just grow up knowing that Gray's Farm and Point are da, da, da – but so many good things come out of there.

In four of the discussion groups, participants explained further that offenders often apprehended in Gray's Farm or Point are not actually from these communities, but seek refuge in the communities because they are more densely populated, the people in the communities tend not to cooperate with police investigations and/or the communities are already stigmatised as 'bad areas'. Moreover, in these discussion groups there was general unease surrounding the implicit definition of crime as street crime. For example, in the Darkwood Beach discussion group Ronald says:

I agree with that but I don't agree with it in totality. I mean, there are different types of crime. A lot of street crime and stuff is specific to what you just mentioned but, there's a lot more crime in Antigua than street crime.

Similarly, in the Longford peer group discussion Jaquel, a Black Antiguan police officer in her 30s asserted:

I agree with the majority of that but as for the named communities, I wouldn't limit it to that, because while we're more focused on violent crime and the crimes that are out there in our faces like break-ins there are a lot of fraud cases, and these are not committed by persons in Gray's Farm...These crimes are committed by persons who are very much highly educated and although its not out there per se, but persons don't pay much attention to it until maybe a business collapse because of – but it's something that is happening on a daily basis.

## II

### **Social Breakdown**

The notion that crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community can be traced back to social ecology and urban mapping research

pioneered by sociologists in the University of Chicago's sociology department (Rock 2012; Williams 2012; Downes and Rock 2011). Comprising what is known as the 'Chicago School,' these sociologists, led by Robert Park, worked from the premise that the city was not just a set of buildings in a particular geographic area but a social organism – a living ecological environment in which the residents of the city and the city's institutions were so inextricably connected that they tended to interact as a whole (Williams 2012). From the 1920s through the 1950s social ecological thinking dominated criminological research as Chicago School sociologists sought to make sense of the city of Chicago's crime problem. In arguably the most influential research during this time, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942; 1969) developed social disorganisation theory, which holds that crime is associated with neither individual pathologies nor poverty but with rapid social change within urban communities. Shaw and McKay argue that in the central areas of a city where there are very rapid shifts in population, residents see themselves as transient and do not take an interest in their surroundings or form bonds with their community. Where contacts are extended, heterogeneous groups mingle, neighbourhoods disappear, and people, deprived of local and family ties, are forced to live under the loose, transient, and impersonal relations that are characteristic of cities, social institutions such as Church, school and family may be weakened. This social change or 'disorganisation' allows for moral dissensus, which in turn allows for criminality (Williams 2012; Wirth 1940, 1931; Downes and Rock 2011).

Over time criminologists would refine social disorganisation theory and expand its parameters. For example, Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls (1997) argue a more nuanced version of social disorganisation theory asserting that it is actually 'collective efficacy,' or social cohesion among neighbours combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good that is associated with reduced violence (Reisig and Cancino 2004). And, Reisig and Cancino (2004) and Osgood and Chambers (2000) argue that both theories – social disorganisation and collective efficacy – can be generalised beyond city settings to nonmetropolitan and rural areas as well. For all of these theorists, treating or severely punishing individual offenders would not remedy a community's crime problem. The solution ought to lie in a bottom-up approach focused on social organisation and community stability. Made famous by Shaw's Chicago Area Project, which consisted of 22 neighbourhood youth centres run and staffed by local residents, this approach is known as 'community crime prevention' (Williams 2012).



Equally, this notion that crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community is also linked to 'social control theory' or 'control theory', a theory advanced by Travis Hirschi (1969: 16), which holds that 'delinquent acts result when the individual's bond to society is weak or broken'. According to this theory all people have the potential to violate the law and modern society presents many opportunities for criminality, however, not all people break the law because internal and external forces control their behaviour. Such forces include attachment and commitment to conventional institutions, individuals and processes (Siegel 2011). Like social disorganisation theory, over time criminologists would refine and build on the core assumptions of control theory.

In his 1989 classic *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*, Braithwaite argues that crime rates are correlated with a community's ability to attach shame to an offender's actions. To the extent that community ties weaken over time, offenders care less and less about how they are perceived by the community and are less and less ashamed of their actions. When offenders are not made to feel shame for their actions, they are not deterred from further offending. Braithwaite's central claim is that:

...shaming affects us most when we are shamed by people who matter to us. It follows that people enmeshed in many interdependent relationships with others are exposed to more sources of effective shaming. (Braithwaite 1993: 12)

Similarly informed by control theory and somewhat linked to the notion of shame, in *Parental Supervision: A Neglected Aspect of Delinquency*, Harriet Wilson (1980) finds that parents who are lax in supervising their children are highly likely to produce delinquents in areas that have high offender rates. Articulating her concept of 'chaperonage' Wilson (1980: 232-233) explains:

In homes where parents exercise supervision it is difficult for children to join in the delinquent activities of their peers as a regular entertainment, even though they may get away with an occasional escapade or they may be tempted to engage in occasional shoplifting. Strictly supervising parents tend to explain their attitude not just in prescriptive terms ('Don't do this and don't do that'), but primarily in terms of critical assessments of other children's behaviour of which they do not approve. In using the technique of labelling other people's children as bad these parents do not just indicate their disapproval of delinquent behaviour, but at the same time they personalise the problem. The child receives two messages: first, that certain forms of behaviour are undesirable, and secondly, that certain boys are not behaving in a manner that would warrant closer acquaintance...The

technique of strict supervision of the younger child turns into self-imposed control; he prefers not to mix with boys whose behaviour he disdains and whose style of life has nothing in common with his own.

In other words, when parents are effective chaperons and provide adequate supervision to their children, they tend to simultaneously transmit acceptable values to their children and may thus prevent their children from offending. Braithwaite and Wilson's arguments build on what Chicago School theorists first argued more than 75 years ago and what social control theorists began arguing almost 50 years ago: with respect to crime, the bonds that community residents have to social institutions as well as those they have to each other matter.

### ***Social Breakdown in the Newspaper***

Components of the Social Breakdown frame appear in slightly more than one-third of the 68 newspaper articles included in this study. In each article, these components are not contested. Writers seem unanimously to support the fundamental premise that crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community. In these articles writers supported the contention that in the past there was less crime because neighbours looked out for one another and parents supervised and disciplined their children. Writers invoke the Social Breakdown frame to propose solutions to the country's crime problem in 19 articles that display the frame while they use it to explain the causes of the crime problem in only eight per cent of these articles. Proposed solutions take three main forms. The first solution, which is advanced in 13 articles, calls for collective action by residents, churches, the police and the public and private sectors. For example, in his letter to the editor John Richards asserts, 'What we need is unity and community effort to fight crime. Ours is a Christian society that requires us to be our brother's keeper' (*The Daily Observer* 2/1/2000: 3). A 2005 editorial asks, '...whose business is it to reverse this trend in our society that makes us cower to criminals and would-be offenders? The resounding answer is all of us (*The Daily Observer* 2/16/2005: 2). Similarly, in a 2006 article entitled 'Gov't to Focus on Preventing Youth Violence' the Prime Minister calls for 'the strengthening of partnerships between the government, the school, the home, the church, community based organisations and the business community' (*The Daily Observer* 2/28/2006: 5). But, notwithstanding this call to collective action, most articles proposing this solution specifically implore parents to get involved. For example, a 2007 editorial entitled 'Time for Tough Love' says:

It is telling that society is complaining, teachers are complaining, and the voices absent in the cacophony are those of the parents. And it's not enough for the parents of the 'good' kids to sit smugly in their corner, thinking that they need not galvanize around the solution. Because the paths of the good kids and the bad kids cross daily, and it is usually the former that bear the scars. Enough of the talk without action...It is time for us to take back this country, and we must do so one home at a time and one village at a time, until we arrest the problem (*The Daily Observer* 2/26/2007: 2)

In calling for schools, churches and families to work together to fight crime, a 1998 editorial places particular emphasis on the need for a 'partnership between parents and children' because '[the editorial staff] believe that family is the strongest and most powerful instrument for social change and therefore appeal to all parents, especially the parents of the young, to review and evaluate the scale of values which they are presently imparting to the young' (*The Daily Observer* 2/10/1998: 2). In another article the then Youth Affairs Minister Winston Williams is described as 'reprimanding' parents when he says, 'adults should grab the bull by the horns and play a more active role parenting their children if they want to effectively address the problem. Government cannot rear your children' (*The Daily Observer* 2/23/2007: 24). Thus, in singling out parents, calls for collective action still seem laden with a fundamental message of personal responsibility and better parenting.

The second proposed solution, which is advanced in only seven articles, calls for interventions that include mentoring, counselling, and various programs aimed at at-risk youth. For example, a 2005 editorial entitled 'Time to Take Our Country Back' argues that:

Youngsters who have a criminal bent, who just won't take warning need to be placed into a programme that takes them into the prison...to spend hours in the penitentiary observing life in confinement and seeing first-hand the fate of the convicted. They need to see how being on lockdown breaks the backs of bullies and street heroes and learn that, contrary to the lore, there is no honour in thug life (*The Daily Observer* 2/16/2005: 2)

Reminiscent of Shaw's Chicago Area Project, another article proposed a range of programmes intended to provide educational support, develop parenting skills, assist with substance abuse and gang prevention, and strengthen community relations with the police force. The article also revealed government plans to open a multi-functional community centre in the heart of one economically depressed community. Sasson

(1995) rightly points out that these interventions all share in common the tacit claim that crime stems from inadequate supervision or a failure of moral integration. While one article called for collective action invoking imagery of more communal living and interdependent village life, the article rejects the need for government programmes designed to provide structure and discipline for at risk youth. The argument is that ‘government does not need to set up a boot camp to discipline wayward youngsters, but rather, that parents need to play a more active role in their children’s lives’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/2/1998: 24).

Consistent with a growing body of literature in the United States that focuses on the importance of faith in rehabilitative interventions, the final proposed solution, which is advanced in only six articles, calls for greater reliance on religion. For example in the 1998 editorial that refutes the claims of the Blocked Opportunities frame, the writer embraces the Social Breakdown frame arguing that:

The churches too must get their act together. They must recapture the ground lost to the influence of television in directing the proper socialisation of children and while their traditional told has been to impart doctrinal faith, they must begin to chart a new course which has as its aim the achievement of social justice. (*The Daily Observer* 2/10/1998: 2)

Similarly, in a 2006 article Nasheta Richards describes the efforts of inter-denominational police group called Cops for Christ and quotes the president as saying, ‘...we feel apart from our duties as police officers, we can do more as Christians...With the prayers of the nation along with support, I believe we can see the best come out of all of our youths’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/8/2006: 5). While this reliance on religion may be thought of as part of a more general call for strengthened partnership with societal institutions, references to religious interventions were coded separately because of the significance of church and religious doctrine in Antigua and Barbudan culture and social life.

In the articles that conjure the Social Breakdown frame to explain the causes of the country’s crime problem all but two do so by comparing contemporary times to a more genteel time of yesteryear where ‘children were raised to become decent and law-abiding citizens of the land’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/2/1998: 2), when ‘police used to do foot patrol and not just be mobile’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/20/2006: 4) and ‘the main causes of death for [young people] would be a vehicular accident or a rare debilitating illness’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/27/2007: 2). In the writers’ historical imaginations, neighbours looked out for one another, the extended family was

paramount, and social institutions were strong. Collectively, the articles paint a dystopian portrait of an Antigua and Barbuda currently in the midst of social crisis. The excerpt below illustrates the point:

It is clear that an alarming plague of social dry rot has set in. The plague is upon our homes and families; it is upon our churches and upon our schools. Indeed, it is upon our Government, which is deemed to be one of the most corrupt in the whole wide world. (*The Daily Observer* 2/10/1998: 2).

Against this dystopian backdrop, writers attribute crime to family breakdown and poor parenting in six articles and to community disintegration and weakening social institutions in four. The perception that family breakdown and poor parenting cause crime is not surprising considering the various calls for parents to get involved in crime fighting efforts by partnering with schools, their children, churches, and government. In one article the Youth Affairs Minister suggests that, ‘the root of the problem stems from the home, and the quicker parents acknowledge this fact, the easier it would be to tackle out of control youth’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/23/2007: 24). The Youth Minister continues to argue:

There are homes within this country, parents who claim to love their children but who can’t remember the last time they had a conversation with their child. There are children who wake up in the morning and don’t see the parent. There are children that can’t tell the last time they sit down at the dinner table with a parent...so the children become the parents, entrepreneurs and breadwinners... we need to go back to it takes a village to raise a child in this country. It don’t take any big set of plans (ibid.).

Likewise, a 2009 letter to the editor entitled ‘It Does Take a Village’ attributes the three fatal shootings during the first two months of that year to the fact that ‘our guardians are failing our children...Parents need to spend more time with their children, steer them in the right path’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/12/2009: 3). With respect to this line of argument, a 2009 editorial aptly summarises the sentiment, ‘While we cannot blame every mother for a son gone wrong, the biblical admonition of training up a child in the way he ought to go and when he is old he will not depart from it, still holds true’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/17/2007: 2).

As we will soon see, many of the arguments made in support of the Social Breakdown frame are echoed in the peer group discussions.

### ***Social Breakdown in the Peer Group Discussions***

The overall performance of the Social Breakdown frame in peer group discussions is strong. Seven of the ten peer group discussions show strong support for the frame as participants unanimously agree with the contention that crime stems from a breakdown in traditional family and traditional community. Across all discussion groups, slightly more than two-thirds of participants endorse this view. In many cases, the enthusiasm that the participants have for the frame is evident in the way they interrupted the facilitator in order to express approval for the frame before the entire frame is read, or by participants chanting, ‘Yes! Yes!’ or similar exclamations of agreement. The favourable reactions to this frame, in other words, are palpably strong. In two discussions there is a mixed reaction to the frame. In these discussions, at least one group member articulates a cogent position contrary to the other group members when discussing the merits of the frame. Participants in only one discussion unanimously reject the Social Breakdown frame and therefore have a weak reaction to it. Attitudes to this frame varied markedly by age, with older participants being much more likely to endorse it than younger participants.

#### **Supportive Arguments**

Like the newspaper articles previously discussed, peer group discussants who favour the Social Breakdown frame present a dystopian view of contemporary Antigua and Barbuda. Contrasting present-day contemporary society to that which they remembered from their childhoods, participants claim that neighbours no longer know the other residents in the community, crime is much more prevalent, parents no longer discipline their children, and people no longer care about their environment. In Antiguan parlance, life in Antigua and Barbuda is not like ‘before time’. The distancing of relations between neighbours was frequently blamed on intra-Caribbean immigration. Although immigration will be addressed in a later frame, the excerpts below illustrate the point:

#### ***Group: Cassada Gardens***

*Pericles:* ...within the – up until they maybe mid 80s the um, rural areas in particular were more settled and people tended to know one another and people used to look out for their neighbours and so you basically could have left your doors open and go and ask your neighbour to look out. But there has been a transformation um, in these communities because of the influx of non-nationals and these non-nationals are not just coming in and settling permanently in the communities

they, well should I say they're transient, they're mobile when they come in. So they move, they may come to Jennings and they go elsewhere. And so people are much more um, people tend not to know each other that well or relate to each other as a sense of community which we had in the 60s 70s and early 80s and so it presents I believe more opportunities for crime.

***Group: Longford***

*Donald:* I agree with [the prompt for the frame]! I agree with that! What I can say, add to that is that we need a more community policing that would also assist. Because as you rightfully say neighbours would look out for neighbours but then again because this population is mixed with all different nationality, you find that persons would come from wherever their respective origin countries with whatever cultures that they have and we find that that is what is happening presently right now in Antigua. Where you might be coming from a bigger country, take for example Guyana where you didn't even know your neighbour. You know and they come and they will continue that same kind of concept here.

In the peer group discussions where at least one participant articulates a cogent position in favour of the Social Breakdown frame, the participants show their support for the frame by arguing either there has been a shift in cultural values, parents are not raising their children as they should or the solution to the country's crime problem lies in collective or community anticrime activism or other types of interventions. In some cases, participants make all of these arguments. The analysis below examines each of these arguments in turn.

***Supportive Argument 1: There Has Been A Shift in Cultural Values Over Time***

Whether it be the waning influence of church or of shame, or a diminishing sense of civic duty, in each of the peer group discussions in which at least one participant supports the Social Breakdown frame, participants argue that there has been a shift in cultural values over time. In language reminiscent of Pearson's (1984) *Hooligan* in the Cassada Gardens peer group discussion Pericles argues, 'people's connection with the church and so forth...those things have broken down so it lends for more anti-social and deviant behaviour'. And, in the Golden Grove discussion group, Deege argues more pointedly:

What I find has changed is that people don't have shame like they used to have shame. Because when I was growing up committing a crime, or a police have you even for questioning – that was big shame

for your family. It didn't just involve you it shamed your whole family...what we used to know as shame no longer is shameful.

Deege's argument is reminiscent of John Braithwaite's work on reintegrative shaming, which was discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Also underlying Pericles and Deege's argument is a sense of increasing individualism – a shift away from interdependence. As Judy, from the Redcliffe Street discussion group explains, '...we're supposed to be helping one another and we are not helping one another'. In each peer group discussion where the frame was favourably discussed, participants express this sentiment:

***Group: Redcliffe Street***

*Lavern:* Why I say agree, I agree because it's a break down in not only the family structure but in terms of let's say the civic community spirit as was rightly said because we don't look out for each other now. And, um, in terms of – I would want to blame it now on technology because we always texting, chatting on the phone or we're on the Internet we have no time to look out. Ok. And we are glued to our television be it whatever it is we're looking at and then we look – if we are going to look at the Antigua context and I guess around the world, Caribbean, you may have the same problem. Whereby the multi-culture – Spanish, Guyanese, Jamaican, so I don't know James, I know this is a James, the James live on this street, the Josephs the Jocks the whoever it is, is no longer there. It's totally different all together.

*Tia:* Yeah, we're more transient. Whereas the families used to live at the same house for 20, 30, 40 years, it's not the same.

*Lavern:* ...today you may see – if you want to be the nosy neighbour – you may see three women, then tomorrow you may see or next week a fourth you don't even know whoever it is. Then you going to see, eh-eh you seeing this guy you didn't see him last week at this house. It's a next one coming. Next thing you know one day you leave for work and when you go home eh-eh she change curtains today. Ok, they doing better than me I ain't change my own [curtains] yet for the year and when you catch yourself, its new neighbours.

*Group:* Yeah that's true.

Participants in the Blue Waters discussion underscore the point:

***Group: Blue Waters***

*Bolivar:* Well I must admit, Elbee, I would say this, because this one really comes out and it hurts. [Our neighbour] has a – can I say son-in-law? Alexa's boyfriend. Alexa boyfriend, I



- mean, we're there and Alexa's boyfriend never says 'hello'. Never. You come into a community. I think it's rude.
- Elbee:* It's a modern thing. I may find myself pass people sometimes and it's only when they say, 'What happened, you can't say howdy?' I say, 'Oh Lord, excuse me, my mind was far,' because it's not something I normally do.
- Mimi:* He's a stranger on the block
- Bolivar:* No, but you never went to a community before and didn't try to be polite to the people who were there.

Each of these participants suggests that the type of interdependent relationships that are thought to reduce the likelihood of offending are now fragmented in Antiguan and Barbudan communities in ways they once were.

Interestingly, two peer group discussions made a more nuanced argument with respect to this shift towards individualism. In ways that Sampson et al. (1997) refined the work of earlier social disorganisation theorists by arguing from a perspective of collective efficacy, participants in these two groups presented more refined arguments than those in other groups. For these participants, the key difference between how Antiguan and Barbudans used to live and how they now live is not only interdependence and social cohesion among neighbours but neighbours' willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good. These participants imagine Antigua and Barbuda as having been a low crime society in the past because in Braithwaite's (1989: 8) terms it was a society 'where people [did] not mind their own business, where tolerance of deviance [had] definite limits...' These two groups point to child rearing to make their point. Consider first an exchange in the Blue Waters discussion and then an exchange in the Cedar Valley discussion group:

***Group: Blue Waters***

[responding to the frame's prompt]

- Elbee:* We agree, we agree. Strongly. I mean the neighbour could cut your – the neighbour could give you licks. And if you go home and complain you get more licks.
- Bolivar:* If you go home and complain that an elderly person hit you for some reason, your parents just assume it's something you did wrong and they put on theirs too. Now what you have, if a teacher scolds a child, the parent wants to beat up the teacher.
- Lynn:* As a matter of fact, we had a code in my house, my mother said if you did anything, make sure you come home and tell me about it first.
- Elbee:* I don't know if we can get back to that you know – that has gone forever.

*Bolivar:* I don't know – I think it has gone too.

***Group: Cedar Valley***

[responding to the frame's prompt]

*Precious:* True. That's a true statement.

*Toya:* I believe that.

*Regine:* Yeah, but we all endorse that but yet still we don't do it. No, because I remember the days when...the neighbour would discipline me for something because...but now. People are saying, 'Not me pickney'<sup>12</sup>, yet still we wish those days would come back so we're not practicing what we preach.

*Toya:* You know that saying it takes a village? We no longer believe in that. We really don't...It's just because the population is so diverse now you know. We don't know our neighbours anymore because it's itinerant. Because the neighbours come and go. Before you lived in a neighbourhood like, ok take for instance where Regine lives. Regine could tell you everybody in her neighbourhood and we could tell you in Ottos everybody.

*Precious:* And we could in Ottos. Oh yeah, we could.

*Regine:* Not anymore.

In the past childrearing was the responsibility of the entire community. The most common referent in these discussions is the African adage, 'it takes a village to raise a child' Neighbours had the authority to intervene and discipline each other's child. The views expressed in the excerpts identify childrearing as no longer being a community responsibility but a purely individual one. Neighbours no longer intervene on behalf of the common good – they now mind their own business.

***Supportive Argument 2: Parents Are Not Raising Their Children As They Should***

In the discussion groups where there was partial or full support for the Social Breakdown frame, participants argued that crime resulted from parents inadequately supervising, disciplining and instilling proper values in their children. For example, in the Lower Nevis Street discussion, Cynthia says:

For me, I think lack of parental control causes undisciplined children and then into society causes a lot of crime. Before times we had parents who used to be at home with their children now we have parents going out and children are left unattended. TV playing the role of parents and now the television, things that they see on the television are not the things that are helping our children what they see is what they learn. Our values are not instilled in them.

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<sup>12</sup> In Antiguan dialect, pickney means child.

The nexus between crime and negligent parenting that Cynthia articulates is rooted in social control theory. More specifically, Cynthia's insights are reminiscent of parental efficacy, a contribution to control theory that argues that effective parenting can help neutralise the effect of both individual and social forces that promote delinquent behaviour (Siegel 2012). With respect to this particular argument, there is not a noticeable age difference among the participants making the claim. In the Russell's discussion where all the participants are under the age of 40 and all but one are between the ages of 18 and 29, Betty says:

Kids are having kids nowadays too and the parents just seem to be wutless.<sup>13</sup> There needs to be an application to have kids it seems nowadays because people are just being wutless – you know it's kids having kids.

The group elaborates further in the conversation:

***Group: Russell's***

*Ashley:* Children need some bull bud on them. I'm joking no, when you look at young mothers, I think it goes back to what we were talking about, pregnancy and like young mothers and the increase in pregnancy, I mean they're so young themselves they're like what 14, 15 years old some of them.

*Betty:* They can't even take care of themselves

*Mary:* There is a girl in my office who turned 28 today and who has 5 kids, single mother.

*Ashley:* Yeah, so how does she possibly – she's still a kid herself when she had her first kid. How is she going to possibly instil discipline when she was probably some rude little skettel<sup>14</sup> running around the place doing what she does.

*Eryn:* Exactly. They are so young trying to live their lives that they don't have time to you know take care of the kids, or watch what their kids are doing they're probably working anyway....

*Ashley:* And some of them are working two jobs. I have staff that work for me like females that work for me from 7:00am 'til 3:00pm and then go to a security job from 5:00pm to 1:00 in the morning. So when are you with your kid when that is happening? But they have to do it. They have to do it. They have to do it. And I know that some of them are single mothers but they have to do it because how else are they going to ... my salary is obviously not enough to support four children and she's the sole provider in the family so you have to take a second job but that happens anywhere else in the world too for single mothers.

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<sup>13</sup> Wutless in Antiguan dialect means 'good for nothing' or worthless

<sup>14</sup> Skettel in Antiguan dialect means a woman with loose morals, roughly synonymous with a whore

Similarly, Doreen, who is also between the ages of 18 and 29 and participated in the Crosbies discussion group, suggests that parents are not transmitting correct values to children, in part because they are young themselves:

But then you also have these young people who are having all these young kids too... I don't know if it's just a different kind of concept now, the whole child, baby having or whatever but you see all these kids hanging around grownups and the grownups like they don't even care what they're doing in front of them. I mean I know even like something simple like smoking weed in front of their children, I personally think is wrong. You know? And listening to certain things watching certain things doing certain things in front of them. And saying certain things. I mean yeah, I used to hear daddy and mommy cuss when I was a child all the time. But I also knew that if I repeated it I was going to get my tail cut. And that's not the case now. But you know, even simple things like carnival time. I think it's wrong to see these young kids in Lions.<sup>15</sup> It's appalling to me when I see a woman working<sup>16</sup> with her little child – boy child saying, 'Oh, they nuh have to let me in' and lifting up her little boy child to grind up a woman on her bottom. I think it's disgusting. That to me is child abuse. To me that's disgusting. Or to see your children be more vulgar than I see most adults and the young mothers or even the older mothers to say, 'Yes man show them how it's done'. And that's where I feel a lot rape too comes in because they don't understand the concept too that that is maybe not the nicest thing or nicest way to behave.

In the Blue Waters discussion group where all the participants are over the age of 40 and all but one are between the ages of 60 and 69, Lynn says:

What I have found is that the whole concept of passing values onto children has changed. It has changed – I think parents used to verbalize dreams for children – help their children to establish things they want out of life, encourage them to set goals and that sort of thing and I'm not so sure that this is a big conversation piece...[because] I think by and large most of the parents are really very young – haven't had that passed on to them and therefore haven't been able to hold that conversation easily.

In response to Lynn in this group, Elbee replies, 'Could be wrong but I think nowadays more single mothers, women, have at least two jobs and don't have as much time with the children'.

In all but two of the peer group discussions in which participants argue that parents are not adequately supervising and disciplining their children, participants attempt to explain this lax parenting by pointing to what they perceive as an increase in young girls having children and/or the increased need for single mothers to hold

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<sup>15</sup> Lions is popular venue for nighttime parties during the annual carnival festival.

<sup>16</sup> Working in this context means dancing

more than one job. The excerpts above illustrate both of these arguments. In the Blue Waters discussion group, Lynn draws on her professional experience to support the latter claim:

I'm going to give you a real example of something that has happened. When I worked in the ministry of education I used to supervise secondary schools. And you know I'd come across a whole lot of different issues with the young people but this particular one. I had gone to one of the schools in the country and the teachers were very concerned about a particular young man. His grades used to be good and things like that but... anyway, his mother decided to take on two jobs so he was one of the first young men in his school to have one of these computer games and to have a little computer and stuff like that. So he had all these little things that she was going around and buying and presenting him with. But when he got up in the morning, she wasn't there, because she worked the night. So before he left he would put the kettle on knowing that when he left for school and turned off the stove, within 5 minutes of his leaving she would be arriving and so she would get a hot cup of tea as soon as she would have arrived. When he got home, his food was hot because she would have literally done the same thing. She would have prepared his meal and she'd be gone. So he never saw her. She was doing two jobs and that was the sort of ships passing in the night situation. And he got very angry with his mother but never said anything and was as he said angry with himself for not having the courage to say anything to his mother. So his grades started falling and nobody could find out why. So after he told me about it I said what time does your mother come home? And he told me well she get's a break at about 4:00 and um, he would be home by then but she was just coming home to change to go off to the night work. And I said to him, he lived in Parham and I said boy, I am coming with you. So I drove over to Parham, he showed me where he lived and the afternoon I went out there and waited with him for her to come. And when she came I said your son has something to say to you. And I told him I would come and wait so that he can talk to you. And when he told her she bawled. Within two weeks she had one job but she had a son who began to pick himself up and move. That conversation isn't happening. Children are hurting and then they take that anger out on other people.

Lynn's comments are enlightening not only because they provide insight into her perceived causes of lax parenting but also because they illustrate a profound point made by Hirschi and other control theorists – children who hurt, hurt others. Using herself as an example, in the Lower Nevis Street discussion Shana underscores this point with a powerful soliloquy:

Can I just say something please? I'm going to use me. When I was a little girl, I used to be very angry. I used to love vengeance a lot because why? My mom used to give us a lot of food but not a lot of clothes. She used to make good money. She saved her money to buy

her property. Now, she never gave us love. My mother used to swear a lot and she used to swear a lot of words at us. So I grew up in that environment and that environment made me more angrier, you know? I have a lot of bitterness inside of me so when I go to school and you pass and you mash me too hard you better be smiling because I'm going to beat you up real bad and when I say real bad, you gonna get cuts too. I used to walk with a knife because my uniform used to have a little bow belt so you have a little flap over so I used to put the a wha you call the knife – a hatchet knife in here, you going to get that. I used to beat the boys and them so so so...beat them bad. Bad, 'til sometimes they can't even raise their hand to hit me back. Because you know what happen? I never get love so I can't show love. And because of that I was a victim too you understand. And I told myself that when I get a boyfriend and he put his hand on me I'm going to beat him. I used to beat my children's father bad, very very bad...you know I – I carried it for years, even in my neighbourhood people never used to like me is what happened. I used to be a very aggressive person. And when people don't like me I get more power. I don't like you either so I don't care about you. For me, nobody was important except me and my own you understand. Even you know I built a bit of security around my kids. You know they don't talk to – when I say talk to people they can talk to people at school but not at home. They can't go by nobody. I give them everything they want. You understand, that was my protection. You understand? And, it's like if I come home from work, and my child says um, no children not children, I never put it out on children, like the neighbours – a grown person interfere with my children they going to get it. Some way or the other they're going to get it. And you know what make me most angry? If I'm cursing her and she does not respond, oooooh I turn crazy...So I believe it's an individual thing. You know, it's not only for the public, it's not only for the police.

In sharing her thoughts, Shana unknowingly supports Hirschi's claim that family detachment, including intra-family conflict, child abuse, lack of affection and lack of supervision, are predictive of offending and reinforces Van Voorhis et al.'s (1988) conclusion that 'bad homes' place youth at risk. In the Blue Waters group Bolivar makes the same point:

...one thing you'll notice about the guys, one, they're young, relatively young and two, they will rob you get what they want and still turn around and attack you. Now, my take on that is that they are people who don't seem to have any regard for anybody. And, um, when this happens right and you're a victim, you also tend to look at the attacker and sometimes you have to feel for them and I am of the opinion that they are a bunch of young people who have never one, have never been shown any love or maybe I should say first of all they don't know God right, you know, they never grew up in the fear of God and that I think is very important whether you believe in God or not, to have had the fear of God initially in your life. And two I don't think

they have ever been shown love because anybody who I think had experienced love in their life, I don't think after robbing somebody you'd still turn around now and want to attack them. That to me shows a total disregard of human life.

In one peer group discussion participants argued that some parents actually encourage and profit from the misdeeds of their children. Echoing sentiments expressed in 2007 by the Youth Affairs Minister, that '[t]here are parents who depend on their children to support them financially... The fathers allow their sons to sell drugs in this country to support them, and they know where the money is coming from...' (*The Daily Observer* 2/23/2007: 24), participants in the Redcliffe Street argued that not only are parents negligent in raising their children, but are, in some circumstances complicit in the children's wrong doing. In this group Judy argues, 'the children steal and [the parents] love what they getting because it's the money come quickly. Also they encourage them to do it and they even conceal the crime too'.

### ***Supportive Argument 3: Community Solutions Are Needed For Community Problems***

Three of the four discussion groups that advocate community based interventions suggest community programs in the vein of Shaw's Chicago Area Project. The remaining group argues for both this type of community program as well as a coordinated neighbourhood watch. In this latter group the idea of self-help and community led activism is strongest. For participants in this group, it is the community that must band together, work with the police and restore order to their communities.

#### ***Group: Lower Nevis Street***

**Sam:** There is a good need for this neighbourhood watch – for communities to organise themselves you know. And perhaps the institutionalisation of that would help. If government got involved, put social services in place, get the community to organise into cells and so they look out for each other, they talk to each other, you even have meetings once a month to say what they want. Raise alarm.

**Malcolm:** Village council maybe would do that.

**Sam:** We have to really help and work closely with the police to do this. We really need to organize that way – to keep out the criminals.

For Sam, organising the community in this way also allows for the community to make demands on government – there is, he argues, strength in making demands as a

unified group. In a previous exchange, however, Sam's frustration with the country's crime situation is palpable as he admits to having contemplated organising a neighbourhood watch patrol far more radical than that he later proposes. Key to Sam's argument is the fact that one should not be made to feel unsafe or to fear being his or her community.

***Group: Lower Nevis Street***

*Sam:* I was getting a little bit concerned and even spoken to some of my friends in talking and saying, 'Hey we might want to start thinking about vigilante. We go out there, form a group of 10 and so on and we go patrol the streets from 12:00 to 2:00 and anybody found within our neighbourhood who don't belong there, we arrest them we call the police'. We've been talking about doing this in connection with the police. But if you find anybody, any young man, anybody in the community between the time of 12:00 and 4:00 we stop you and you better be read- or we're ready to shoot because we're going to be armed. You know. When we say stop, you stop. It may be you alone or we going to open fire on all 1-2-3 because people beginning to feel scared. You don't feel scared in your community. It's wrong for people to feel scared in their homes. And I say that if the men get together, and form cells, say I go from 2-4, working no less than 4 people, hopefully we get a police to be with us, and we have our stuff and as soon as we see a [inaudible] we code them. We say code 1 – that means a stranger, we're moving in on somebody. The police starts gathering close and when we stop that person, if that person doesn't respond we say all right guy, drop whatever you have, hands up. That's what I was telling you guys, my solution to it. Because I felt that we weren't getting the police protection.

*Malcolm:* That sounds scary. That sounds wild, wild, wild.

*Sam:* Dr. King in his house, he and his wife at home, the guys go in while they're there and you know, another place over in Crosbies, they broke in and these people are scared. And they're shaking...they wonder if guys are going to jump in. These guys try to get in with a ladder on the second floor. The woman, the doctor was raped. How long do you go with that if you don't have any police protection?

*Malcolm:* Yes, we understand that, we understand that.

*Sam:* You know, I was saying to a guy, 'Quit being scared man, let's go out there and meet those guys. You go after –'

*Cynthia:* They're armed too

*Sam:* We know that, that's why we're going armed. And we're going prepared for war... I hope we don't get there...



Participants in three of the four groups that argue for community based interventions observe that young people are idle today in ways they were not idle in the past. For these participants, structured programs with adequate supervision are needed to fill the void left by negligent parents and neighbours who increasingly mind their own business. As Sam says, ‘...we need the authorities to put something in place such that the young people can be attracted to something constructive’. The focus for some participants is the length of the school day for the average young person who attends a government school. This is a popular topic in the country’s public discourse, as many have argued over the years that the school day should extend to at least 3:00pm rather than the current 1:00pm. The excerpt below echoes the call of the editorial:

***Group: Golden Grove***

***Participants:***

*Hulette, a Black Antiguan office administrator in her 60s*

*Nadine, a Black Antiguan trust manager in her 30s*

*Anne, a Black Antiguan information technology professional in her 30s*

*Deege, a Black Antiguan education administrator in her 40s*

*Annette, a Black Antiguan counsellor her 30s*

*Nicola, a Black Antiguan aircraft mechanic in her 40s*

*Neicy, a Black Antiguan producer in her 30s*

*Robyn, a Black Antiguan banker in her 50s*

*Edy, a Black Antiguan human resources consultant in her 60s*

*Edy:* I think we need more social programs

*Annette:* For whom?

*Edy:* for youth.

*Neicy:* I think the programs are there and the youth are not accessing them too.

*Edy:* I think we need to extend the school day.

*Anne:* Specifically for youth? There are too — too many programs specifically for youth.

*Robyn:* I agree with Edy, the extending of the school hours, I agree. And not that I’m thinking that the extending of the school day is purely academic....

*Edy:* I am talking about a holistic program.

*Anne:* I like the no child left behind thing too. For ours, it looked at extending the curriculum to include a lot more trade subjects a lot more curricula activities. Because we used to have curricula activities but your school could just decide this year that they were cancelling it.

*Annette:* I would tend to agree with you all with extending the school day and doing that but what I think the breakdown is especially in secondary schools the teachers are not teaching anymore, they are lecturing.

*Edy:* Well the teachers are not really trained.

- Nadine:* Ok, on the trade part of it, that I think in Antigua it's negative and I think those things need to be... vocational skills, should be it should be ok if a child – a child should get tested earlier and elect to do skills and trade instead of going along an academic path if that is what the child wants.
- Edy:* And I think there should be a national service program here... where they – after they graduate high school or whatever they serve two years in the cadets or something like that...
- Anne:* It doesn't have to be military. It can be military service or social work but something.

Other participants argue for interventions that include adopting a spiritual approach and encouraging young people to attend church and creating sports programs and encouraging them to get more involved in sports.

### Rebuttal Arguments

Notwithstanding the fact that Social Breakdown is one of the least contested frames in this study, a fifth of all participants and one peer group discussion reject various components of the frame.

#### ***Rebuttal Argument 1: Single-Parent Homes Do Not Cause Crime***

In one group where the participants have a mixed reaction to the frame, the main objection is that there is no causal relationship between single-parent households and crime. In the Redcliffe Street discussion Tia is adamant that you cannot 'draw a link between saying for example if a father is not there then this boy is gonna become a criminal you know'. What is interesting about this rebuttal is that it reveals unspoken assumptions as to what the traditional family might mean. At no point does the Social Breakdown prompt define 'traditional family' but Tia, other discussion participants and newspaper writers seem to imagine the 'traditional family' as one with two parents in the house. Although she wholeheartedly agrees with the frame, Lynn in the Blue Waters group realises this tendency and cautions against using a two-parent nuclear family as the default reference point when speaking about the 'traditional family' in a Caribbean context. While Lynn agrees that crime is caused by a breakdown in traditional family, contrary to the 1998 editorial that asserts, 'it can no longer be acceptable, if it ever was, that a child is raised by a single parent, be that parent mother or father of the child...', Lynn argues that, 'the traditional family is an interesting one in this region because the traditional family is usually a single-parent family'. Lynn continues to say of the two-parent nuclear family:

But traditional – that’s the textbook traditional, the biblical traditional. But, the fact of the matter we’re a slavesome society and what you have were parents who um, a father and a mother who in as much as they didn’t live together, respected one another up to a point and by and large the father attempted to support his children, even if he had a million he attempted in some shape or form, whether it is moral support or otherwise he would support his children. And as Elbee would say, the relatives of both sides would look out for the children in one way or the other. Um, those of us who grew up in families where you had that sort of extended family and so on we still get caught in that kind of setting and we love it dearly and we sorry for all the people who don’t have it. But it is not a very common thing to see anymore.

For Lynn, the breakdown of traditional family means not an increase in the prevalence of single mothers but an increase of parental responsibilities falling solely on the shoulders of that single mother. Put differently using Lynn’s words, the breakdown of the traditional family simply refers to the shift that now places ‘the onus of bringing up the child...really on the mother’. Given that she felt the need to make this point, Lynn’s contribution is another example of the unspoken assumption underlying this frame.

For years Caribbean sociologists and anthropologists have been issuing the same warning as Lynn. For example, Christine Barrow, a Caribbean sociologist argues that ‘research and policy on family in the Caribbean got off to a poor start in the post-World War II colonial period, with culturally inappropriate conceptions of what constitutes “a family” and “a conjugal union”’ (Barrow 1996: 458). Judged according to ‘Eurocentered ideals’ Barrow explains that Caribbean families were described as deformed and malfunctioning and constituted a threat to the social order. According to European standards, families were stable units composed of a mother, a father and their children, owned or officially adopted, living together in one household. Conjugal unions were defined as marriages – legally and religiously sanctioned, co-resident, permanent and based on love and togetherness. The man was the head of the household and worked outside of the home and the woman worked within the home raising children, comforting her husband and doing the housework. Caribbean households were described as incomplete and headed by women. Women were thought to have too many children that were left alone while their mothers went out to work. Conjugal unions that did not involve co-habitation or marriage were thought to be temporary with little love, affection or joint activity. Children were described as ‘illegitimate’ and ‘outside’ if they were born out of wedlock or to a parent who was in

another committed relationship. Children were described as being shifted from one home to another. Parents migrated and aging grandmothers were saddled with the responsibility of training and disciplining the children. Boys allegedly grew up without their fathers as male role models. Barrow further explains that the task of colonial officials was to restructure Caribbean families and change the patterns of relationship, 'what existed had to be removed, not understood. Social policy, therefore, along with the Church, the educational system and the law, set about constructing proper families in the Caribbean, in accordance with European ideals' (Barrow 1996: 458). Given Barrow's insights with respect to the colonial re-education effort, it is not surprising that this colonial understanding of the traditional family seems to be the default backdrop of the Social Breakdown frame and the source of the participants' angst with respect thereto.

### ***Rebuttal Argument 2: The Traditional Family and Community Were The Site Of Crime***

Feminists have long argued that because it is hidden and unregulated by its very nature, the private realm of domesticity is where women generally experience some of the more punitive aspects of gender relations that are grounded in domination and a denial of agency. This power dynamic coupled with the lack of governmental intervention and scrutiny allows discrimination, subordination, and violence against women to run rampant because such matters are simply dismissed as 'family matters' or the actions of a 'private entity'. Frances Olsen (1993) argues, that for the 'powerless', the private realm is frequently a sphere not of freedom but of uncertainty and insecurity. Participants in two of the peer group discussions drew on this kind of perspective to challenge the idea that crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and the traditional community. Indeed, for these participants, the traditional family and the traditional community were often the sites of crime and violence. For example in the Golden Grove discussion Edy says:

I think that crime has changed because before there was whole lot of crime going on in the family that nobody talked about. You had a lot of incest, you had a tremendous amount of domestic violence and stuff like that that absolutely nobody talked about. And, so I think it has changed but I don't necessarily agree with that...

Similarly, in the Darkwood Beach discussion Ronald emphatically rejected the dystopian view that life was so much better in the past and crime much less prevalent.

Ronald exclaims, 'I don't believe in the good old days. The good old days to me were horrible when I was growing up here in Antigua. They were absolutely horrible...I think we as a society we were horrible. I saw a lot of exploitation...' Ronald also explains, 'When I grew up here, they had known criminals – them people like Hash Riley and so. I don't know if you know of him. Hash Riley is a guy that used to rape his mother and he lived in my community...' Ronald strengthens his point by saying:

You see, what we're having here in Antigua now with the exception of the foreign element that has come in, and that has come in in the past 10-15 years, but what you're seeing now, we're now reaping what was sown 20 years ago with how men treated their women and had kids and didn't take care of them... I mean, when you look at circumstance now, I don't know who's political persuasion or what but I'm going to say it, when you have leaders in government who are openly consorting with underage women, and getting away with it, bragging and having children with them – breeding them as they say – what do you expect our society to degenerate to?

Both Edy and Ronald suggest that crime is not more prevalent now than it was in the past, it is simply that the type of crime that occurs now is different. Consider Ronald's exchange with the other participants in his group:

***Group: Darkwood Beach***

*Ronald:* That's a tough one because the thing that we're seeing now right, is petty crime increasing. And yes, petty crime can be stopped if what you say is true. But there was a lot of institutional crime. That existed 40 years ago. There were crimes, and I know this to be a fact. There were a lot of crimes against women. When women went for job in business they were coerced into sleeping with the owners and managers and stuff because when I grew up here they used to call it the bruck foot industry. You know that. That was a crime.

*Facilitator:* Can you explain that?

*Arnelle:* The bruck foot?

*Terrence:* Sexual harassment.

*Ronald:* It's like the casting couch in the States. Young women – and another thing that caused crime in Antigua that a lot of people seem to turn a blind eye to, is that a lot of fathers didn't take care of their children 50 years ago.

*Arnelle:* And bruck foot still exist today.

*Ronald:* I don't know why they call it bruck foot but I do know for a fact that a young woman went to get a job and whether you knew the family or not the employer made it a precondition of hiring her that he would have to have sex with her. Before he even hired her.

### ***Rebuttal Argument 3: Family and Community Breakdown Does not Cause Crime***

Eight discussion group participants argue that the frame accurately characterises the conditions of contemporary Antiguan and Barbudan society but those conditions do not cause crime, they merely provide more opportunity for it to flourish. For these participants, crime is caused by some other factor in spite of there being a breakdown in traditional family and community, and they do agree that neighbours banding together with the police may restore order to the communities. Neicy's comments are illustrative:

I disagree with that too. It doesn't stem from the fact that you no longer have that family base, it encourages it. Because we no longer have that family base and we don't have our neighbours' back anymore, we're not our brother's keepers anymore it gives more opportunity for it but I don't know that it stems from that breakdown.

## **III**

### **Summary**

While one-third of the newspaper articles reference components of the Social Breakdown frame, fewer than one in ten refer to components of the Blocked Opportunities frame. This tepid performance is in stark contrast to Social Breakdown's performance in the newspaper discourse where components of the Social Breakdown frame are invoked favourably and uncritically. Writers seem unanimously to support the fundamental premise that crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community. The frame performs even better in the peer group discussions where almost three-quarters of all participants agree with the components of the frame and more than two thirds of all discussion groups unanimously agreed with the frame. With respect to Blocked Opportunities, there are no discussion groups that unanimously agree with the frame. Although peer groups seem more nuanced in their understanding, at times linking family breakdown to economic conditions, in the peer group discussions as in the newspaper discourse Blocked Opportunities has a weak showing.

The most striking difference between the performance of the Blocked Opportunities and Social Breakdown frames is that while participants reject the Blocked Opportunities frame in its entirety, they reject only specific components of the Social Breakdown frame. It seems that the theme of personal responsibility resonate with Antiguan and Barbudans in a fundamental way – in a way that

structural failure does not. Participants seem much less likely to entertain the idea that crime stems from structural conditions such as poverty and marginalisation. In the words of Deege, ‘if you’re born poor big deal – plenty people born poor. It does not mean you have to stay poor’. The emphasis is on one’s individual responsibility to lift him or herself out of poverty. As evidenced in the Social Breakdown discourse, even while calling for collective action and interdependence there is still a strong sense that parents have an obligation to raise their own children. Child rearing is not something that government or the community can do, the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of individual parents. The message of personal responsibility is implied albeit not the personal responsibility of the individual offender. Equally interesting is that many of the components in the Social Breakdown frame could be seen as ‘excuses’ or explanations external to the individual yet, in contrast to *Blocked Opportunities*, they are not seen as such.

In much of the discourse surrounding *Social Breakdown* and *Blocked Opportunities*, intra-Caribbean immigration is prevalent as well as the infiltration of foreign cultural influences. This is most apparent with respect to the Social Breakdown frame where participants talk about community residents as now being transient because many of them are immigrants from Jamaica, Guyana and other Caribbean islands. All of these insights into Antigua and Barbuda’s popular consciousness with respect to crime can have profound political and public policy implications. These implications will be discussed at the end of the study. The next chapter develops the themes of immigration and foreign cultural influences.

## CHAPTER SIX: ALIEN INFLUENCES

*'...Perhaps the crimes are not what we used to hear but at the same token, Antiguan are being led by the Internet, by the television and certain things are creeping into the culture. It wasn't the culture when I was growing up. But, the effect of the Internet and everything that is infiltrating the system wasn't there when I was a kid'.*



*'That's true. True true true...and you know where that was evident? With Lee Malvo<sup>17</sup>...the boy was from Jamaica and when they interviewed his dad in Tivoli Gardens or Trenchtown or whatever...the area that these folks were coming from, and the desperate situation...so, the immigrants that are coming from [Jamaica and Guyana], sad to say are the ones that are the bottom of their society. And, I hate to use that word but that seems to be true. You're not getting people who – the majority of them are not skilled and educated'.*

### Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which newspaper articles and participants in the peer group discussions articulate the relationship between socialisation processes, exposure to various cultures, behavioural norms, and crime. The chapter is a logical extension of the themes presented in the preceding chapter. To the extent that Antigua and Barbuda is not the peaceful close-knit society it once was, newspaper articles and members of the public argue that it is in part because of 'alien influences' or those elements, foreign to Antigua and Barbuda's culture that Antiguan and Barbudans feel are criminogenic. Such influences include Jamaican dancehall music, cable television broadcast from the United States, criminal deportees sent back to Antigua and Barbuda from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, the Internet and immigrants primarily from larger Caribbean countries. In this chapter it becomes clear that a small percentage of newspaper articles and focus group participants tend to blame 'non-nationals'<sup>18</sup> and foreign influences for the country's current crime situation.

Like the chapters immediately preceding and succeeding it, this chapter is organised around two frames and is divided into three distinct sections. Section I focuses on the Foreign Cultural Influences frame, describing the various components of the frame, discussing its theoretical underpinnings, and reporting the frequency with

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<sup>17</sup> This is a reference to Lee Boyd Malvo, the Washington DC 'sniper' who was convicted for murder. Although Malvo is Jamaican, prior to migrating to the United States Malvo and guardian/accomplice, John Allen Muhammed, were living in Antigua and Barbuda.

<sup>18</sup> The term 'non-national' is Antiguan and Barbudan parlance for immigrant or foreigner.



which these components were found in newspaper articles. Reactions to the frame in the peer group discussions will also be considered, paying particular attention to the supportive and rebuttal arguments proffered by the participants. Similarly, section II will focus on the Poor Immigration Control frame articulating the various components of the frame along with their theoretical underpinnings. Section II will also report the prevalence of the components of the frame in newspaper articles as well as the reactions to the frame by participants in the peer group discussions. Lastly, section III will summarise the findings of the two frames and discuss their implications.

While this chapter is similar in style and structure to chapter five, there is one important analytical difference. Unlike the other frames, the Foreign Cultural Influences frame emerged from the data organically or spontaneously. That is, the facilitator did not prompt the frame in any way during the course of the peer group discussions nor did the interview guide contemplate any of the frame's components. It was only after careful analysis of the transcripts of each discussion and discovering nuances in how participants discussed immigration and exposure to other cultures that the frame was constructed and its presence coded.

## I

### **Foreign Cultural Influences**

The Foreign Cultural Influences frame posits that crime stems from exposure to and adoption of cultural elements foreign to Antigua and Barbuda. The discourse surrounding this frame assumes that most of the crimes that occur in Antigua and Barbuda reflect patterns of criminality that are not indigenous to the country. Accordingly, the frame's proposed solution to the country's crime problem lies in protecting the indigenous culture from outside influences that have crept into the society through the perceived Trojan horses of criminal deportees, the Internet, North American television stations broadcast as local cable television, Jamaican dancehall music and immigrants. At face value, there is substantial overlap between this frame and the Social Breakdown frame. For example, television and music were similarly referenced in the crime discourse describing the breakdown of the traditional family and the traditional community. But, what is analytically important about the material coded to the Foreign Cultural Influences frame is the xenophobia in which it tends to be steeped. The argument is not merely that television has had a deleterious effect on Antiguan and Barbudan society, it is that North American television, most notably the

Black Entertainment Television station, has had a deleterious effect on Antiguan and Barbudan society. The argument is not merely that music has had a negative impact on Antiguan and Barbudan youth, it is that Jamaican dancehall music has had a negative impact on Antiguan and Barbudan youth. Likewise, given the discomfort with the ethnic heterogeneity implied by the Poor Immigration Control frame, overlap with the Foreign Cultural Influences frame may appear to exist. Yet, unlike the Poor Immigration Control frame the Foreign Cultural Influences frame does not assert that immigrants are actually committing the crime, rather it asserts that Antiguan and Barbudans are adopting criminogenic elements of the various immigrant cultures now present in the country. Thus, while the Foreign Cultural Influences frame in some ways mirror the arguments of the social disorganisation theorists and strain theorists described in chapter five and referenced in section II, the xenophobic-tinged discourse coded as Foreign Cultural Influences fits more squarely within the ambit of imitation theories advanced by Jean-Gabriel Tarde (1890), Sutherland's (1939) differential association and Sellin's (1938) contributions to culture conflict theory.

Jean-Gabriel Tarde is widely touted as the intellectual forefather of modern learning theory and his work focusing on the social origins of crime has become a mainstay of American criminological thought (Wilson 1954). For Tarde, the criminal is not born but made – one becomes an offender by close association with friends and acquaintances not by any biological predisposition (*see for example* Wilson 1954; Beirne 1987). In *The Laws of Imitation* (1890), Tarde describes the process through which a person becomes an offender as a process of imitation governed by three laws. According to Tarde, the first law of imitation is that persons imitate each other in proportion to the extent to which they live in close contact. In crowds or cities where contact is close and life is active, imitation is most frequent and changes often. In stable groups or in more rural areas where contact is less and life is less active, there is less imitation and little change. The second law of imitation posits that not everyone is worthy of imitation. That is, imitation tends to be unidirectional – from cities to rural areas and from those in a position perceived to be superior to those in a position perceived to be inferior. Lastly, Tarde's third law of imitation, what he calls the law of insertion, posits that when mutually exclusive 'fashions' or frequently imitated phenomena occur simultaneously, one will supplant the other. The example that Tarde gives to illustrate the law of insertion is the way in which guns eventually supplanted knives as the weapon of choice in cases of murder in some jurisdictions (*see* Jones 2013; Wilson 1954).

Influenced by Tarde's theory of imitation, social learning theorist Edwin Sutherland (1939) builds on the notion that persons are not born criminals but become criminals through association with others. Although Sutherland does not focus on imitation per se, he argues that criminal behaviour is learned through 'contacts with procrime values, attitudes and definitions and other patterns of criminal behaviour' (Siegel 2012: 237). For Sutherland, such learning is most effective if these contacts take place within the context of direct personal interaction. Moreover, the result of this learning is not only the skills needed to commit a crime but also the attitudes favourable to delinquency and law breaking (Maguire et al. 2007). While Sutherland acknowledges the possible effects of frequent contact with procrime values and attitudes through television and other forms of media, he argues that such contact is secondary to direct personal interaction (Williams 2012). Thus, as Siegel (2012: 238) explains:

...differential association theory holds that people learn criminal attitudes and behaviour while in their adolescence from close and trusted friends and/or relatives. A criminal career develops if learned antisocial values and behaviours are not at least matched or exceeded by conventional attitudes and behaviours. Criminal behaviour, then, is learned in a process that is similar to learning any other human behaviour.

According to Sutherland (1939), the underlying cause of differential association and thus systematic criminal behaviour is culture conflict (Galliher 1988: 129). Culture conflict, a theory popularised by Thorsten Sellin (1938), posits that each culture sets out its own rules of behaviour and inculcates them in each of its members. These rules of behaviour, or what Sellin terms 'conduct norms', pose little difficulty in an uncomplicated homogenous society but as a society becomes more complex with increased migration, an increased number of cultures and splintering subcultures, the likelihood that conduct norms will remain consistent across all members of society decreases. Where conduct norms with respect to a given situation are inconsistent, conflict ensues. This conflict can take the form of a primary culture conflict or a secondary culture conflict. A primary culture conflict, which is the type of conflict most germane to the crime discourse in Antigua and Barbuda due to high rates of immigration, occurs when there is a clash of two different cultures – usually as a result of colonisation or migration (Jones 2013). The suggestion is as Hayward and Young (2012: 116) argue, 'multiculturalism generates a sense of ineluctable collisions of

[conduct] norms...’ A secondary culture conflict occurs when a single culture splinters into different subcultures, each with its own conduct norms (Jones 2013).

Imitation, differential association and culture conflict are critical to understanding the Foreign Cultural Influences frame that is identified in Antigua and Barbuda’s crime discourse because the frame posits that crime stems from a clash of cultures – from imitating procrime behaviour and/or adapting procrime attitudes that are not indigenous to Antigua and Barbudan culture. Accordingly, the solution lies in protecting Antiguan and Barbudan culture from outside influences that have crept into our society through criminal deportation, American cable television, the Internet, Jamaican dancehall music and immigration. The remainder of this section will examine the prevalence of the Foreign Cultural Influences frame in newspaper articles and participant reactions to this formulation of the problem.

### ***Foreign Cultural Influences in the News***

Components of the Foreign Cultural Influences frame appear in just over 10 per cent of the newspaper articles included in this study. In each article displaying the frame, there is palpable fear that crime has reflected or will reflect patterns of criminality not traditionally associated with Antigua and Barbuda although this claim is not bourn out by any empirical data. For example, in a 1994 newspaper article entitled ‘On Crime and Justice For All’ the author argues that:

The gunshot-wound bodies of three males and one female found dead, bound and gagged on board a deserted 65-foot yacht off the Barbuda coast last Saturday, is joyless evidence that gangland-style international crime has at last beset our shores. Even now, long before the work of combined local and international criminal investigation agencies is far from complete, there can be little doubt in the minds of a down-to-earth local populace that the mass-killings portray a foreign connection. The killings have sent shockwaves throughout this relatively peace-loving community. That is grief enough. But that the crimes should be of international or rather, of a foreign tenor, fills us all with justifiable outrage. (*The Daily Observer* 2/2/1994: 5)

Similarly, a 2007 editorial entitled ‘What’s To Be Done About Crime?’ laments:

For a while last year, when the PM declared a zero tolerance policy and announced his six point plan, many felt a level of comfort which has since significantly eroded and citizens cringe after every report of criminals getting away with their deeds. There is a real fear that soon ordinary citizens might fight back and the spectre of vigilante justice could become a real possibility. As a matter of fact, with so many CARICOM nationals in our midst, where this kind justice is practised, it might be sooner than we think. (*The Daily Observer* 2/27/2007: 2)

None of the newspaper articles displaying the Foreign Cultural Influences frame challenge the underlying premise that exogenous influences are creeping into Antiguan and Barbudan society or that these influences necessarily have a deleterious effect on the society. On the contrary, the newspaper articles displaying this frame take these assumptions for granted. For example, in a 2006 news article entitled 'Probation Now an Option', the Minister of Social Transformation is said to have pointed out that, '...the country is experiencing an increase in criminal activity, much of which could be blamed on deportees from the US (*The Daily Observer* 2/17/2006: 19). One editorial entitled 'Time To Take Our Country Back' asserts uncritically, '[w]e take so many unwanted pages from America's books...' (*The Daily Observer* 2/16/2005: 2) and yet another editorial entitled 'Breakdown In Gun Control' describes criminal deportees from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom as professional criminals 'just itching to make their way in the world utilising the power of the gun' (*The Daily Observer* 2/9/2004: 2). In the analysis below, it is clear that these assumptions carryover to the peer group discussions where they remain unchallenged and form part of the taken for granted knowledge about crime.

### ***Foreign Cultural Influences in Peer Group Discussions***

The overall performance of the Foreign Cultural Influences frame in peer group discussions is strong. Notwithstanding the fact that this frame emerged organically from the analysis, unprompted by the interview guide, no participant refuted the claims made by its proponents. As such, the strength of the Foreign Cultural Influences frame was assessed in light of the number of discussions in which it spontaneously occurred, the enthusiasm that the participants showed when the frame was conjured and the absence of arguments raised in rebuttal. Of the 20 participants who conjure this frame, only four are under the age of 40 suggesting that this frame may be particularly influential among older people, who may be most resistant to change and more protective of what is perceived to 'indigenous' Antiguan and Barbudan 'culture'.

Participants in over three-quarters of the discussion groups drew on the frame by spontaneously lamenting the fact that Antigua and Barbuda is now a 'cosmopolitan' society – 'people from all over the place in Antigua'. In language reminiscent of Thorsten Sellin and his culture conflict theory, these participants argued that with cultural diversity has come a general dilution of Antiguan and Barbudan values and culture. In no discussion did participants make this argument as ardently or

as stridently as the participants in the Cedar Valley discussion group. As part of a conversation triggered by the Poor Immigration Control frame, participants explained:

**Group: Cedar Valley**

**Participants:**

*Regine, a Black Antiguan banker in her 40s*

*Precious, a Black Antiguan retiree in her 60s*

*Oliveen, a Black Antiguan senior legal secretary in her 30s*

*Toya, a Black Antiguan attorney-at-law in her 50s*

*Toya:* Jamaicans and Guyanese, when they walk in, as soon as they walk in, they think Antigua belongs to them.

*Oliveen:* They don't like to see you getting by more than them.

*Regine:* But you know what? I'm going to defend them, our Antiguan allow them to, they even talking like them they dressing like them, they doing all kind of stupidity.

*Toya:* Oh, that's another thing, I mean, Jamaicans especially...you cannot differentiate Antiguan from Jamaicans. All the little boys and so now, they just look and act Jamaican.

*Regine:* We have our Carnival Queen 2008 Tashika Lavan, she's studying in Jamaica.

*Oliveen:* So I hear.

*Regine:* Now, last year, when she was doing some carnival interviews, I wonder, who this woman? She go Jamaica for six months and come back and talk like Jamaicans? She wan kick<sup>19</sup>!

*Oliveen:* You know, Glen has a guy, a young guy selling down there by him. This guy have his hair cut in the Mohawk style. In this tight tight tight pants and this long mouth shoes and this tight tight shirt. Nigel pass and say, 'Yardie<sup>20</sup>, a wha gwan<sup>21</sup>?' Hear he, he look around and say, 'Yow, me a no yardman nuh, a Antiguan me be nuh.<sup>22</sup>' So Nigel say, 'But wait, if you're Antiguan, what make you dress so?'

*Toya:* But no, you can't differentiate because a lot of the young people now are taking up that culture. The girls, the –

*Regine:* Causion<sup>23</sup>! No...we went...to this food fest thing. Music fest? 'Bring a Can and Come' at St. Paul's rectory. Now all the other artists and them come but [Causion] is the one who organized it. So then [Causion] coming on, when he come on me say, 'A Jamaica me dey.<sup>24</sup>

*Toya:* And she asked me, 'A who dat? It's Antiguan? No, Jamaican? I said wait, no no me think he Antiguan you know but me nah certain anymore because –' But, the guy from Antigua. He's an Antiguan but looking at him,

<sup>19</sup> Antiguan parlance for, 'She should be kicked'.

<sup>20</sup> Yardie is a colloquial term used to refer to recent immigrants from Jamaica.

<sup>21</sup> Antiguan parlance for, 'What's going on?'

<sup>22</sup> Antiguan parlance for 'I am not Jamaican, I am Antiguan'.

<sup>23</sup> Causion is a popular Antiguan and Barbudan reggae artist.

<sup>24</sup> Antiguan parlance for 'I am in Jamaica'.

- talking, the way he acts and everything you'd think he's from Jamaica.
- Precious:* But from long time nuh, these people like to act like Jamaicans talk like Jamaicans.
- Toya:* But the Jamaican culture has literally taken over...
- Regine:* We complain but we allow it.
- Toya:* We do.
- Oliveen:* Because I have a problem when we're having carnival, and they give Jamaican license to have a reggae show in Antigua. I have a big problem. I have a problem –
- Regine:* 'Cause you cannot get a calypso show in Jamaica...during their festival.
- Oliveen:* Don't give them any license thank you very much. I have a problem with it.

As the Cedar Valley participants continued to describe the effect they felt other cultures were having on their own, they became visibly upset and grew more and more agitated. The implicit argument seems to be that criminogenic behaviour or law breaking activity is antithetical to Antiguan and Barbudan values and culture, therefore dilution of the culture facilitates crime. References to Causion and Jamaican culture are particularly instructive because many Caribbean people associate Jamaica's high crime rate with Jamaican culture. It is thus plausible that fear of adopting Jamaican culture is in part fear of adopting what is perceived as a criminogenic culture.

Participants in the Golden Grove discussion group addressed more pointedly the type of cultural dissonance expressed in the Cedar Valley discussion group as well as the frustration felt by its participants and others who feel that outside cultural influences have diluted Antigua and Barbuda's own culture. In response to the Poor Immigration Control frame the Golden Grove participants explain:

***Group: Golden Grove***

***Participants:***

*Hulette, a Black Antiguan office administrator in her 60s*

*Nadine, a Black Antiguan trust manager in her 30s*

*Anne, a Black Antiguan information technology professional in her 30s*

*Deege, a Black Antiguan education administrator in her 40s*

*Annette, a Black Antiguan counsellor her 30s*

*Nicola, a Black Antiguan aircraft mechanic in her 40s*

*Neicy, a Black Antiguan producer in her 30s*

*Robyn, a Black Antiguan banker in her 50s*

*Edy, a Black Antiguan human resources consultant in her 60s*

*Deege:* ...I think that because [immigrants] have been socialised probably differently to us, that we see behaviours that we are not familiar with – that we don't agree with – that we

condemn. For instance, I've heard people say, Guyanese people too beg.<sup>25</sup> Right? And, those that I do know, they seem not to be shy at all to ask for anything. I don't know if that is a good thing or a bad.

*Anne:* But, a lot of persons say Antiguan are too proud to ask for anything.

*Deege:* Well, I'd rather have pride than not pride. But again, it's a different socialization so we might see it as a failing whereas maybe they see it as assertive or... maybe they see it as a strength. Yeah. And...my experience with Jamaicans, living in New York, whatever they are, they take it to the extreme. If they are going to be a doctor, they are going to be the best doctor and according to them if they going to be a thief,<sup>26</sup> they're going to be the best damned thief.

[Later in the transcript discussing the same subject:]

*Edy:* Now, I had somebody say to me – come this close to telling me I wasn't born here.

*Anne:* I get that all the time.

*Edy:* And I let them know that I could trace my family roots back here to the 1700s and I ask them if they could do that. But, then I had to step back and ask, 'Why do they feel that way?' and I think it's because they feel that their culture is slowly being taken away from them and that is the reason why you know you find that Antiguan feel that way.

In addition to discussing the increasing heterogeneity of Antiguan and Barbudan society, supporters of the Foreign Cultural Influences frame made two basic arguments with particular regard to crime: deportees returned to Antigua and Barbuda from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom are responsible for Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation, and, as Nadine expressed in the epigraph of this chapter, Antiguan and Barbudans are being led by cable television broadcast from the United States as well as the Internet. Each of these concerns is discussed in the analysis below.

### ***Supportive Argument 1: Deportees are the Cause of the Country's Crime Problem***

Participants in six of the eight discussions that displayed the Foreign Cultural Influences frame blamed criminal deportees returned to Antigua and Barbuda from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom for Antigua and Barbuda's crime problem. For example, in response to the question, 'Who do you think are committing

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<sup>25</sup> The literal translation is 'Guyanese people are always asking for things' but in Antiguan parlance this literal translation does not accurately reflect the connotation. Imbued in the term 'too beg' is a sense of rapacious acquisition. As Elisa Janine Sobo (1993: 94) explains in her book *One Blood: The Jamaican Body*, '...people labelled "too beg" maximise benefits but feel no debts'. Sobo explains that the term connotes a parasitic relationship – the desire for a 'free lunch'. Sobo's explanation fits precisely with the way in which the term is used in Antigua and Barbuda.

<sup>26</sup> Antiguan parlance for 'Thief'.



these crimes?’ Oliveen and Toya, during the Cedar Valley peer group discussion responded, ‘Mainly deportees’. Toya further asserted:

We have a lot of deportees. And you will hear that, not in the media, we wouldn’t know that deportees are here, but you’ll hear it by the wayside and say, ‘Oh, no wonder because certain crimes that have been committed are not germane to our area’. It’s like the hold up with the masks and so... once you hear that you know boy well we say to ourselves, ‘We must have had a couple of deportees who came in lately and are doing these types of crime...’

Similarly, in response to the question: ‘To what extent is crime a problem in Antigua and Barbuda?’ Pericles, from the Cassada Gardens discussion group responds:

...I would like to add another dimension um, although um, it is not, um, been documented um, in the way that I would like to see it. But I believe that the United States policy of um sending back people to their um, country of origin after serving their time also contributes...it means you’re bringing people who are more sophisticated um, in terms of their criminal activities. And some of these people really and truly don’t have the um any really ties to Antigua and Barbuda. I know of a few personally and one in particular in Jennings who when he was introduced to me at the police station I did not even know him. I only know him from his family reference but he had lived out of Antigua for 38 years and he probably would have gone away as a child maybe 5 or younger. And so he has no real roots and then you take them and bring them back here in order for them to adjust, especially when they don’t have family. [They] have to find some way and um, means of surviving.

And, in discussing the Blocked Opportunities frame during the Blue Waters peer group discussion, Elbee argued that the main culprits of Antigua and Barbuda’s crime problem are ‘...locals who were in the States. They come back home but they not working and they have to live and they not going to do certain kind of work’. The participants again bring up the topic of deportees when discussing the Poor Immigration Control frame and in offering solutions to the crime problem:

***Group: Blue Waters***

***Participants:***

*N’Jaedr, a Black Haitian telecommunications engineer in her 40s*

*Elbee, a Black Antiguan civil engineer in his 60s*

*Lynn, a Black Antiguan public servant in her 60s*

*Mimi, a Black Antiguan retiree in her 60s*

*Bolivar, a Black Antiguan engineer in his 60s*

[In response to the Poor Immigration Control frame]

*Bolivar:* ...I feel a lot of the people we're sending back home, the Antiguan –

*Elbee:* I think it's like Antiguan who they send back home from the States and Canada. I think they are the main culprits...

*Bolivar:* They are by far. From the time they started sending them back –

*Lynn:* And they are influencing locals

*Bolivar:* They are very well trained, boy...

[In response to the question: What do we think should be done about crime in the country?]

*Elbee:* Well as far as the deportees are concerned, they should be sending them back with a full CV

*Bolivar:* Elbee, I can't agree with you with sending them back because they didn't learn them things here.

*Elbee:* They are going to deport them, you might as well accept that. You might as well accept it, these things are not going to stop.

*Bolivar:* You see this is where the first world countries have been cruel.

*Elbee:* They are not going to stop.

*N'Jaedr:* Bolivar, they don't tell us when they reach here?

*Elbee:* You see they just put them on a plane and they disappear. They need to come and everybody know and bap, bap, bap, and you hold them, and put them in rehab here – try the rehab 'cause the rehab not going to work with everybody but you have to try.

*Lynn:* Look at my niece Alexa, Alexa went to Canada when she was what 6? How old was Lexi, 6? Just about 6. Alexa is what now, 42? She'll be 42 this year.

*Mimi:* All Alexa know is Canada.

*Lynn:* Exactly. Um, just say that she had done something and they had deported her. Outside of her family, what really would she have in Antigua? And if she doesn't have a receptive family, so she would have had to find maybe a gang or some group of people who will determine whether or not she's easy to fit into their particular culture.

*Bolivar:* And you know what is hard about it too? Many of them are in America legally you know. They have green card you know...they there long enough that they could apply to be citizens so since they haven't done that.... Some of them there from infancy – don't have a clue about this country.

One discussion participant recounts a personal experience as she says:

Um, two years back my daughter and her husband were sitting in the car, and then we have a neighbour there have a garage and he fix cars and so, right at the side of the road. After 7:00pm [they] see a light in the garage. What he doing? Break there and went in there and see a new brand car for the man and strip the car. Take all the amplifiers and whatever and so and walking down the road with the amplifier.

Where this man come from? They deport him from St. Thomas and then he did not have anywhere to sleep. He was sleeping in a old car by the side of the road. He not working, he wants money so he do what he have to do.

Participants in the Longford discussion group quibble with the notion that deportees are actually committing the crime but are unwavering in their belief that deportees are teaching to locals more sophisticated crime techniques. For example, in response to the question, ‘Who do you think are committing these crimes?’ Donald responds:

Persons who live and reside here. Um...persons believe that deportees returning but [deportees], although we don’t have stats to show it, [are not] necessarily involved in these crimes. Some of them, they orchestrate – they mastermind – some of those crimes that are being committed. As I said we don’t really have stats to show it but based on information we would have received.

Donald’s fellow discussion participant, Jaquel, further explains that:

[Deportees] have been teaching others along the organized crime line. Before we would find that one or two persons would basically commit a crime unplanned. But, now the type of crimes we’re seeing you can tell that they plan it. Different individuals are responsible for different parts of the act so one person – let’s say in the case of house breaking – one person would probably be responsible for actually gaining entrance. Maybe another would be responsible for getting into the house. Then in terms of selling the items you have different markets. It’s more organized.

In an excerpt that is cross-coded as Poor Immigration Control, Pericles shares similar sentiments with respect to immigrants. Pericles says:

But when you look at some of the other criminal activity, some of the [non-nationals] are working in tandem with Antiguan. It is quite possible that some of them have taught Antiguan new tricks...what I would strongly agree on, I believe we can put a dent in the crime if we took our immigration laws um, if we took them into serious consideration...in terms of determining who comes to your country.

### ***Supportive Argument 2: Adoption of Foreign Values and Culture is a Cause of Crime***

Participants in five of the eight discussions displaying the Foreign Cultural Influences frame share the concern that Nadine expresses in the epigraph of this chapter, young people are being led by a popular culture that is not their own. With respect to this argument, what all of its supporters have in common is the belief that crime is escalating in Antigua and Barbuda, in part because young people are adopting foreign values and culture. Regine, in the Cedar Valley discussion group says simply, ‘We’re

too Americanized...we're just doing everything [Americans] do and want everything they have'. In the Golden Grove discussion, Deege sums up the basic argument. In refuting the Social Breakdown frame, Deege asserts that with respect to crime:

One of the things that I think we can't underestimate is the influence of other cultures on our culture because I think that the young people listen more to their peers and they're more influenced by music and television – Internet – than they are by what they see around them.

While all participants agree with this core argument, they argue two slightly different points. Some participants suggest a clear causal relationship between the violence depicted in foreign music and television and crime. In terms reminiscent of Gabriel Tarde, these participants claim that Antiguan and Barbudan youth engage in criminal activity because they are mimicking the crime and violence glorified in North American television and Jamaican dancehall music. For example, in the Crosbies peer group discussion, while refuting the Blocked Opportunities frame, Patrick explains that:

I think television has a lot to do with it...it's what they see on the television. All you see on television now is fighting fighting, gunplay, robbing, you know...they think that's the way to go and nobody is there to teach them that it is not the way to go. It's only a movie.

Similarly, in the same peer group discussion, in responding to the question, 'Who do you think are committing these crimes?' Doreen, asserts:

Well, what I think too is that a lot of the foreigners influence a lot of the younger kids. And, I think too a lot of the music that comes out of Jamaica influences the younger ones a lot too. Because listening to like my younger cousin who listens to this Gaza bull crap,<sup>27</sup> you know it's all about – they have no respect for life or no value for life you know so they do things and say things and if you ask them do you really understand what you're saying or not really? Or are you just saying it because it's the Gaza way? You know what I'm saying? And that is aggravating and frustrating.

Later in the discussion in response to the question 'What do you think we should do about crime in Antigua and Barbuda?' Heather explains:

You have the television. You have BET,<sup>28</sup> which is horrendous as well as MTV<sup>29</sup> and things like that coming out, which are what – are what

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<sup>27</sup> Doreen is referring to the infamous feud between two of Jamaica's most popular dancehall music fraternities: Gaza, led by Adijah Palmer most popularly known as Vybez Kartel, and Gully, led by David Brooks, commonly referred to as Mavado. As one Jamaican journalist explains, '[t]he feud between Gaza and Gully has led to many distasteful and violent lyrical exchanges and recently sparked public condemnation in Jamaica when followers, including students, started acting out their criminal messages' (see <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/results/Police-promise-to-address-Gaza-Gully-feud>).

<sup>28</sup> The Black Entertainment Television channel broadcast on Antiguan and Barbudan cable television from the United States.

– is causing the kids – what is teaching the children what to do, what not to do, what’s cool, what’s not...

Other participants make a more subtle point, more akin to arguments put forth by Edwin Sutherland, notwithstanding the fact that Sutherland believed contact with the media to be secondary to direct personal contact. These participants claim that through cable television broadcast from North America, Antiguan and Barbudan youth are in constant contact with a North American value system – a value system that the participants perceive to produce an excess of definitions favourable toward criminality, a value system antithetical to their own. For example, in the Lower Nevis Street discussion group, Cynthia asserts that crime is caused in part by ‘...tv playing the role of parents’. Cynthia further explains, ‘...things that they see on the television are not the things that are helping our children. What they see is what they learn. Our values are not instilled in them’. In other words, Cynthia argues that the negative values and behaviours that Antiguan and Barbudan young people are learning from North American television are not being matched or exceeded by conventional Antiguan and Barbudan attitudes and behaviours (Siegel 2012). Participants argue that one manifestation of this constant contact with North American values is an appetite for material possessions, which Antiguan and Barbudan youth quench by robbing and stealing. In response to the prompt for the Faulty System frame, Terrance from the Darkwood Beach discussion group explains,

Let me just say this though. The thing is our youngsters – our youth, our young women and young men – are products of the electronic media too. [They are] of an instantaneous gratification mind set. Therefore, in many instances frustration sets in and rather than going the long tough route...with their unrealistic expectations, instantaneous expectations, they turn to crime. And so, you know, it is also partly due to the mindset that there’s not a lot of pleasure and happiness and fulfilment in doing the task...So, they’re focused on the reward aspect of it. That instant gratification and I think that’s also a big result of the electronic media.

Participants in the Crosbies discussion group make a similar point:

[In response to the question: What do we think should be done about crime in the Antigua and Barbuda?]

*Doreen:* I would probably propose a lot of things. Ban foreign elements like cable TV.

*Indigo:* That’s a huge factor, because then there are expectations.

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<sup>29</sup> The Music Television channel broadcast on Antiguan and Barbudan cable television from the United States.

*Doreen:* These kids they get get get then they want want want like what they see these kids on tv get and there are also some rude kids on those shows.

## II

### **Poor Immigration Control**

The notion that immigration leads to increased crime rates has its roots in Shaw and McKay's (1942) social disorganisation theory as well as Edwin Sutherland (1934) and Thorsten Sellin's (1938) work on culture conflicts. The notion is also supported, albeit less explicitly, by Merton's (1938) reformulation of anomie theory. Although all three theories have been discussed elsewhere in this study, a very brief explanation as to how each theory relates to immigration in particular is warranted.

Recall from chapter five that social disorganisation theory holds that crime is associated with rapid social change within urban communities. In spaces where there are very rapid shifts in population the by-product is often ethnic heterogeneity, which impedes communication and cooperation among distinct cultural groups (Lee et al. 2001). Moreover, residents in these spaces often see themselves as transient and do not take an interest in their surroundings or form bonds with their community. This community apathy leads to social disorganisation, which is a breeding ground for moral dissensus, which in turn is a breeding ground for criminality (Williams 2012; Wirth 1940, 1931; Downes and Rock 2011). As immigration is a significant driver of this type of social dislocation, many social disorganisation theorists argue that there is a positive relationship between crime and immigration (Reid et al. 2005). While Shaw and McKay (1942) developed their theory with particular regard to city settings, other theorists discussed in chapter five argued that the theory could be generalised beyond city settings to nonmetropolitan and rural areas as well.

Notwithstanding Sellin's (1938) general proposition that conflicts of cultures are inevitable when the norms of one cultural area migrate to or come in contact with another, Sellin (1938) and other culture conflict theorists such as and Sutherland (1947) also suggest that certain types of crime are more prevalent among specific immigrant groups as a result of cultural traditions they bring with them from their home country. Sellin (1938: 68) offers as example the case of a Sicilian-American father's killing of his 16-year-old daughter's seducer. The father, surprised when he is arrested for the killing, claimed that he had 'merely defended his family's honor in a

traditional way'. Similarly, Martinez and Lee (2000: 490) cite a study of Hawaii during the 1920s that revealed that '...Chinese immigrants brought with them traditions of certain types of graft and gambling'.

Chapter five also explains that Merton reformulates anomie as a structural disjunction between culturally prescribed goals and socially prescribed means of attaining these goals. In other words, anomie ensues when wealth and material gain are communicated to all members of society as cultural symbols of success yet legitimate opportunities to achieve these goals are not available to everyone. Although it does so less explicitly, a Mertonian understanding of anomie theory also supports the link between immigration and crime because immigrants, especially new immigrants, are often in positions of relative disadvantage vis-à-vis the native population. Martinez and Lee (2000) point to the fact that scholars have widely acknowledged that new immigrants tend to settle in areas characterised by poverty, substandard housing, poor schools and high crime rates. Accordingly, immigrants may turn to crime in order to overcome blocked economic opportunities. Martinez and Lee (2000) also cite scholars who suggest that previously noncriminal immigrant groups may simply be 'contaminated' by the many criminal opportunities that exist in their neighbourhoods. Thus, these scholars feel that:

...immigrant criminality is more a function of pre-existing structural factors like poverty, a preponderance of young unattached males, or the availability of alcohol than either the biological makeup or cultural traditions of immigrant groups. (489)

As newspaper articles lament the 'unsavoury characters' that migrate to Antigua and Barbuda and cite examples of certain crimes being associated with certain ethnicities; and, as discussion participants support the contention that most of Antigua and Barbuda's crime is committed by non-nationals, traces of social disorganisation theory, culture conflict theory and anomie theory are apparent in Antigua and Barbuda's newspaper and public discourse. In much of this crime discourse, the solution proffered is severe limitation of the number of non-nationals allowed into the country -- especially those from Jamaica and Guyana. The remainder of this section will examine the prevalence of the Poor Immigration Control frame in newspaper articles and peer group discussions.

### ***Poor Immigration Control in the Newspaper***

Components of the Poor Immigration Control frame appear in 7.4 per cent of the newspaper articles included in this study. Each article displaying the frame supports one or more components of the frame's components. Writers appear unanimously to support the fundamental premise that crime stems from poor immigration control. More nuanced than the straightforward argument that increased immigration leads to increased crime, however, the articles suggest that it is the type of immigrant allowed into Antigua and Barbuda that has a negative impact on crime. Most articles make this point explicitly while one article does so implicitly. For example, a 1994 article expresses explicit concern that foreign-born persons of unsavoury character may have been responsible for a murder involving four victims:

It is true that, wittingly or unwittingly, foreign persons of unsavory character from the Caribbean region and beyond have been let into our country and from time to time, have been allowed to rehabilitate themselves, to construct and conduct decent lives for their families and themselves. Even if we have not been exactly enthusiastic about their presence among us, they have been permitted to carry on the business of 'living' provided they conduct themselves with due regard for the law, and respect for our institutions and our countrymen. Such is the nature of our imperfect society. But, even in this imperfect society there can be no solace, no room for foreign mercenaries, murderers, or those found guilty of crimes of moral turpitude. (5)

Similarly, a 1995 editorial decries the presence of immigrants from the United States perceived to be of ill repute:

Today we have in our midst a place called Mafia Hill<sup>30</sup> where the scum of the earth, and the dregs of society reside in cool comfort, safe and secure from the clutches of the United States government and with all the full knowledge and connivance of those who govern us. One of the persons who graced the portals of our 'beloved' Mafia Hill was indicted a few days ago in Philadelphia in the USA. According to the Philadelphia Daily News of February 22, 1995, this resident of Mafia Hill has been indicted on a US\$2 Million fraud charge, dealing with what has been described as an 'advance fees scheme'. In the meantime, the man involved who has a criminal record in the United States, evidenced by criminal file in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, has been given, or is about to be given, a license to carry a firearm in Antigua and Barbuda. There are many respectable citizens in Antigua and Barbuda who have no criminal record but who have been denied a license to carry a firearm by the same policemen that are about to license this seedy criminal...Why are foreign criminals being given licenses to carry firearms? It would appear to us

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<sup>30</sup> Mafia Hill is a name given by Antiguan and Barbudans to an area of Antigua, where a critical mass of ex-patriots settled upon arrival in Antigua and Barbuda. Many of the ex-patriots were involved in high profile businesses and were alleged to have engaged in illegal activity.



that certain people within the government structure have, through their naiveté or innocence, have allowed some of the most unsavoury characters to enter our midst and, because of their political contacts, become instant big shots. Trouble is, after everyone has received his payoff and cuts, these characters will have become so firmly entrenched in our society that they will no longer be subject to the will of the government, [because] they will be in a position to impose their will on us all by force of arms. Licensed firearms. Of course! We are told that, on Mafia Hill, all the imports with strange-sounding names carry guns on their person and many of them even sport machine guns under their offshore betting services to United States residents from the safe distance of Antigua...If Ministers of Government can apparently give official sanction to gun-toting residents of Mafia Hill, it is no wonder that ordinary people appear to feel the need to equip themselves with guns also. Now that that has happened, we find ourselves in deep trouble. People are taking matters into their own hands and are equipping themselves with unlicensed firearms. People tend to follow example and if the example is to carry firearms, they certainly will do so. It is no wonder therefore that incidents such as the one that occurred yesterday<sup>31</sup> may continue to happen. This trend will not change until such time as the government gives a clear indication that they will no longer tolerate the proliferation of firearms in this country. On no account should the folks at Mafia Hill be given firearm licenses and Police Commissioner Potter should be made to understand that.

The one article that implicitly links 'less than desirable' immigrants with an increased crime rate reflects thinking akin to Sellin (1938) and Sutherland's (1947) suggestion that certain types of crime are more prevalent among specific immigrant groups. In a 1999 article entitled 'Guyanese Man Narrowly Escapes Deportation,' the Chief Magistrate associates with Guyanese nationals the crime of receiving stolen goods as he proclaims, 'I don't have anything against Guyanese but it seems to me most of these crimes seem to involve Guyanese, and I am beginning to wonder why' (*The Daily Observer* 2/16/1999: 6).

Many of the arguments made in support of the Poor Immigration Control frame are echoed in the peer group discussions.

### ***Poor Immigration Control in the Peer Group Discussions***

The overall performance of the Poor Immigration Control frame in peer group discussions is fiercely divided. Four out of ten discussions show strong support for the frame as participants unanimously agree with the contention that crime stems from poor immigration control and must therefore be thwarted by restricting the number of

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<sup>31</sup> A Canadian tourist was shot on a beach in the southern part of the island on 24 February 1995 (see Antigua Observer article entitled 'Canadian Tourist Shot Dead on Local Beach' p. 1).

non-nationals that come into the country. Across all discussion groups, 45 per cent of all participants share this view. In all but one discussion, the enthusiasm that the participants have for the frame is evident by the fact that they spontaneously conjure the frame within the first three questions of the interview guide. When the facilitator finally prompts the frame towards the end of the interview guide, the participants again show their zeal for the frame by interrupting the facilitator with proclamations such as, ‘I agree strongly. I overstrong agree!!’ ‘[I agree strongly] like 10 Million times! Jamaicans and Guyanese okay!’ or ‘Yes! That is so true!’

Equally, in four out of ten discussions participants unanimously reject the Poor Immigration Control frame. Fifty-five per cent of all participants across all discussion groups share this view. These participants are just as ardent in their rejection as those who support the frame are ardent in their support. For example, in rejecting the frame a number of participants vociferously retort, ‘That is not a fair statement!’ or interrupt the facilitator to emphatically declare, ‘Disagree!’ or ‘Oh God!’ Like the Social Breakdown frame in chapter five, the reactions to this frame are palpable. Participants in the remaining two peer group discussions have a mixed reaction to the frame. In these discussions, at least one group member articulates a cogent position contrary to the other group members when discussing the merits of the frame. The majority of those who support the frame are under the age of 40 while the vast majority of those who reject the frame are over 40. Of those who support the frame, most participants are between the ages of 18 and 29. This finding seems counterintuitive as one might expect proponents of this frame to be demographically similar in age to proponents of the *Foreign Cultural Influences*. After all, both frames contemplate exogenous influences felt to be deleterious. However, the difference may lie in what each of the frames protect. *Foreign Cultural Influences* argues that Antiguan and Barbudan *culture* must be protected, in part, from outside *influences* in the form of foreign television, the Internet, music and existing immigrants. In contrast, *Poor Immigration Control* argues that Antigua and Barbuda’s *borders* must be protected from *people* allowed into the country. It may be the case that younger people are more comfortable with or less aware of possible effects of foreign television, the Internet and music, which have become mainstays of modern Antiguan and Barbudan life but feel more economically insecure and are therefore threatened by immigration. There was no noticeable difference between those groups that had at least one non-national member and those that were comprised of strictly Antiguan.

### Supportive Arguments

Although Poor Immigration Control is the very last frame contemplated by the interview guide and its prompt among the last three questions, participants in all but one discussion supporting the frame spontaneously introduces it within the first three questions of the discussion. And, when these participants spontaneously conjure the frame, they all make the same argument – increased immigration leads to increased crime. For example, in response to the very first question, ‘To what extent do you think crime is an issue or a problem in your life,’ Toji, from the Darkwood Beach discussion group, explains that he now takes precautions ‘because there’s definitely been a raise in the level of crime around the country’. Toji then diagnoses the perceived crime problem by surmising, ‘I think people feel like that has a lot to do with the um, relaxing of the immigration laws, the CSME.<sup>32</sup> We’re not geared up for big island crime I would say’. As Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana are the largest CARICOM countries and colloquially referred to as the ‘big islands,’ Toji is making a link between increased crime levels in Antigua and Barbuda and immigrants from these CARICOM countries. The link between increased immigration and increased crime is thus the first supportive argument below.

#### ***Supportive Argument 1: With Increased Immigration Comes Increased Crime***

During the Cassada Gardens peer group discussion, Pericles responds to the very first question, ‘To what extent do you think crime is an issue or a problem in your life,’ in much the same way Toji responded earlier. Pericles asserts:

Personally, I wouldn’t say that crime is not a problem. I think there has been a big fundamental shift...um within – over – the past 20 years, which I believe um, doesn’t necessarily have to do with, um, economic issues but mainly has to do with the demographic shift.

When pressed on the meaning of ‘demographic shift,’ Pericles references ‘the influx of non-nationals’. Terms like ‘demographic shift’ and words like ‘cosmopolitan’ appear to be veiled references to increased immigration. In the Lower Nevis Street discussion group, Sam responds to the Blocked Opportunities prompt arguing that crime has increased because ‘now we have a cosmopolitan society’. When he is pressed on the meaning of cosmopolitan, Sam says in an exasperated tone, ‘People from all over the place in Antigua’. With little regard for niceties or veiled references,

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<sup>32</sup> CSME is the abbreviation for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, which is an attempt by Caribbean governments to create one large market among the participating member states. Among key elements of the CSME is free movement of labour. Such free movement has involved *inter alia*, ‘removing all obstacles to intra-regional movement of skills, labour and travel...’ ([http://www.caricom.org/jsp/single\\_market/single\\_market\\_index.jsp?menu=csme](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/single_market/single_market_index.jsp?menu=csme))

few peer group discussions were as direct and as clear as the Russell's group. In response to the third question of the interview guide, 'Who do you think are committing these crimes,' the group very quickly responded:

***Group: Russell's***

***Participants:***

*Brock, a Black Antiguan human resources manager in his 30s*

*Betty, a Black Antiguan accountant in her 20s*

*Ashley, a White Antiguan landscape designer in her 20s*

*Mary, a White Antiguan environment officer in her 20s*

*Eryn, a Black Antiguan market officer in her 20s*

*Eryn:* Immigrants.

*Brock:* Yardies.

*Ashley:* Leave my Jamaicans alone.

*Brock:* And Guyanese.

*Ashley:* I will not have that.

*Brock:* Who tief your bag that night?<sup>33</sup>

*Eryn:* It was a Yardie.

*Mary:* To be honest, I think the majority are foreigners because they come, they don't have jobs, they can't get work permits, they are not getting paid, they don't have money and therefore are almost forced to commit crimes...

Beyond the fundamental contention with which all supporters of the frame agreed – that increased immigration leads to increased crime – participants argued both that current immigration laws do not contemplate the 'quality' of persons given permission to reside in the country and certain crimes are associated with certain immigrant groups. Thus, in the peer group discussions in which at least one participant articulates a cogent position in favour of the Poor Immigration Control frame, the discourse mirrors that found in the newspaper. Supportive arguments two and three further explore these points.

***Supportive Argument 2: We Get The Bottom Of The Barrel***

Many participants construct a hierarchy of sorts preferring some immigrants to others. Like the articles in the newspaper, these participants argue that it is also the type of immigrant allowed into Antigua and Barbuda that has a negative impact on the country's crime rate. The basic sentiment is the same as Ronald expresses in the Darkwood Beach discussion group, which appears in the epigraph of this chapter:

...the immigrants that are coming from [Jamaica and Guyana] are the ones that are the bottom of their society. And, I hate to use that word

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<sup>33</sup> Antiguan parlance for, 'Who stole your bag that night?'

but that seems to be true. You're not getting people who – the majority of them are not skilled and educated.

In the Golden Grove discussion, Edy echoes Ronald's view as she laments that, 'as far as our immigration is concerned we bring in individuals who do not necessarily add value to the society'. The only other person in the Golden Grove group who supports the Poor Immigration Control frame, Annette champions Edy's position by insisting:

We get the bottom of the barrel...I've gone to Mona<sup>34</sup> on stage and gotten into trouble for it. I tell them some of you lecturers should come to Antigua, because we have the bottom of the barrel, and send [the others] back. We'll take a hundred of you and send back all that are there now. At least I know you all will contribute and pay [your] tax.

However, in making this argument, many participants point out that undesirable immigrants also come from the United States and Europe. Consider the example below from the Crosbies discussion group in response to the Poor Immigration Control prompt:

**Group: Crosbies**

**Participants:**

*Patrick, a Syrian/Lebanese Antiguan retiree in his 60s*

*Indigo, a White Antiguan archivist in her 50s*

*Heather, an Antiguan student in her 20s who racially identifies as 'other'*

*Doreen, a Syrian/Lebanese cake decorator in her 20s*

*Patrick:* [Agree] strongly.

*Doreen:* And Santo Domingans<sup>35</sup>. And they love a knife, boy. And cutlass.

*Indigo:* But it's just so easy for them to falsify police records and just come in here and start fresh.

*Facilitator:* So, are you saying then that you think that we'll have a decrease in crime if we had more stringent immigration controls in place?

*Indigo:* I think so...

*Patrick:* It's gone so far now that we escort them here.

*Doreen:* The same way that people have to pay so much money even to go to the United States I think there should be some sort of immigration policy like that here. Just because I think Antigua has been so taken advantage of. Not with just people from Guyana and Jamaica but even rich people like Mr. Stanford or like people from all over Europe who come here and do what they want and nobody troubles them. Nobody does anything about it. And they do a lot of things that you would never even think they

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<sup>34</sup> A Reference to The University of the West Indies, Mona campus located in Jamaica.

<sup>35</sup> Antiguan and Barbudans typically call all those who are from the Dominican Republic Santo Domingans

were doing. Look at Jonathan with the whole child pornography thing. What happen to him with that? Nothing.

Responding to the same prompt, participants in the Russell's peer group discussion make a related point:

***Group: Russell's***

*Eryn:* But it's not just Jamaicans and Guyanese

*Ashley:* Dominicans tief nuh rass too you know<sup>36</sup>

*Eryn:* Exactly

*Brock:* I think they need to... not saying that you don't want to let people in but...

*Mary:* I think that the point of that is that when you have poor immigration policies and they're trying to change them not for the better but for some other shit<sup>37</sup> – I think when you have poor immigration policies and you bring in people or they come in illegally – however, and they can't get jobs legally then [they] turn to crime.

*Ashley:* See I was like baffled with that idea, that they should – like when they start letting people into the country – high school diplomas and all that should be taken into account. But then at the same time it's not like the States<sup>38</sup> where they do background checks and all that kind of stuff on you. They should but they don't and I don't think they ever will.

*Mary:* But they can't.

*Brock:* And then I hear the people and them from Jamaica lie about them stuff too.

*Betty:* It needs to be a Caribbean wide thing all the different islands are like connected and honestly sharing information.

Notwithstanding Ashley's comment in the excerpt above, that Dominicans also tend to steal, participants suggest that immigrants from neighbouring Eastern Caribbean countries such as Montserrat, Dominica and St. Kitts are perfectly acceptable and they exclude them from definitions of 'foreigner'. In the Cedar Valley discussion group when asked explicitly why immigrants from the Eastern Caribbean are any different from Jamaican or Guyanese immigrants, the following below captures the general sentiment:

***Group: Cedar Valley***

*Toya:* Oh, they're quiet people.

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<sup>36</sup> Antiguan parlance for, 'Dominicans steal a lot also'.

<sup>37</sup> Mary is alluding to popular conceptions or speculations that during when national elections are called certain political parties relax the immigration laws for CARICOM nationals seeking residence in Antigua and Barbuda so that they are eligible to vote in Antigua and Barbuda's elections.

<sup>38</sup> A reference to the United States.

*Regine:* Because we've always accepted them. Montserratians? They're like Antiguan. St. Lucians? They've been coming to New Winthorpes village since I was a little girl.

*Toya:* The Dominicans, you're not going to hear them.

*Precious:* Oh no, they're different. St. Lucians...

*Facilitator:* So there is this hierarchy then of immigrants such that there are certain immigrants that are better than others?

*Toya:* Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

*Regine:* Of course, anywhere.

*Toya:* [It's] by their actions. By their actions.

*Precious:* Yeah, definitely.

### ***Supportive Argument 3: Certain Immigrants Commit Certain Crimes***

As cavalierly as Doreen says that Santo Domingans love a knife and a cutlass and Ashley exclaims Dominicans 'tief nuh rass,' participants showing support for the frame associate certain crimes with certain nationalities. Like the Chief Magistrate in the newspaper article discussed earlier in this chapter, participants associate Guyanese immigrants with theft and property crime. Additionally, participants associate Jamaican and Guyanese immigrants with more violent crime such as robbery and rape, immigrants from Spanish speaking countries with theft and misappropriation of services and 'non-nationals' collectively with prostitution. The excerpts below are illustrative.

#### ***Group: Darkwood Beach***

##### ***Participants:***

*Ronald, a Black Antiguan educator in his 50s*

*Toji, a White Antiguan online gaming operator in his 30s*

*Terrance, a Black Antiguan dental surgeon in his 50s*

*Franklin, a Black Antiguan heavy equipment operator in his 20s*

*Arnelle, a Black Antiguan banker in her 50s*

*Arnelle:* One of the reasons I think the rape has reduced in the last year, maybe nine months is because the recognized type of violence leading up to the rape was of a particular nature and they have recognized it to be Guyanese and they have tapped into that ring and have sent them home.

*Toji:* Did they reckon that it was one person?

*Arnelle:* No.

*Ronald:* But why send them home and not prosecute them?

*Arnelle:* But, why feed them here? Why feed them in our jail?

*Ronald:* No, but I mean if somebody has committed a crime and you have the evidence it seems to me that they would prosecute them and...that's what I'm asking, was this proved or did they just deport them.

*Arnelle:* The types of things they were doing to the ladies they could identify them with the type of things that were happening in Guyana and they tapped into a particular ring of Guyanese

people with soldier background and they have actually sent them home.

*Toji:* Certainly that string of rapes all had the same characteristics.

*Terrance:* My concern with um, I think the foreigners though, right, they are they have borne the brunt of the accusations about crime. My concern with them is not so much the violent crime and I concur that that rape situation seemed to have come out of somebody with some sort of military background some sort of awareness of how crimes are perpetuated. But I think in terms of the foreigners, my big concern is the blue-collar crime that they perpetuate. For instance you put them, you employ them, and wherever they can use their position to create profit for themselves they do it...I do see that the Guyanese in particular are very, very overt to doing committing such crime. I would never – I personally would never employ a Guyanese and put them in any position responsible for my stock my cash or any valuables whatsoever. I mean. I say that and I have the greatest respect for my fellow Caribbean men and sisters and I personally, I have been an immigrant in another country and I understand that immigrants are motivated people and over the years the immigrants who have come to Antigua have greatly contributed like they have done to any society because of what they bring right. However, I have a serious problem with the type of immigrants that we've been getting on our shores in the last 4 5 7 8 years right.

***Group: Cedar Valley***

*Toya:* ...there are some of the crimes that we know – that you can almost tell – that unfortunately comes from Jamaica or Guyana or what have you.

*Oliveen:* Jamaicans do a lot of hold up.<sup>39</sup>

*Regine:* They're thieves. Because they have to live. Not to jump but there's another situation that's on the rise as well that I'm told about. Especially the Spanish community where um a friend of mine has a Spanish girlfriend. The Spanish girlfriend's mother lives in the Spanish territory...Santo Domingo. The girlfriend goes to a Spanish doctor here in Antigua who gives her a prescription because she's like on the books, she's paying medical, social and stuff like that. She gets the prescription and she goes to fill it at medical benefits every month. She doesn't have the disease. She sends it home to her mother. Every month. Well, in a way, maybe she's entitled to the drugs if she has that illness because she's contributing to the scheme but she's not, you know –

*Toya:* There's a lot of white-collar crime but go ahead, finish.

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<sup>39</sup> Hold up is a reference to robbery.



*Regine:* These people who we seem to be allowing in the country, they're not contributing to the economy.  
*Oliveen:* A lot of them take out more than what they contribute.  
*Regine:* An example is like having a balloon. You just keep stuffing it with water it's going to pop.

[Later in the transcript:]

*Oliveen:* Me have some Guyanese live side me and me know they commit crime and they tief and me report them to the police. And police catch them and when the police come to them one day they carry the police show the police the wrong house and tell them it's a wrong house.  
*Toya:* But then again...too, part of it is a lot of the police officers are non-Antiguans.  
*Oliveen:* Me love to tell them a go back home.  
*Precious:* I talk to my radio every day. Ya'll go home. Everyday me talk to the radio. Ya'll go home. They need to go home.  
*Oliveen:* Let me explain something to you. They have some Guyanese police they are the scampish thing you ever find in the police force. Me actually catch one a tief the woman gas tank one night. Hurricane nuh.  
*Regine:* Police?  
*Precious:* Guyanese are the worst you know.  
*Oliveen:* A me friend. He go to tek one TV from Courts.<sup>40</sup> And Courts bailiff a look for the [police man] for the TV because he nah pay for the TV. A plenty crime he do nuh...And Courts' bailiff chat and he say something and he say how the man say something – somebody take the tv or the tv a gone to Guyana. Me say, he lie. The tv over there in the house. Because me know the tv inside because me min in...he say how you know? Me say because me min dey yesterday. The tv inside there go for the tv. Me ketch he with the pliers at cut off the woman gas tank  
*Precious:* You see you can't trust these people for real though.

[Later in the transcript:]

*Facilitator:* So is it from personal experiences...why you know?  
*Oliveen:* All that. Then they park up car between Corn Alley and so and make people knock their car fa get insurance money  
*Toya:* Oh, that's another thing that's rampant in Antigua.  
*Oliveen:* Police me say!  
*Toya:* ...And back to the crimes, a lot of the type of crimes are strictly not Antiguan. The car situation. We never knew anything about stealing cars and changing number plates and so forth.  
*Precious:* Hijack – and hijacking car and all that kind of nonsense.

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<sup>40</sup> Oliveen is referring to Courts, which is the Caribbean's largest furniture, appliance and electrical retailer. Courts operates 93 department stores across 11 Caribbean countries.

- Toya:* Yeah. You know? And that we can say, that's been imported. Yes. That's imported. You know? The daylight robberies. Before you would hear of a robbery, but it's late at night people are sleeping. Now you know, you're like, wait a minute, this is high daytime.
- Regine:* Like a gas station robbery and so when people gone home. You know? But now?
- Precious:* Because they're bold.
- Toya:* Yeah. And those I can tell you are non-Antiguans. Antiguans don't do them kind of robberies.

In describing the ways in which he believes that poor immigration control leads to crime, Pericles introduces the topic of prostitution in the Cassada Gardens peer group discussion:

***Group: Cassada Gardens***

***Participants:***

*Pericles, a Black Antiguan consultant in his 40s*

*Senaa, a Black Antiguan executive secretary in her 50s*

*Dawn, a Black Antiguan district officer in her 30s*

*John, a Black Antiguan personal/administrative assistant in his 20s*

- Pericles:* [Poor immigration control] leads to other criminal activities. For example, you know, um, women um, giving sexual favours to men in terms of um –
- Senaa:* yep...getting their status regularized
- Facilitator:* So, then would you say there's a sort of um, underground prostitution then? I mean is that what you're suggesting? That there are people who – that there are women who will sleep with an immigration officer –
- Group:* Yeah! Yeah that happens of course.
- Facilitator:* And how prevalent do you think that is?
- Senaa:* On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest, hmm.... five maybe between five and six
- Pericles:* You think it is that high? But there is that connection in terms of – especially when they are not in a position to pay the cash. I've seen some of it reported in the papers if I'm not mistaken.
- Dawn:* You also hear them talk about it too.
- Pericles:* They talk about it?
- Senaa:* Yeah, they actually say it. You know, these non-nationals they nuh easy nuh. They barefaced nuh [choops]<sup>41</sup>
- Pericles:* You know some of them are directly imported in the country just for that – at the established brothels. You haven't come across that in your reading?
- Facilitator:* I've come across speculation.
- Pericles:* Speculation?

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<sup>41</sup> According to the *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* edited by Richard Allsopp and Jeannette Allsopp, 'choops' is 'an imitative word representing the sound of sucking the teeth'. Antiguans and Barbudans choops in order to show annoyance or disgust. Including Senaa's choops in the transcript is important in conveying the level of her annoyance or disgust with what she appears to perceive as the shamelessness of non-nationals. An alternative spelling for choops is 'chuptz'.

*Senaa:* It's a fact!

*Pericles:* I don't know how you've missed it in the papers, for example, the way they pick up these people who are connected with these brothels. Especially the one that was burned down on Fort Road, um, most of them, a lot of them were illegal –

*Senaa:* They were imported...

*Pericles:* ...and then there is the other underground portion. Um, because I remember I had a neighbour [who was renting a house]. I always remember that one because she was a very beautiful lady and one day I asked [the owner of the house] where she was. And she was saying 'Oh! I had to trow she out'<sup>42</sup> because um, she had the little girl up there and when one man inside the bedroom, one a wait pon the gallery,<sup>43</sup> and the car them lining up and the Antiguan bringing them a whole pay check and just giving to her'. She was a Jamaican but the other lady who had rented the place was a Vincentian but she had been living here for some time. But the [homeowner] had come from Jamaica and she had took her in...I notice I used to see some activities there but I didn't understand what was actually happening.

*Senaa:* People sick eh? These men. Oh Lord! Antiguan men...

*Pericles:* These things do happen. [We] laugh but I mean... I'm sure you can get some of these guys – I don't hang on the block as much but I'm sure some of these guys will tell you these things.

A similar point is made by Edy during the Golden Grove discussion:

First of all, I don't know if we want to say that they're Guyanese and they're Jamaicans. That I don't know. But, I do think that there is one part of our society where the majority of those individuals are non-nationals and I'm talking about the houses of prostitution. The majority – 99.9% of them – are non-nationals, and that is creating a problem.

Even participants who adamantly refute the Poor Immigration Control frame make casual connections between certain immigrants and certain crimes. For example, in the Longford discussion Jaquel connects immigrants from Spanish speaking countries with auto theft as she casually mentions, '...we have a large population of [Spanish residents] and the trend is now that they are fairly good on auto theft'. Additionally, a number of these participants reluctantly concede as Pericles does, that 'what I would agree strongly on – I believe we can put a dent in the crime if we took our immigration laws um, if we took them into serious consideration'.

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<sup>42</sup> Antiguan parlance for, 'throw her out'.

<sup>43</sup> Antiguan parlance for, 'one was waiting on the verandah'

### Rebuttal Arguments

Although only four peer group discussions unanimously reject the Poor Immigration Control frame, more than half of the participants across all groups reject the frame. The remainder of this section is dedicated to the arguments participants proffer in rebuttal. The first argument discussed is the most prevalent. In every group in which at least one member rejects the frame, the participants argued that Antiguanians are responsible for Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation. Some participants making this claim contend that the statistics are likely to disprove the frame and others point to the fact that the vast majority of those imprisoned are Antiguan and Barbudan. Irrespective of the way in which they make the argument, participants blame the media for distorting reality by giving the impression that non-nationals are disproportionately committing crimes. The remaining argument that participants make in refuting the Poor Immigration Control frame focuses on the nationalities singled out in the frame as they argue that it is unfair to single out Jamaican and Guyanese immigrants.

#### ***Rebuttal Argument 1: It's Mainly The Locals Who Are Into Crime***

Participants who reject the claim that crime stems from poor immigration control disagree vehemently with the frame's proposition that most of the crime that occurs in Antigua and Barbuda is committed by non-nationals. These participants challenge the frame's underlying premise that immigrants cost Antigua and Barbuda more than they contribute, arguing that immigrants are hardworking and in search of opportunity. According to Donald:

I think that the non-nationals...come here and most of them are here to work, to find a job somewhere. Most of them are not here – yeah, there are a few who get caught up but when they get caught up they are with Antiguanians, you don't find them doing it by themselves...to say something like [the frame's prompt], I strongly disagree with that.

Additionally, every participant rejecting the frame argues that immigrants are simply a scapegoat – it is mainly Antiguanians and Barbudans who commit crime. Janet's comments, which she makes in the Redcliffe Street discussion, are illustrative:

...when you really check it out it's the Antiguanians themselves who are doing it. And, they blaming the Jamaicans and Guyanese but when you get the real information it's the Antiguanians who are doing it. Because I'm not saying that the Jamaicans and the Guyanese and the non-nationals – some of them have their ways, yes – but sometimes certain things happen and because of their trend they get blamed for it when – whereas – it's the Antiguanians that are doing it.

The excerpt below from the Blue Waters discussion is similarly illustrative:

***Group: Blue Waters***

*Elbee:* I'm going to tell you something...Bolivar has that experience from the Bahamas. [They complain] crime, crime, and they blaming the foreigners, until they started catching the people involved and they were local Bahamians. And, I think it's the same thing here.

*Lynn:* It's mainly the locals who are into crime.

*Bolivar:* I have said that. You might have a few but it's going to be mainly locals.

To support their contention that immigrants are unfairly blamed for the country's crime situation, participants point to official police statistics and the number of Antiguan and Barbudans currently incarcerated. Consider the excerpts below:

***Group: Golden Grove***

*Nadine:* What are the statistics to actually say that is so...I challenge the statistics, that it's actually so and while there is a harmful effect I think on some of the other cultures on Antiguan society, I don't question that. I can't say that some of the horrendous crimes we have been hearing about ought to be attributed to non-nationals.

*Deege:* Most of the non-nationals I know are just like me. They want an opportunity to work, to earn, to mind their families and make their life better. I would say that 99% of them are like that.

*Nicola:* That you know.

*Deege:* Yes, I said 99% of them that I know.

*Neicy:* I think they are just people. People are just people.

*Deege:* I think there is the same percentage of criminal element among immigrants as there probably is among Antiguan.

*Annette:* I would disagree with that completely.

*Edy:* I'm going to disagree with you.

*Deege:* OK. Wait I not finished. The reason I say that is because I have been an immigrant right. And I know the purposes for which I immigrated and I believe that the same purposes apply here. And, most of the immigrants that I know and I can only speak for the those I know – maybe the bag run skip away from me – right? They want an opportunity.

In the Longford peer group discussion Wayne confirms Nadine's suspicion. As a police officer in his 30s, Wayne speaks from his knowledge of official crime statistics:

Nearly all of the prison population are Antiguan. Nearly all the murders committed in Antigua are by Antiguan. For the year we have three murders committed. One is a Dominican and the others are Antiguan.

The obvious question that emerges with respect to this frame is why? Why might some Antiguan and Barbudans blame immigrants for the perceived increase in crime? In two discussion groups the participants blame the media for perpetuating this notion. For example, in Redcliffe Street peer group discussion Lavern says, ‘we can work the ratio out. You always hear [on the radio] Guyanese national or Jamaican but when you don’t hear anything they come from Antigua’. Lavern’s fellow group member Judy adds, ‘...sometimes Antiguan do things and you never see it in the papers’. Additionally, participants in the Blue Waters discussion adamantly believe that the main perpetrators of this notion are first-generation Antiguan and Barbudans and recent immigrants themselves. Bolivar says:

...I came to this realisation when I was living in Bahamas, right...people who tend to perpetuate this type of thing are the children of non-nationals...I have never seen people hate non-nationals more than the children of non-nationals. I saw it in Bahamas when I was there. The Bahamians who came from Bajans. Their fathers and mothers were Bajans and Grenadians and so, hated Haitians and Jamaicans and non-nationals. Hated them with a passion. [I] saw it...We have friends who are not from [Antigua and Barbuda] and they will make statements like, you know since all them Jamaicans and so come here the place just gone bad. Why?

Bolivar continues to say, ‘What I’m really getting at is the immigrant who comes here for a better life and after they have made it, no others must come here for a better life’.

### ***Rebuttal Argument 2: It’s Unfair To Say Especially Those From Jamaica and Guyana***

In constructing the prompt for the Poor Immigration Control frame, I deliberately emphasised Jamaican and Guyanese nationals as examples of the most problematic immigrants. I chose these two nationalities because in my preliminary research Jamaicans and Guyanese were most often associated with crime and I was interested in the reaction of peer group discussion participants to this association. In two peer group discussions participants argue that it is unfair to single out Jamaicans and Guyanese. The statements Malcolm and Renee make are illustrative. Malcolm asserts:

It is not a fair statement. As Sam said, it’s that Antigua has become a cosmopolitan country. We have persons from various nationalities. And, so it’s not a fair statement. Yes, we know that coming out of Jamaica they have a record of you know, being involved in violent

crimes and all of that. We have – yes, we have some influence from those islands – but we have from other Caribbean islands also. So, it's not a fair statement because within the prison we have Vincentians there for drug offences, and others. So, it's not quite a fair statement.

Similarly, Renee explains:

I have been doing prison ministry for a number of years – over 10 years since I'm in Antigua. And, um, they – what they call it – the statistics of foreigners in the prison, you might be surprised. I remember at one time there was – it was in the papers where they were talking about how many Guyanese was in the prison at the time. How many Jamaicans, how many Trinidadians. I think it was around the time when they have the Columbians they catch on a boat was there. And, I don't even think they had 10 Guyanese and 10 Jamaicans.

### III

#### Summary

Components of the Foreign Cultural Influences frame appear in just over 10 per cent of the newspaper articles included in the study while components of the Poor Immigration Control frame appear in just over seven per cent. It seems that journalists and newspaper commentators are slightly more comfortable with the idea that exogenous influences are creeping into Antigua and Barbuda and having a deleterious effect on the society than they are with the idea that immigrants are at the root of the country's crime situation. Notwithstanding this slight difference neither exogenous criminogenic influences nor increased immigration are particularly popular themes in the newspaper's crime discourse. In this respect newspaper coverage contrasted with the views expressed in the peer group discussions.

Both the Foreign Cultural Influences and Poor Immigration Control frames were more popular among peer group discussion participants than they were in the newspaper coverage although the Poor Immigration Control frame enjoys less unified support. Notwithstanding the fact that the Foreign Cultural Influences frame emerged organically from the analysis, unprompted by the interview guide, the frame is triggered in over three-quarters of the discussion groups. On the other hand, with four discussion groups supporting the frame and four rejecting it, the Poor Immigration Control frame is as fiercely contested in the discussions as it is supported. Even in the remaining two peer group discussions, where participants have a mixed response to the Poor Immigration Control frame, the reactions are palpable. The crime discourse emerging from the discussions thus suggests that while Antiguan and Barbudans may be wary of foreign influences they deem criminogenic, the biggest concern is not a causal connection between increased immigration and increased crime. Indeed, 54 per cent of all participants in the study reject this causal connection. These participants argue that Antiguan and Barbudans are responsible for the vast majority of crime, as evidenced by the number of Antiguan and Barbudans incarcerated and official police data. A smaller percentage of participants argue that the frame's assertion that it is *especially* Jamaicans and Guyanese who are responsible for the country's crime situation unfairly stigmatises these nationalities.



Instead, the biggest concerns seem to surround criminal deportees and the perceived tendency for Antiguan and Barbudans to adopt foreign values. Additionally, participants exhibit angst with respect to the type of immigrants granted permission to live in the country. This angst is captured not only by the Poor Immigration Control frame but also by the Criminal Culture frame discussed in the next chapter. The next chapter, which focuses on Governance, Crime, Culture and Control, will discuss in greater detail the fact that even participants who wholeheartedly reject the Poor Immigration Control frame express concern that immigration officers are breaking immigration rules by allowing people into the country who would be otherwise ineligible to permanently reside in the country. While these participants do not think immigrants are the root of the country's crime problem, they accuse immigration officers of a corruption they feel is endemic in Antigua and Barbuda.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: GOVERNANCE, CRIME, CULTURE AND CONTROL

*'But I do believe that people who are thinking about crime in this country regard the police force as such a total joke that it motivates them – why not? Because the risk of [you] getting caught is almost zero unless you're a complete idiot...'*



*'And I guess what I'm hinting at here is that we have a very corrupt society, right. And, a lot of the businessmen are involved in fraudulent transactions and the drug trade – whether it's drugs, whether it's arms, whether it's defrauding the government of it's revenue, right. And, therefore you end up with a class in society that projects serious wealth...so it's a message that we as a society sending out to the youth, they not looking at the doctor who struggled and did his do and now can come back and buy his vehicle and build his house what have you. They're looking at the classmate of theirs who didn't go anywhere and he's making money hand over fist and he's not even in the league of the doctor – he's way ahead of the doctor, so why I need to emulate [the doctor]? I need to emulate that big man and that big man is one of the biggest crime lords in the island'.*

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the last of the three major themes emerging from the analysis – Governance, Crime, Culture, and Control. The data suggest that a significant number of newspaper articles and focus group participants are sceptical of the criminal justice system proclaiming that it is antiquated, inefficient, corrupt and in dire need of reform. Moreover, a number of newspaper articles and focus group participants argue for either increased police presence or stiffer penalties, or both. Additionally, the data reveal sentiments that Antigua and Barbuda has a 'criminal culture'. That is, people are thought to happily cut corners and commit seemingly victimless crimes such as misappropriating government resources, including water and electricity. This chapter is thus organised around two distinct frames: Criminal Culture and Faulty System.

Rooted in Edwin Sutherland's differential association, section I of this chapter articulates the various components of the Criminal Culture frame, discusses its theoretical underpinnings and reports the frequency with which these components appear in newspaper articles and peer group discussions. Similarly, section II traces the roots of the Faulty System frame back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century classical criminology built around the reformist ideas of Cesare Becarria and Jeremy Bentham. Additionally, the section articulates the various components of the frame and reports the frequency with which these components appear in newspaper articles as well as

peer group discussions. Lastly, in section III I will summarise the findings of the two frames and discuss their implications.

As the Criminal Culture frame emerged from the data organically, this chapter is most similar in style and structure to chapter six. Like the Foreign Cultural Influences frame in chapter six, the facilitator did not prompt the Criminal Culture frame in any way during the course of the peer group discussions nor did the interview guide contemplate any of the frame's components. It was only after careful analysis of the transcripts of each discussion and discovering the nuances with respect to the ways in which the participants discussed both the Faulty System and the Poor Immigration Control frames that the frame was constructed and its presence coded.

## II

### **Criminal Culture**

The Criminal Culture frame posits that crime stems from excessive contact with systems and authorities that send pro-crime messages. According to the frame, when there is widespread corruption among government officials and in government institutions, when police officers and politicians break the law and when the justice system treats people differently based on who they are and who they know, people feel justified in cutting corners and breaking the law themselves. Therefore, the solution to Antigua and Barbuda's crime problem, according to the frame, lies in a transparent justice system that treats everyone equally irrespective of wealth or status and rooting out corruption in all of its forms. Integral to this frame are notions of legitimacy and procedural justice. On some level, the Criminal Culture frame appears to have much in common with the Faulty System frame discussed in section II of this chapter. After all, the premise of both frames suggests systemic failures of the criminal justice system. For example, the logical conclusion of the assertions made by the Criminal Culture frame does seem to point to a fundamental failure to apprehend and punish offenders. And, like the Faulty System frame, the Criminal Culture frame suggests that offenders know they can do whatever they want to do and get away with it. But, the umbrella idea that the criminal justice system is a systemic failure obscures essential aspects of the Criminal Culture frame. The Criminal Culture frame is less about poor detection and lenient punishment and more about an atmosphere conducive to and supportive of even the most seemingly benign criminal activity. The very name

of the frame emerged from the excerpt below taken from the Golden Grove peer group discussion in which Deege and Anne discuss what criminal behaviour actually means in an Antiguan and Barbudan context. Deege points to a man nearby who appears to be misappropriating water at a government building, on a Saturday, to wash a privately owned vehicle:

***Group: Golden Grove***

*Deege:* Like I wonder if this man using government water to wash his car, wonder who authorise him to come up here and use public utilities, you know?

*Anne:* But, there is that, but that seems to be a – I really don't look at that as crime as much as culture in Antigua and Barbuda.

*Deege:* But, it's a crime.

*Anne:* But here, I look at it as it seems to be the culture of the place.

*Deege:* Maybe it is, so we have a criminal culture.

*Anne:* People abuse those things.

*Deege:* I think we have a criminal culture but we don't recognise it...I feel like we have a criminal mentality in...our expectation. Anywhere else it would be a crime.

Similarly, at first glance the Criminal Culture frame appears to overlap somewhat with the Poor Immigration Control frame discussed in chapter six. The overlap is most glaring where peer group discussion participants exhibit angst with respect to the type of immigrants granted permission to live in the country. However, coding such discourse to the Poor Immigration Control frame would be analytically imprecise because the concern is not that immigrants are the root of the country's crime problem, it is that immigration officers are breaking immigration laws by allowing people into the country who would be otherwise ineligible to permanently reside in the country. Participants accuse immigration officers of corruption they feel is endemic in Antigua and Barbuda. It is this corruption that fits squarely in the ambit of the Criminal Culture frame. Thus, the Criminal Culture frame is more about an environment of lawlessness and people doing whatever they need to do in order to get by. The frame is about the myriad pro-crime definitions that are thought to abound in Antigua and Barbuda. At the core of this frame is Edwin Sutherland's differential association. Discussed in chapter six, differential association holds that people turn to crime '...if learned antisocial values and behaviours are not at least matched or exceeded by conventional attitudes and behaviours' (Siegel 2012: 238). Stephen Jones (2013: 96) explains further that:

A person who is exposed to 'an excess of definitions favourable to violation of the law over definitions unfavourable to violation of the

law' is likely to become a criminal. The likelihood is determined by variations in the frequency, duration, priority and intensity of the associations.

In addition to differential association, the Criminal Culture frame reflects elements of neutralisation theory, which is a theory most closely associated with Sykes and Matza (1957) and Matza (1964). Neutralisation theory holds that offending behaviour is not rooted in a deeply oppositional morality but that offenders master techniques that enable them to neutralise conventional values and drift back and forth between illegitimate and conventional behaviour. The theory suggests that offenders are able to navigate effortlessly the terrain between legality and illegality, in part, because of 'subterranean values' or morally tinged influences entrenched in the culture, which exist alongside conventional values (Siegel 2012). While these subterranean values may be condemned in public, they may be admired or practiced in private. Sykes and Matza (1957: 668) argue that one of the ways in which offenders neutralise conventional values is by 'condemning the condemners' or 'rejecting the rejectors'. Put simply, Siegel (2012: 242) explains that:

[a]n offender views the world as a corrupt place with a dog-eat-dog code. Because police and judges are on the take, teachers show favortism, and parents take out their frustrations on their kids, it is ironic and unfair for these authorities to condemn his or her misconduct.

Moreover, Sykes and Matza (1957: 668) argue:

[t]he rewards of conformity – such as material success – become a matter of pull or luck, thus decreasing still further the stature of those who stand on the side of the law-abiding. The validity of this jaundiced viewpoint is not so important as its function in turning back or deflecting the negative sanctions attached to violations of the norms. The delinquent, in effect, has changed the subject of the conversation in the dialogue between his own deviant impulses and the reactions of others; and by attacking others, the wrongfulness of his own behavior is more easily repressed or lost to view.

Although neutralisation theory does not apply to this study in ways that it would if offenders had been interviewed and given the opportunity to rationalise their own behaviour, conceptual arguments inherent in the theory are helpful to understanding Antigua and Barbuda's crime discourse. The sentiment that this frame captures is systemic failings potentially release people from social norms and gives them permission to offend. In making this argument, some of the frame's proponents reference a popular Antiguan adage, 'if the top is slack, the middle and the bottom

can't be tight'. The remainder of this section examines the prevalence of the Criminal Culture frame in newspaper articles and peer group discussions.

### ***Criminal Culture in the News***

Components of the Criminal Culture frame appear in 13 per cent of the newspaper articles included in this study. All the articles displaying the frame endorse all of its components. Where the Criminal Culture frame is conjured, writers argue that crime stems from contact with pro-crime messages sent by law breaking politicians, government officials, the prime minister and the police. To the extent that leaders in society are breaking the law, it is held to be unsurprising that others follow their example. In a 1995 article entitled 'Commentary on Crimes of Violence,' the author accuses the Prime Minister and politicians from both political parties of sanctioning violence and rejects the idea that they can effectively eradicate the crime problem. In other words, for this author politicians cannot be a part of the solution if they are part of the problem:

Unhappily, we are reluctant to call upon the politicians to join our national appeal for a national renunciation and repudiation of violence. Our reluctance stems from the fact that [the Prime Minister] among them, have demonstrated a proclivity towards violence...and we are convinced there are others on either side of the parliamentary divide who share his sentiments. (*The Daily Observer* 2/23/1995: 7)

Similarly, a prominent news reporter's open letter to the Attorney General entitled 'AG Cort: Injustices Breed Crimes' underscores the point that 'crime appears to have official sanction' as he writes:

Under no circumstances, are we supposed to encourage crimes. You said zero tolerance to crimes, but I would like to go a little further and say '-0' tolerance to crimes. But, Mr. Attorney General, if we do not stop injustice, especially organized injustices, as practiced by your government, we are bound to fail in our fight against crime. No maybe, if, or but. For years now, the teachers who were wrongfully dismissed by your 'democratic' government, have been waiting to be reinstated and paid as ordered by the High Court. Just in case you forgot, may I remind you that Justice delayed is Justice denied. In any other country violence would have erupted like the volcano in Montserrat. When government officials can break the law with impunity and then be given a royal pardon, as in the case of Hilroy Humphreys, I say that is injustice, not only to the man in prison, but also to the man on the street. When a government minister could say to the nation, after we had been hit by a hurricane, that the government's priority was to take care of its supporters first, then

everyone else after, what do you say Mr. Attorney General? Justice or Injustice? Mr. Attorney General, I could go on and on, but space demands that I stop at this one. In the General Elections of March 1999, Guyanese, Jamaicans, Dominicans and especially Spaniards were illegally allowed to vote. Some of them voted in Antiguan's names and when the Antiguan's tried to vote they were denied the right to vote. There could be no greater injustice than this one, where 'foreigners' are allowed to illegally choose our destiny. If we are going to fight crime successfully, let your government put its house in order, because some of the crimes in our society today are as a result of government sanctioned injustices. An ardent government supporter was freed from prison after he had been convicted for raping his own daughter, while prisoners for far much lesser offences are still behind bars. I shall join the fight as long as I am guaranteed JUSTICE FOR ALL. (*The Daily Observer* 2/22/2000: 3)

In addition to the argument that politicians and other government officials set a poor example, authors also argue that a justice system that is not transparent and treats people differently based on their socioeconomic class and their connections to prominent politicians, police officers or business people delegitimises its authority. For example, in a 2006 article entitled, 'Gray's Farm Residents Upset With Police,' the writer relays the story of residents in the economically depressed Gray's Farm community, who claim that a 19 year old held in connection with the murder of a 22-year-old non-national was not charged because of police corruption. The writer explains:

Allegations said the youth had turned himself in to police headquarters after the shooting death. The source alleged the case had been transferred from the original investigating officer to a relative of the suspect. [The source] feared lawmen would now drop the ball, based on his conflict of interest. 'It is the cousin of the boy that they let go and investigate the murder,' she said. 'They...let he go, and now we hear the boy going England Monday...They corrupt, and something need to be done about the whole thing...nobody seem to care about anybody, or is it because we are not from Antigua?' [Residents] said the community's interaction with the village station was guarded. 'Nobody in the village trust the police,' a source said. 'Only certain people in Gray's Farm go to jail [but] the ones that have money, run the drugs and have the guns, it seems as if they are untouchable'. Another woman, who became tearful as she spoke about the way [the victim] met his death, echoed similar sentiments. On Friday, another family also lashed out at the police for what they described as 'a poor and biased investigative approach...' (*The Daily Observer* 2/27/2006: 1)

This message is aptly summed up in the 2003 editorial entitled, ‘That’s What Friends In High Places Are For,’ where the editorial writer observes that the law as administered sends the message that ‘all men are created equal, but some are more equal than others’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/13/2003: 2). This sentiment is further echoed in the following excerpt of a 1995 editorial entitled ‘No Guns For The Folks On Mafia Hill’:

What concerns us is that a great deal of our crime appears to have official sanction. Politicians seem attracted to criminals in much the same manner as bees are attracted to honey...we have in our midst a place called Mafia Hill where the scum of the earth, and the dregs of society reside in cool comfort, safe and secure from the clutches of the United States Government and with the full knowledge and connivance of those that govern us. One of the persons who graced the portals of our ‘beloved’ Mafia Hill was indicted a few days ago in Philadelphia in the United States...In the meantime, the man involved who has a criminal record in the United States...has been given, or is about to be given, a license to carry a firearm in Antigua and Barbuda. There are many respectable citizens in Antigua and Barbuda who have no criminal record but who have been denied a license to carry a firearm by the same policemen that are about to license this seedy criminal. It seems somewhat strange that [an American] criminal from Mafia Hill can get a license to carry a gun in our country while a local person cannot. The government and the commissioner of Police owe us an explanation. Why are foreign criminals being given licenses to carry firearms? It would appear to us that certain people within the government structure have, through their naïveté or innocence, allowed some of the most unsavoury characters to enter our midst and, because of their political contacts, become instant big shots. Trouble is, after everyone has received his payoff and cuts, these characters will have become so firmly entrenched in our society that they will no longer be subject to the will of the government, they will be in a position to impose their will on us all by force of arms... If Ministers of Government can apparently give official sanction to gun-toting residents of Mafia Hill, it is no wonder that ordinary people appear to feel the need to equip themselves with guns also. Now that that has happened, we find ourselves in deep trouble. People are taking matters into their own hands and are equipping themselves with unlicensed firearms. People tend to follow example and if the example is to carry firearms, they certainly will do so. It is no wonder therefore that incidents such as the one that occurred yesterday may continue to happen.<sup>44</sup> This trend will not change until such time as the government gives a clear indication that they will no longer tolerate the proliferation of firearms in this country. On no account should the folks at Mafia Hill be given firearm licenses and Police Commissioner Potter should be made to understand that. (*The Daily Observer* 2/25/1995: 2)

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<sup>44</sup> The incident to which the writer refers is the attempted robbery of a 26-year-old female tourist who was shot and killed when she refused to relinquish her handbag. The victim was killed on a beach in broad daylight in the presence of her mother, father, sister and brother.



### ***Criminal Culture in Peer Group Discussions***

In peer group discussions, the overall performance of the Criminal Culture frame is strong. Like the Foreign Cultural Influences frame in chapter six, the Criminal Culture frame emerged organically from the analysis, unprompted by the interview guide. Consequently, the strength of the frame was assessed in light of the frame's spontaneous occurrence in eight out of ten discussions, the enthusiasm that participants showed once their fellow group members conjured the frame and the absence of arguments put forth in rebuttal. 79 per cent of all focus group participants support the frame. Supporters of the frame appear to span all age groups as nearly half are under the age of 40 while just over half are over the age of 40.

Discussion participants trigger the frame in much the same way as Terrence, who is quoted in the epigraph of this chapter. Participants spontaneously lament the corruption they perceive to be endemic in Antigua and Barbuda. Specifically, participants make one of three claims: Antigua and Barbuda's justice system treats people differently based on who they are and who they know, government agents are easily bribed and break the law with impunity, and crime is actually orchestrated by politicians. Irrespective of the claims they make, the vast majority of participants use language reminiscent of Sykes and Matza (1957) and Matza (1964) to explain the ways in which offenders may rationalise their behaviour. In the analysis below each claim is discussed in turn.

#### ***Supportive Argument 1: Justice is Determined By Who You Are And Who You Know***

The idea that the justice system treats people differently based on who they are and who they know appears in slightly less than half of all peer group discussions. For example, in response to the prompt, 'What do you think should be done about crime in Antigua and Barbuda,' participants of the Cedar Valley peer group discussion respond:

##### ***Group: Cedar Valley***

##### ***Participants:***

*Regine, a Black Antiguan banker in her 40s*

*Precious, a Black Antiguan retiree in her 60s*

*Oliveen, a Black Antiguan senior legal secretary in her 30s*

*Toya, a Black Antiguan attorney-at-law in her 50s*

*Toya:* We might need to strengthen the laws too...or, I don't know if we want to strengthen the laws or –

*Regine:* No, enforce them.

- Toya:* Enforce the laws yeah. I would change it to enforcing the laws because we have some very strong laws.
- Regine:* Plus interference from authorities. Whether they're politician or whatever, they hear such and such lock up – [a prominent person] lock up in prison, [the Minister of National Security] get one phone call, [the prominent person] get out. Me no wan no interference.<sup>45</sup>
- Precious:* Exactly. It should be you do the crime and – how it go? They do the crime [they do the time].

This behaviour is what Lavern, from the Redcliffe Street discussion calls, 'friendism'. In her response to the very first question of the interview guide, 'To what extent is crime a problem in your life,' Lavern explains, 'Okay. It's a very close society like many societies. But, [police and other government agents] fail to like, separate their professional relationship from their relationship as friends...' In a conversation prompted by the last question of the interview guide, 'How important are forgiveness and rehabilitation in the criminal justice system,' Pericles, from the Cassada Gardens peer group discussion expounds on Lavern's point:

You know this is a small place, as Jamaica Kincaid wrote, I mean not in the same sense but it is a small place and sometimes who you are connected with and your political persuasion can determine a lot of these things even to the extent of crime...

In each peer group discussion in which participants discuss this notion of 'friendism,' the participants speak as though this behaviour is a common and taken for granted feature of Antiguan and Barbudan life. The sentiment is very much captured by Doreen in the Crosbies discussion where she exclaims, '...so it's all about who you know. Antigua is just one big ball of corruption'.

### ***Supportive Argument 2: Bribery Abounds And Officials Break The Law With Impunity***

In nearly three-quarters of all peer group discussions, participants make a deeper point – the problem with Antigua and Barbuda's criminal justice system is not only that people are treated differently based on who they know or to whom they are connected, it is also that government agents are easily bribed and break the law with impunity. High-ranking government officials, police officers, immigration officers and customs officers bear the brunt of these accusations. For example, during the Cedar Valley

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<sup>45</sup> Antiguan parlance for 'I don't want any interference'.

discussion, in response to the question, ‘Who do you think are committing these crimes,’ Regine explains:

Well, I think initially, the real criminal, the real thieves were doing their do – or the real lawbreakers – and then the police started to crack down on them so they feel very threatened and, I think the thieves toned down or they just kinda lie low. But the police are now taking advantage of this situation and they themselves are doing it...We still go to them for protection. We’re pretending that you know they’re our friends but in the back of our mind we think they’re doing stuff so even with them you’re uncomfortable.

Participants in the Redcliffe Street discussion make similar accusations as they discuss the Poor Immigration Control prompt:

***Group: Redcliffe Street***

***Participants:***

*Lavern, a Black Guyanese programme officer in her 40s*

*Peaches, a Black Antiguan clerical assistant in her 30s*

*Tia, a Black Antiguan social development practitioner in her 20s*

*Judy, an Antiguan security officer in her 30s*

*Janet, a Black Dominican janitor in her 20s*

*Lavern:* And, immigration break immigration laws.

*Tia:* They’re not following their own structure.

*Lavern:* Not whatsoever.

*Judy:* Immigration cannot track...where these people – where they are their whereabouts and all of that.

*Lavern:* But, sometimes they know. They know sometimes.

*Judy:* And some immigration because they are getting money under the table –

*Lavern:* Of course.

*Judy:* They won’t say anything.

*Lavern:* They won’t say not a thing. All of them driving their big car and all kind of thing and I still walking.

*Judy:* And then they’re catching up on them because they’re forging stamps and all kind of thing.

*Lavern:* They come to work and...[they] driving already. Maybe I need to become an immigration officer. I’m serious, I’m serious, I’m serious.

*Tia:* How that go?

*Judy:* I see persons join the immigration department last year and in fact they don’t have no rice land,<sup>46</sup> no big way in terms of getting money. I don’t know how the family structure – they never have no gold mine or no oilfield or whatever the case may be. [They] join lets say last year and this month its like, oops the person driving no ordinary trade in kind of car its car with the seats still in plastic.

*Tia:* Yeah, it’s corruption

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<sup>46</sup> Lavern is referring to farm land, which is often a source of income for the plantocracy in many Caribbean countries.

*Lavern:* Guys, you guys need to do it sometimes.... drive around. And say, 'Uh...who is living here?' An immigration – an immigration who? How long the person in the immigration department? One year. If you see the structure. I'm serious. Apartments and them sort of things. So Immigration breaking immigration law. So I normally say um-hmm, I better go and get a job as an immigration officer. Because I am going to stop walking and get a big house too. It's a fact. It's a fact.

*Peaches:* Yes it's the hook up.

*Lavern:* ...we're talking about trafficking in terms of when they collude with persons who bring persons inside the society for sexual and other pleasures. Yes...whorehouses. Bring them in for whorehouses.

*Judy:* Because the immigration will be paid under the table and they know that um, these people they're coming in to work at the whorehouse and these people come and tell the immigration, 'Oh I'm bringing in 10 ladies to come and be waitresses in my establishment' and [immigration] know that well it's not true. The immigration get paid to conceal that crime...

Again, as participants make this supportive argument, they speak as though the behaviour they describe is a common and taken for granted feature of Antiguan and Barbudan life. When asked to clarify whether she was suggesting that there a lot of police officers who accept bribes, in the Crosbies discussion group Doreen replies, 'Of course! Come on. That's Antiguan's nature. Stemming from [the Antigua Labour Party]. Papa Bird.<sup>47</sup> Eventually conceding that she does not believe bribery to be the exclusive domain of the Antigua Labour Party as she believes the United Progressive Party also indulges in the practice, Doreen explains:

The government is supposed to be your prime example, right? And you have, like, the youth of the country is going to look up to all their elders. So when you have all the elders of the country doing crap, that's how they follow...I think it's just gone so bad.

In the Russell's discussion, Eryn offers her opinion as to why she believes corruption is so pervasive in responding to the question, 'What do you think should be done about crime in Antigua and Barbuda':

But I feel like the government wants the system to be like that. That's why there's so much corruption 'cause you know, we pay you nothing 'cause we expect you to take advantage. Like the immigration officers... So you know, they know their salaries could be better but it's like you – what, whatever, we could get the kickbacks. You know like the immigration officers. They wonder why illegal stamps are cropping up in passports [but] what do you think? It's because they get paid nothing so someone comes to them with 500 dollars 1000

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<sup>47</sup> Doreen is referring to Vere Cornwall Bird, the architect of the independence and first Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda.

dollars just to stamp [a passport] you know? They'll do it. I'm sure if I was them I would probably do it. Well...

Implicit in Eryn's response is a sense that corruption is systemic and deliberately so. There is a sense that the behaviour is, on some level, just another unfortunate aspect of the culture. This reflects Tankebe's (2009) observation that in developing countries the relationships between the public and the police are fraught with distrust and alienation.

### ***Supportive Argument 3: Politicians Orchestrate Crimes***

The last main argument that participants make with respect to the Criminal Culture frame appears in slightly less than one-third of all peer group discussions. Participants argue that politicians actually orchestrate crimes. Participants in the Cassada Gardens peer group discussion make this argument most intelligibly as they respond to the question, 'In general would you say crime is getting better, worse or staying the same?'

#### ***Group: Cassada Gardens***

##### ***Participants:***

*Pericles, a Black Antiguan consultant in his 40s*

*Senaa, a Black Antiguan executive secretary in her 50s*

*Dawn, a Black Antiguan district officer in her 30s*

*John, a Black Antiguan personal/administrative assistant in his 20s*

*Senaa:* ...most of [the crimes] are orchestrated.

*Facilitator:* What do you mean by that?

*Senaa:* Um, from the political standpoint

*Facilitator:* So, in what way? Do you think politicians are [committing crime]?

*Senaa:* Mmmhhmm. Mmmhhmm. No, not the politicians themselves.

*Pericles:* But, they have the um –

*Senaa:* I'm going to put it plain and simple and you can put it how you want it. Some of the crimes that are committed, the persons are being paid by politicians to destabilise the country.

*Pericles:* To destabilise the country.

*Senaa:* And that is a fact.

*Facilitator:* On what do you base that conclusion? How do you know that?

*Senaa:* Some of the people, they talk. They admit to these things. They even call names. They even call names.

*Pericles:* Well I, I can say for example, in the context of my brother's house. But that was back in 1994 when the person confessed that he was paid by the politician to vandalise the house.

*Senaa:* That was politically orchestrated, year.

*[Further in the conversation]*

*Pericles:* ...from reading the historical records it seems that when you're going through a period of political crisis in Antigua and Barbuda, the spate of criminal activities increase and I don't believe it's accident. If you go back and read the papers in the 1970s, 1960s when they were having turmoil you'd see that crime was rampant. Especially during the period of the PLM government. The destruction with respect to government properties – bombs, fires set to cane fields and so forth. Those were pretty active period – at heightened periods of political tension in the country. And so, that would tend to support the case that she's making.

*Senaa:* And the same thing is happening now. At a certain time and it comes right back to now, a different party is in um rulership and the crime thing has come up again. You know like in 71 to 76 when there was when the Birds are not in power so to speak.

*Facilitator:* So, you think prior to 2004 there wasn't that much crime? Is that what you're saying?

*Senaa:* Yes. I can safely say that. It has increased tremendously after 2004.

*John:* After the 2004 election.

*Senaa:* Whether it is rape, robbery, you know that kind of stuff. It's like crazy after 2004 elections. And, even like, the vandalism of schools and you know, that kind of stuff, it has increased after 2004 elections. Computer access centres that um, was, introduced by this administration – most of them were vandalised – computers were stolen, computers were smashed up. You know, that kind of stuff.

During a conversation prompted by the Social Breakdown frame, participants in the Blue Waters peer group discussion make the connection between individual politicians and criminal gangs:

***Group: Blue Waters***

***Participants:***

*N'Jaedr, a Black Haitian telecommunications engineer in her 40s*

*Elbee, a Black Antiguan civil engineer in his 60s*

*Lynn, a Black Antiguan public servant in her 60s*

*Mimi, a Black Antiguan retiree in her 60s*

*Bolivar, a Black Antiguan engineer in his 60s*

*Elbee:* Several years ago when the gangs things started forming in Antigua, [Orville Grant] preached. He said you have to nip that in the bud. That's how the crime started in Jamaica, some of the politicians were encouraging them.

- Lynn:* Yeah. They used to boast about who had what gang and so.
- Facilitator:* Do you think that's the issue here – a connection between politics and gangs?
- Bolivar:* At one time. It seems as if it has subsided a little bit.
- Elbee:* People say it seems to be subsiding but I don't know...I don't know if they feel good to have – I don't know what they ask them to do.
- Bolivar:* Some have actually said it openly.
- Facilitator:* And when they talk about it, what is it – each party has a particular gang?
- Bolivar:* No, not the parties, individuals, not the parties.
- Lynn:* I remember when I was studying in Jamaica, Edward Seaga was known to have his gang. You know, you knew they were Edward Seaga's people so he was literally untouchable. So, I guess it's the same sort of syndrome being played out to the fullest.
- Facilitator:* Is this a recent thing?
- Lynn:* I'm not sure.
- Elbee:* In 2004 [a prominent politician] was [a government Minister] – no 1999 – my Minister. And, one day I went down to open his office door, the door was locked and I asked his secretary who was in there with him and she say Red Shirt Gang. And, I turn around and went back to my office and they asked me if I 'fraid. I said, 'No, I just don't want to be associated with these people'. I'm not going to go and sit in a meeting with them.

As Doreen's comments in the excerpt above suggests, irrespective of the supportive argument participants make with respect to the Criminal Culture frame, the vast majority of participants make a connection between the perception of a two-tiered criminal justice system rife with 'friendism,' corruption, or politically orchestrated crime and the country's overall crime rate. In language reminiscent of neutralisation theory, Pericles more pointedly makes the argument:

...I would also say, which is something that I neglected to say initially. The fact that some people in this country can get off with impunity, whether it's politicians or people of high influence in society – can get away with certain criminal activities, um, makes um, people think that there are a different set of laws for people and therefore they can do whatever too. And I don't think we should take it lightly in terms of the way people perceive politicians as being thieves. The way people perceive certain high government officials. Or, not even government officials but people who – people in society who are connected to government officials. If they can get away with it, why can't I? So I don't know how – I would perhaps call that the crime perception index, how people perceive how they're treated can have an impact on how they um, you know, relate to the um, criminal justice system and the laws of this country.

## II

### Faulty System

In their popular song ‘Get Tough On Crime,’ Burning Flames, Antigua and Barbuda’s most celebrated musical group, proposes severe punishment as an antidote to the country’s crime problem. In so doing, the musicians articulate the law and order meme so prevalent in the country’s crime discourse. The musicians sing:

*Get tough on crime, Judges get tough on crime.  
Let the criminals serve their time.  
They will rob, they will kill, they don’t even care,  
Now we have to live in fear.  
Ah what we do? Lock them up and throw ‘way the key, lock them up,  
Lock them up and throw ‘way the key, lock them up,  
Using gun, using knife, steal and kill as they like,  
Lock them up and throw ‘way the key, lock them up.  
Get tough on crime, Judges get tough on crime,  
Let the murderers serve more time.  
Poisoning our youths, they don’t even care.  
Now we have to live in fear.  
Ah what we do? Lock them up and throw ‘way the key, lock them up.  
Lock them up and throw way the key, lock them up.  
Day and night on the street, selling drugs as they like,  
Lock them up and throw ‘way the key, lock them up.*

The fundamental message of the song is similar to a critical message of the Faulty System frame – the courts need to ‘get tough’ and make criminals do ‘hard time’. This message, however, presupposes that offenders are rational and choose to offend after engaging in a utilitarian calculus promising more advantages than disadvantages. This presupposition is the outgrowth of eighteenth century Enlightenment-era theories put forth by Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1833) (see Rock 2012; Siegel 2011). In *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* Bentham (1907: I.1) famously explains that:

[n]ature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it.

Although Bentham and Beccaria were social theorists and not criminologists in any modern sense of the word, much of their work has been applied to crime and crime control nevertheless. For example, Bentham’s (1907) observations that the temptation



to offend is weakest when the advantages derived from offending are small relative to the accompanying troubles and dangers and Beccaria's (1963) insights that offending can be controlled by fear and punishment as long as the punishment is swift, proportionate and certain, are the very foundation on which classical criminology is built (see Siegel 2011). Seeking to explain criminal offending, the classical perspective assumes that individuals have free will to choose between criminal and lawful solutions to meet their needs. Classical criminology further assumes that criminal solutions may be attractive if for little effort these solutions promise significantly more gains. Thus, classical criminology posits that an individual will choose a criminal solution if she or he believes the pain of expected punishment will be greater than the expected reward. Moreover, the individual will only understand the potential pain of punishment if the punishment is proportionate, certain and swift enough to convince her or him that 'crime does not pay' (Siegel 2011). Although the popularity of classical criminology waned in the nineteenth century, the classical principals on which it is based enjoyed a resurgence during the late twentieth century under the guise of Rational Choice Theory (see Becker 1974).

Rational choice theory, best understood through the prism of economics, holds that offenders make a rational assessment of the potential consequences of their actions and will commit an offence only if the economic advantages outweigh the disadvantages (Becker 1974; see also Jones 2013). Rational choice theory is a theory that recognises that offenders do not simply commit 'crime' in some amorphous sense of the word but that they carry out specific crimes, each of which has its own particular motives, purposes and benefits (Cornish and Clarke 2008). More pointedly, according to Cornish and Clarke (2008) rational choice theory:

[v]iews the desires, preferences and motives of offenders and potential offenders as similar to those of the rest of us, and as in continual interaction with contemporary opportunities and constraints to produce, reinforce and sometimes reduce criminal behaviours. At its core are the concepts of choice and decision-making, present-centredness, and the centrality of the crime event to continued criminal activity – success in offending driving the development of criminal lifestyles, and failure leading to reduction and change in criminal activity, or to desistance. (21)

Additionally, Cornish and Clarke (2008) argue that rational choice theory is more of a conceptual tool than a true criminological theory as it developed in a pragmatic and piecemeal way in response to very real public policy questions. That is, 'rather than setting out to provide a complete explanation for criminal behaviour, the rational

choice perspective has been more concerned with how to prevent or disrupt it' (Cornish and Clarke 2008: 38). For proponents of rational choice theory, the solution to a community's crime problem lies in reducing the physical opportunities for offending and increasing the risk of an offender being caught and punished (Downes and Rock 2011).

In Antigua and Barbuda's newspaper discourse as well as in the peer group discussions, arguments reminiscent of rational choice theory abound. Unsurprisingly, like the Bentham, Beccaria and their intellectual progeny, the solutions proffered are rooted in better apprehension of criminals, harsher penalties and greater surveillance. The remainder of this section will examine the prevalence of the Social Breakdown frame in newspaper articles and in peer group discussions.

### ***Faulty System in the News***

Of all the frames identified in Antigua and Barbuda's crime discourse, the Faulty System frame appears most frequently in newspaper articles. Indeed, components of the frame appear in almost half of all newspaper articles included in this study. In these articles, writers seem almost unanimously to support the fundamental premise that crime stems from the failure of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish offenders. This support takes two main forms. Writers either emphasise that the police are inept and thus ineffective or they focus on the fact that the courts need to impose stiffer sentences.

In half of the articles displaying the frame, authors draw attention to the perceived ineptitude of the police force and implicitly associate this ineptitude with the 'spiralling crime rate'. Eight articles complain of police failure to respond to distress calls in a timely manner, seven articles note the lack of police visibility throughout the community and three articles lament the lack of adequate resources allocated to law enforcement. For example, a 2005 article entitled 'Shake-Up At Dockyard Police Station' asserts that the lack of police visibility at Falmouth and English harbours may have 'given the criminals license for the recent spate of robberies on yachts moored in the area...' (*The Daily Observer* 2/16/2005: 1), and in a 2006 article entitled, 'Task Force Targets Youth Violence, Drug Abuse in Barbuda,' reporter Nasheta Richards quotes a Barbuda councilman who reminisces that, '[b]ack in the days, police used to do foot patrol and not just be mobile. Policemen walking on the streets used to make a difference' (*The Daily Observer* 2/20/2006: 4). Similarly, in a 2008 letter to the

editor entitled 'Urgent Police Assistance Needed in Jennings,' the writer complains that:

A lot of us in this neighbourhood have to live in fear, looking over our shoulders and praying that we will not be the next victim of robbery, assault or rape. There are persons who are targeting this community and we are not getting good assistance from the police... We have called the police on many occasions and they have not responded to our calls. We've received excuses like there are no vehicles on the compound (even though they have new ones) or there is no one who can drive them. I am absolutely fed up. All of us are. We cannot tell the last time we saw a police vehicle patrolling the area. If they were hunting for drugs they would certainly be around. Tuesday night, I called them after I was seeing this really suspicious car circling the neighbourhood and this officer said in a don't care manner, 'What do you want us to do now?' It was this incident which led me to write this letter. This is usually the response we've been receiving or sometimes even with a chuptz.<sup>48</sup> (*The Daily Observer* 2/1/2008: 2)

And, in a 2006 article entitled 'More Residents Blast Police' the writer chronicles the woes of residents who 'complain bitterly about members of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda' relaying that:

The man, in a telephone interview, chided the police for promising to come to the scene, and not doing so sooner than three hours after the call. 'I calling the police, I call 911, I call St. John's [Police Station] and I call C[riminal] I[nvestigation] D[eartment] and the police keep telling me somebody is going to come for the past three hours,' the Trini said. 'Until now, no police have showed up. I really angry, and somebody could ah dead,' he said. 'I have to ask the woman at 911 if only when somebody dead they going to show up'. (*The Daily Observer* 2/19/2007: 16)

In applauding efforts to revamp the police force and calling for a corresponding revamping of entrenched mind sets within the institution and in government, a 2008 editorial entitled 'Police, Political Will and Partisan Politics' asserts:

...the matter that has gripped the entire nation is that of the spiralling crime rate and the seeming ineptitude of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda. None among us can dispute that the police force has limped along these past years, plagued by infighting, apparent disunity, lack of clear commitment, by officers – many of them transplanted Caribbean nationals – to Antigua and Barbuda and to the ideal to protect and serve, and a lack of public trust. A record high of 19 murders on record for 2007 and with a serial rapist terrorising the nation tossed in, with the overall increase in crime has caused sundry persons to call for the problem to be addressed comprehensively and immediately...If it is truth, justice and positive change that we desire, then we must give the proposed changes a

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<sup>48</sup> See footnote 40.

chance...The police have been deliberately and systematically under-trained, under-staffed, underpaid and demoralised for decades. The officers did not do this to themselves. So, as we focus on the police officers, their practices and procedures, we must not be so quick to let the politicians, past and present off the hook for the hash they have made of what should have been a noble unit...We all accept that, generally speaking, the police have fallen down and off the job. But we must also acknowledge that the script could end no other way; this was the design, the will of the political directorate, although it is the police who now shoulder the blame. (*The Daily Observer* 2/28/2008: 2)

In short, the implicit argument at the heart of each of the articles in this category is one that Beccaria or any one of his intellectual progeny might make – if police are not able to swiftly apprehend offenders, or if there is little certainty as to which offender the police will choose to apprehend, there is no deterrent to future offending. Although, very few articles explicitly propose measures aimed at correcting these perceived deficiencies, those that do focus on increased police visibility. For example, in an article entitled ‘Police Crack Down To Curb Criminal Activity,’ a police officer proposes what a classical criminologist or rational choice theorist might view as common sense, ‘We must control the criminal activities in this country...so to do this we have to step up our patrol throughout the Nation’ (*The Daily Observer* 2/16/2000: 3).

In the remaining half of the articles supporting the Faulty System frame, the overarching theme is ‘tough on crime’. In these articles writers bemoan the perceived lack of severity in dealing with offenders, including at-risk youth. For these writers, like the proponents of classical criminology, courts and other criminal justice institutions must send a clear message that ‘crime does not pay’. The overall message of these articles is best captured by the 2006 article entitled, ‘Former Educator: Spare The Rod, Spoil The Child,’ in which a former educator is quoted as saying:

In Antigua we are becoming too loose, and we are sorry for the person who commits the crime and not the victim...Young people are going into people’s houses, stealing and reverting to violence. And instead of dealing with them appropriately, we have this soft approach to the problem, and it is not working because they laugh at us and keep on committing the crime. (*The Daily Observer* 2/9/2006: 6)

In making this point the vast majority of writers call for stiffer penalties generally, however, a small number of writers call for increased use of the death penalty or a strict boot camp for young people specifically.

In calling for stiffer penalties, five articles argue as the legal maxim, ‘justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done’. In these articles writers claim that criminal penalties serve a function that is symbolic as well as practical. Criminal penalties are not only about punishing the individual offender, in a very Durkheimian (1964, 1965) way they are also about reinforcing a moral code and ensuring members of society that the society’s abhorrence of crime is understood and duly reflected. For example, in a 2000 editorial entitled, ‘Courts Should Impose Appropriate Sanctions,’ the writer expresses concern that courts are not imposing the maximum penalties ascribed to their respective offences. In lamenting the decision of a trial judge not to impose a custodial sentence in a case involving Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm, the writer cautions:

Asking a layman to second guess what sentence a court of criminal justice will likely impose in any case given its own peculiar facts and circumstances can be problematic at best...But, if this nation is at all serious in its commitment to come to grips with crimes of violence, to fight against them and to end them, then criminal justice must be meted out in such a way as to reflect this society’s abhorrence to such crimes. And, among other measures it is perhaps through the imposition of stiff sentences that the public will know that the authorities are in earnest...Courts ought not to be timorous in imposing appropriate sentences when required to do so. And the message should be sounded loudly and clearly throughout the land that the Courts of the nation shall never flinch from their obligation to impose appropriate sanctions against persons found guilty for vicious criminal behaviour. (*The Daily Observer* 2/28/2000: 2)

In protesting the perceived lenient treatment of a sex offender, a 2003 article entitled, ‘Bawl Murder! Bawl Advantage!’ underscores the point:

...a little girl of 11 years is raped by a man more than four times her age. And what for it? Five years in prison! Murder! Advantage, indeed, when one realizes that the penalty allowed for this crime is life imprisonment...The latest buzzword is penal reform; the welfare of the criminal is suddenly paramount. But what kind of message does this five-year sentence send *the victim*? What are the authorities telling the more than 9000 persons who petitioned the Prime Minister for greater protection of our daughters, granddaughters, nieces, cousins, neighbours? With this brand of justice, one now wonders whether the parents of the pornography-ring victims did not have the right idea when they sent away their children. After all, the message has been clearly received that girls have little value in our society. The last 36 years of our existence have been under so-called self-rule. We have no English colonials to blame for our condition. But nature it is said, abhors a vacuum and so we have created our own massas to fill it, and we have perpetuated our own daughters’ degradation in the post-colonial era. The truth is that we have brushed off their rapes as the

indulgences and foibles of old men handed down to their sons. (*The Daily Observer* 2/5/2003: 2)

Nine articles, however, claim that stiffer penalties will deter offenders from reoffending and would-be offenders from ever offending. For these writers, offenders and would-be offenders are at the fore. The penalties do not only send messages to the wider society generally but to those who may and do run afoul of the law specifically. Many of those making this argument focus on young people given the purported ‘ever-increasing scourge of youth violence’ with which many newspaper writers appear preoccupied. For example a 2007 editorial calling for a youth ‘boot camp’ warns:

But, we can get tough now, starting with the [boot camp] idea posited here, or we can look forward to joining the queue outside 1735<sup>49</sup> on visiting day or worse, standing over lifeless bodies at either of the two morgues. When we look at it that way, the choice seems an obvious no-brainer. (*The Daily Observer* 2/26/2007: 2)

Along similar lines, in a 2005 article entitled, ‘Legal Heads Address HMP’s Overcrowding Problem’ the Attorney General is quoted as saying:

...young persons must understand that there is a certain modicum of behaviour which is expected of them and if they do not behave along those lines, then they will face the full wrath of the law and if it means that they have to be incarcerated before they can obtain bail, then so be it. (*The Daily Observer* 2/17/2005: 9)

This argument is also echoed in three of the four articles that call for increased use of the death penalty. In each of these articles the writers argue that the death penalty is an effective means of preventing violent crime. For example, in a letter to the editor entitled, ‘The Case Of The Jammed Button,’ the writer says:

Rumours abound in the upper echelons of Antiguan society that the current governor general is opposed to capital punishment. This issue needs to be aired and clarified, because one of the best deterrents to violent crime is the knowledge that at the push of a button you could be in the company of some of the world’s most notorious misfits. The hangman’s button seems to be jammed in this country. Please apply some WD40 immediately. (*The Daily Observer* 2/1/2005: 3)

Likewise a 2002 editorial entitled, ‘To Hang Or Not To Hang’ the writer explains:

The arguments against the death penalty are convincing to a point but fail to convince me on one critical question: is it a deterrent or not? First, it cannot be denied that an executed murderer is forever deterred from committing the same crime again. Second an analysis of my

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<sup>49</sup> Antigua and Barbuda’s sole prison, Her Majesty’s Prison was built in the year 1735 and 1735 is inscribed above its portals. It is common for Antiguan and Barbudan to refer to the prison as 1735 when speaking colloquially.

own feelings indicates to me clearly that the threat of a death penalty has stayed my hand on occasion in moments of extreme stress. Third, my opinion is that anyone who claims that the threat of losing one's life is not a deterrent to acting unlawfully, is not being honest about their feelings...If execution of murderers does prevent some murders then I will be comforted by the thought that my family, my friends and my countrymen will be spared some grief because some of us will be held back from killing because of fear of the death penalty...To me the bottom line is the survival of as many potential victims of murder as our consciences and laws allow us. It may not be a universally held view but it seems to me that the rights of society as a whole must supersede those of the individual. If we accept that premise, along with the view that the death penalty is a deterrent to violent crime, then retaining capital punishment is essential if we are to preserve our quality of life and indeed, improve upon it. (*The Daily Observer* 2/5/2000: 2)

In 4 per cent of all articles, writers conjure the Faulty System frame to refute one or more of its components. In each of the articles in this category, writers reject the call for stiffer penalties as well as 'get tough' rhetoric. While one article makes a very practical claim, that alternatives to prison and rehabilitation are critical because in the long run the costs of incarceration are significantly greater, two articles challenge the frame on more fundamental grounds. For example, in a 2000 guest commentary entitled, 'It Is Cheaper To Kill Them,' writer Dobrene O'Marde challenges the frame on the grounds that offenders are far less rational than many believe and are likely not be deterred by harsh punishment as he asserts:

The majority of murders are crimes of passion, acts that take place in the split second of loss of mind, loss of control – death penalty or not! The premeditated murder or the gangland slaying are (sic) planned under the shadow of the death penalty. So they are planned more carefully – the murderers plan not to get caught. The death penalty is not a deterrent; it is just another variable that is taken into the planning of premeditated murder...It is the association of punishment with pain which propels our teachers to break children's hands, which justifies parents in the physical abuse of their off-spring; which motivates men to continue beating women like road marches. None of the above will change until we regain respect for human rights and human life (*The Daily Observer* 2/8/2000: 2)

O'Marde's commentary echoes the critique that many criminologists have made with respect to classical criminology and rational choice theory. Downes and Rock (2011: 251) describe as unwarranted the assumption that:

[t]he simplicities of rational choice theory afford us a good enough comprehension of the way in which would-be predators decipher their environment and formulate plans, being deterred or seduced by signs, obstructions, and opportunities.



Similarly, in particular regard to certain types of street-level crime, Neal Shover notes in his foreword to *Armed Robbers in Action: Stick Ups And Street Culture* (Wright and Decker 2011: xi) that:

Street-level robbers typically make decisions in contexts of hedonism and desperation in which the likely consequences of their acts are neither weighed carefully nor taken seriously. When offenders describe their crimes, they employ a rhetoric of utilitarianism that contrasts markedly with the fanciful attributions of motives and meanings suggested by interpreters who lack...first-hand knowledge...

Moreover, both O'Marke, in his commentary discussed above, and an editorial writer in the editorial discussed below, denounce painful punishment on the grounds that violence spawns violence irrespective of whether that violence is state sanctioned. In criminological terms, the writers essentially claim that painful punishment has the 'brutalisation effect' described by scholars such as Dann (1935) and Bowers and Pierce (1980) in their work on the death penalty (see also Gilligan 2001). That is, offenders may model their behaviour after the state or act violently because the violence associated with the state's response cheapens the value of life (Bowers and Pierce 1980). In excoriating corporal punishment, the editorial writer of a 2000 editorial entitled, 'Missing The Message,' argues that:

We are of the view that the entire culture of violence has a rich spawning ground in the classrooms of the nation where ill-tempered men and women constantly abuse the young. As a result, students are shooting, stabbing and raping fellow students; and teachers who should know better are violently turning on students in a disquieting number of instances. If we believe violence has no place in the nation's classrooms, we are then under a moral obligation to ensure that it doesn't happen. (*The Daily Observer* 2/10/2000: 2)

Many of the arguments made in the newspaper with respect to the Faulty System frame are echoed in the peer group discussions.

### ***Faulty System in the Peer Group Discussions***

The overall performance of the Faulty System frame in peer group discussions is strong. Eight out of ten discussions show strong support for the frame as participants generally agree with the contention that crime stems from the failure of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish offenders. Across the discussion groups, 94.2 per cent of all participants share this view. In many cases, the enthusiasm that the participants have for the frame is evident by participants interrupting the facilitator to express approval for the frame before the entire frame is read and by making



comments such as, ‘very strong – not only strong but very, very strongly agree!’ Enthusiasm for the frame is further evident by the fact that in five of the ten discussion groups the frame was conjured before the facilitator prompted it. In two of the ten peer group discussions there is a mixed reaction to the frame. In these discussions, at least one group member articulates a cogent position contrary to the other group members when discussing the merits of the frame. No peer group unanimously rejects the Faulty System frame. As such, at least one person in each of the ten peer group discussions conducted in this study support the Faulty System frame. Supporters of the frame appear to span all age groups as nearly half are under the age of 40 while just over half are over the age of 40. There is no other frame identified in Antigua and Barbuda’s crime discourse that enjoys such a high level of support.

### Supportive Arguments

In peer group discussions, participants ardently support the fundamental premise that crime stems from the failure of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish offenders. While journalists and commentators either emphasise police ineptitude and ineffectiveness or the ‘need’ for the courts to impose stiffer sentences, peer group discussion participants argue more broadly. That is, participants claim there is ineptitude across the entire spectrum of criminal justice institutions, not only the police, and that the entire system is ineffective. In keeping with the newspaper writers, however, many participants also argue that the courts must impose stiffer sentences. The analysis below examines each argument in turn.

### ***Supportive Argument 1: Our Institutions Are Broken***

Whether they lament the ineptitude of the police, bemoan the inefficiency of the judicial system or deplore the state of the country’s adult and juvenile custodial centres, in each of the peer group discussions where at least one participant supports the Faulty System frame, participants argue that the institutions comprising Antigua and Barbuda’s criminal justice system are broken. The implicit message of this supportive argument is that broken institutions are antithetical to ensuring swift, certain and severe punishment and will encourage rather than stymie offenders. Mary’s sentiment underlies the basic tenor of this supportive argument:

[The criminal justice system is] not efficient. No government office is efficient. Not one – not a single one. You go down to legal affairs and they don’t have filing systems. They cannot find files and that is – I mean, I work in a government office and we’ve had court cases

brought against the government and the legal department cannot find files, which are essential for cases. When the key bodies aren't functioning correctly and efficiently I don't know how anything else falls into place.

In five out of ten discussions participants focus on police ineffectiveness and the lack of resources available to the police, and in seven out of ten discussions participants complain bitterly about the lack of professionalism within the police force. The excerpts below are illustrative.

In the Darkwood Beach discussion group, Toji responds to the frame's prompt by saying:

The reason I agree with that is because a lot of people probably wouldn't get into crime in the first place if it was like we have an intelligent police force that's going to get you most of the time. I think a lot of kids around here are just idle and it seems far too easy to them and that's what motivates them.

Participants in the Redcliffe Street discussion expand on Toji's point.

***Group: Redcliffe Street***

***Participants:***

*Lavern, a Black Guyanese programme officer in her 40s*

*Peaches, a Black Antiguan clerical assistant in her 30s*

*Tia, a Black Antiguan social development practitioner in her 20s*

*Judy, an Antiguan security officer in her 30s*

*Janet, a Black Dominican janitor in her 20s*

*[In response to the question, 'Why do you think the crime problem is getting better, worse or staying the same?']*

*Tia:* But I think too what [Judy] said about the police. And, I think people feel that they'll get away with it.

*Group:* Yeah, yes. Yeah.

*Peaches:* If the Police would have solved the problem, right, if they solve a problem occasionally –

*Lavern:* And make persons examples

*Peaches:* Right. You will say, well ok if I go and steal this or if I go and break into somebody's home that police would catch me eventually, you know. They would go all out and catch me. So [people] wouldn't go back and do it or other people out there that wants to do it, even if they're unemployed they wouldn't do it again because they know the police are gonna be on their trail, you understand?

*Lavern:* And, and –

*Peaches:* But they're not doing anything.

*Lavern:* And not only –

*Peaches:* You go to them, they come they do a little dusting –

*Lavern:* Dirtying not dusting, dirty the place.

*[In response to the frame's prompt]*

- Tia:* Also, when you have been victimised you really do realise how ridiculous the system is or how ineffective the system is. Once you have to go through it, once you see the perpetrator still walking the street next to you, you know, once you call the police and they have nothing to tell you, you really see how ridiculous the whole structure can be.
- Lavern:* And, and other than that. You know, you're a victim over and over again and it makes no sense you go to them and report it. And maybe sometimes you short changed yourself because that [one] time when you will go to make the report, maybe that's the time they're going to apprehend the person but because you have gone so many times, you've worked with them on so many occasions, them nuh do nothing, so why go now? I mean it happens not only to me, but to so many other persons in society. So why are they going to go to the police? For what? They're not going to do anything about it.
- Tia:* And depending on your situation, your personal situation – I mean for me personally, next time I wouldn't tell the police I would tell an uncle or a brother or my boyfriend. I would look to somebody else for a solution, which may not be within the confines of the law.

With respect to the lack of professionalism found in the police force participants argue that police officers operate according to their political loyalties, fail to follow up on cases or respond to calls, collect evidence incorrectly or are simply rude and unnecessarily belligerent. A number of participants also express concern with respect to issues of confidentiality and crime reporting. In the words of Judy from the Redcliffe Street discussion, '...when you give them the information about things, the police release your information to other people in the public'. The Cassada Gardens participants broached the idea of professionalism in responding to the question, 'What do you think should be done in Antigua and Barbuda about the crime situation?'

***Group: Cassada Gardens***

***Participants:***

*Pericles, a Black Antiguan consultant in his 40s*

*Senaa, a Black Antiguan executive secretary in her 50s*

*Dawn, a Black Antiguan district officer in her 30s*

*John, a Black Antiguan personal/administrative assistant in his 20s*

*Pericles:* I think there needs to be a revamping of the Antigua – of the police force. More professionalism in the police force because the police force is dividing along political loyalties. Right. And that gives opportunities for crime.

*Facilitator:* How so?

*Pericles:* Um, in the sense that if your government is not in power you are very lax in how you enforce the laws. Or, how you police. Let me put it this way. So for example, if you

- know there is criminal activities happening in a particular way in a particular community, you are not interested in doing anything about it as long as it makes the government look bad. I think they would say that openly.
- Senaa:* I think some of the criminal activities could be aborted if there was police presence, you know, in the communities. You know, if they had more police presence in the communities. But, you don't see the police. You don't see anybody. You know you have to call when anything happens. And sometimes you have to wait so long for them to respond. of course sometimes they don't respond at all. So, you know with these loopholes, you know people don't care because the police don't come anyway, 'No police dey'<sup>50</sup> so let me go and do what I want to do'. And, I think we have enough police on the force that the situation could be different.
- Pericles:* I believe so too but they are saying they don't have enough –
- Senaa:* Who? It have more than enough police in the force, you know.
- Pericles:* over 600 police officers in the force, I believe they can – but police themselves, I have two police officer friends and every time I go there my wife is always on them saying you know, you're police officers how do you expect to stop people with the tint on their car when your car is tinted?
- Senaa:* That is the thing again. Some of the things, they're doing it themselves so they can't trouble nobody because they're doing the same thing.

Senaa also raises an important point with respect to police visibility. In six out of ten discussion groups, calls for a higher level of police professionalism include calls for greater police visibility and initiatives in line with community policing. In the Russell's discussion group Eryn and Mary discuss the fact that cases are often thrown out of court as a result of poorly collected evidence. Supporting Eryn's claim that, '...it comes down to the police force and they never ready,'<sup>51</sup> Mary, whose father is an attorney-at-law, explains:

I know that so many people – we were driving through town today – and my dad was like that guy is a rapist. Known. And he's just walking on the streets. And half of them get out because the police haven't collected evidence in the correct way...

In the Crosbies discussion participants lament the lack of professionalism within the police force while also claiming that police are not adequately trained and do not have

<sup>50</sup> In Antiguan parlance, 'No police are there'.

<sup>51</sup> In this context Eryn is using the phrase 'they never ready' in a way that Antiguan and Barbudans typically use the phrase in a colloquial setting. The idea is not that the police are not literally 'ready' in the standard English use of the word but that they are amateur and inept.

proper resources. Continuing a conversation in which Doreen describes members of the police force as arrogant and claims that they ‘think because they have a little bit of power, they can do what they want...’ Heather and Doreen have the following exchange:

***Group: Crosbies***

***Participants:***

*Patrick, a Syrian/Lebanese Antiguan retiree in his 60s*

*Indigo, a White Antiguan archivist in her 50s*

*Heather, an Antiguan student in her 20s who racially identifies as ‘other’*

*Doreen, a Syrian/Lebanese cake decorator in her 20s*

*Heather:* They’re not trained properly. They’re afraid. They’re afraid and they’re not equipped...I don’t think they are trained enough. Sometimes they’re not equipped to handle a situation whether it be guns or Tasers or drugs or whatever. They don’t have police vehicles – they don’t have enough police vehicles in enough police stations. Like the time there was a problem in Coolidge I remember they called the Coolidge police station and there was one policeman there with no car so he couldn’t do anything about it. Or they’re afraid to go into the situation because they don’t have the gun, whatever the case may be.

*Doreen:* I don’t think they’re afraid...Even a time I was parking in town this was late in the afternoon and it was a regular parking space and this pompous police came up to me and said, ‘You can’t park there’. I said, ‘Well, why not?’ [He said,] ‘Me say ya cyaan park dey! Move!’ Is that really necessary? Instead of you saying something like, ‘Well, the truck with all the money is coming and you can’t park there or it’s reserved for –’ Nothing. It’s just ‘Me say you cyaan park dey! Move!’

Participants argue just as forcefully that the judicial system is inefficient with participants in four out of ten peer group discussions claim that the judicial system is too slow. For example, in the Redcliffe Street discussion group Lavern says, ‘And, additionally, um, other than the police, we have to look at the whole judicial system. They have a very tardy way’. Likewise, in the Lower Nevis Street discussion group Malcolm bemoans judicial backlog asserting, ‘...I think the challenge we have is the whole court system...the matters take so long to go to court...’ and in the Russell’s discussion Brock underscores the point by relaying a personal account:

I know somebody who committed the crime and then when the case got called [the judge] had to postpone it and they kept postponing it for years until they just eventually threw it out.

But, the problem is not only that the judicial system is too slow. In four out of ten discussion groups, participants argue that the laws are antiquated. In the Russell's discussion group Brock expresses his surprise that there are existing laws that still contemplate medieval weapons:

I think a lot of the laws need to be revisited too because I was looking at something the other day and they were talking about swords and I'm like what the hell is that?

Similarly, in the Longford discussion Wayne concludes:

We need to make some amendments. Some of the laws were amended in 1994 yeah and 95 but just a few. We're living in modern times we need modern things – not to be fighting crime with 83 year old laws!

Additionally, participants in two peer group discussions explicitly attack the judicial system for what they see as inconsistent sentencing. For example, in response to the frame's prompt Mary almost immediately responds:

It's not a straight line with the courts here, some people can go to jail over the most petty thing and be in there for like five years because they just never got to it – you know? And, then there's people that actually deserve to be in jail but get out in like two years, you know what I mean?

Later in the conversation, in response to the same prompt, Mary's fellow group member Ashley makes a similar point about sentencing:

They're not at all consistent because it depends on the judge. Like the judges here are so inconsistent that you don't feel like there is a true level of like sentencing for the same crime. It depends on what judge it is and what lawyer. The judge will give a different sentence like we all know that there's a female judge who when it comes to guns has a zero tolerance with gun policy, you know like she has zero zero zero tolerance. Once you were with a gun, you're getting some kind of time or a huge huge fine, you know? But she's very big on – and then there are some judges who will let it go and I thin you have to keep it consistent.

Along these lines, in the Cedar Valley discussion group Regine denounces the prospect of a mitigated sentence in cases where the offender pleads guilty saying:

...there's a penalty for this crime? That's the crime – you did it? That's the penalty. Why the court have to be cooperating with you because you say you're guilty?

Importantly, in the Russell's discussion group Ashley makes a point about inconsistent sentencing with respect to class and race. In discussing a friend who was detained for 11 months while awaiting trial for shooting a gun in the air three times, Ashley emphasises the seemingly random nature of the detention in the excerpt below.

**Group: Russell's**

**Participants:**

*Brock, a Black Antiguan human resources manager in his 30s*

*Betty, a Black Antiguan accountant in her 20s*

*Ashley, a White Antiguan landscape designer in her 20s*

*Mary, a White Antiguan environment officer in her 20s*

*Eryn, a Black Antiguan market officer in her 20s*

*Ashley:* It was a statement because obviously his mother is an ambassador and his father is like a stature in the community and they were trying to make a point that even though you're not white you're high coloured and you going. We going to make an example out of you and they did, because trust me, me never go fire off no gunshots in front of anybody. I might not even tase you – I think they were making an example and they'll happily do that. I mean, how many of our friends have been thrown in jail over night for stupidity – just because they're white and they want to prove a point.

*Facilitator:* Do you think it's just because they're white?

*Ashley:* No not just because they're white. Like when we were growing up – I think the point I'm trying to make is when I grew up I was under the mentality that I could get away with anything on this island and it's not so much anymore.

*Facilitator:* Because you were white?

*Ashley:* No not because I was white. Because of the social group that I was in.

*Betty:* Maybe who you were

*Facilitator:* Because of class

*Ashley:* Yeah because I've always had a mix race of friends, it's never been just white people or you know, whatever. Now it's like the police are so angry and they seem so much meaner nowadays

Lastly, participants argue that Antigua and Barbuda's custodial facilities are also broken. Participants in three discussions decry the only juvenile correctional facilities in the country, the Boy's Training School and the Sunshine Home for Girls, as inadequate and ineffective. These participants argue that the conditions of the Boy's Training School primarily are deplorable, members of staff of both institutions are not qualified and the young people who are released or escape are more dangerous than when they were first admitted. In the Blue Waters discussion group Lynn explains:

Because the environment in which the boys are required to survive does not provide them with anything positive. The beds are made of some 2x4s knocked up together and they are really ugly. The furniture, they're sort of crudely done. And so its really depressing. Everything about the place is depressing but I'm really concerned that there is really not enough care and attention.

Participants in the Crosbies peer group discussion make the point more vividly:

***Group: Crosbies***

- Indigo:* I wouldn't put my dogs in there.  
*Heather:* Same with the prison.  
*Indigo:* How can you rehabilitate somebody that's not being fed properly –  
*Heather:* Getting raped constantly  
*Indigo:* Yeah, being molested. Being put down constantly. Especially Boys Training School. You got young kids in there, yes some of them are bad eggs, but some of them are just there for stupidity and then you're putting them with these other elements and there's nobody there saying well guess what, maybe you can do this, maybe you can do that and try motivate them and finding out why they're doing it.

In four out of ten discussion groups participants complain that Her Majesty's Prison, Antigua and Barbuda's sole adult prison is inadequate and ineffective. In two of these discussions participants argue that the prison is ineffective because the conditions are deplorable, inhumane and offer no hope of rehabilitation. Again, the Russell's discussion group recalls their friend's experience:

***Group: Russell's***

- Brock:* The women are separated from the men?  
*Ashley:* They are but they still pass around a shit bucket. This boy had to shit in a bucket and they would not remove it from your cell until the shit bucket is full. Ok? Now, if you put me in there and I went and that kid was not of the strong mentality that he went in there with – a good, I mean he had a good support system around him to keep him level headed, you come out there fucking crazy man. Like, I would have killed myself in there, I'm not lying to you.  
*Betty:* You come out worse than you went in.  
*Ashley:* One week in there I would have lick off my head. Like, somehow, some way – I would have told them to bring me about 10 sleeping tablets. Let me just go to sleep, can't manage.  
*Brock:* I would have taken some people out with me, I wouldn't have gone by myself.

Contrastingly, participants in two discussions claim that the prison is ineffective because it treats inmates too well. The Cedar Valley discussion group complain that even if rehabilitation programmes in the prison exist, these programmes are not mandatory and thus inmates choose not to attend. According to these participants,



inmates enjoy the unwarranted luxury of choice in matters pertaining to how they exist in their confinement. The exchange below is illustrative.

***Group: Cedar Valley***

*Toya:* There are programmes in place but they don't attend them.

*Precious:* Well, I was very shocked to understand that before, prisoners could have locks and so forth and so on. Now they can have their locks and their cell phone and they do whatever they doing like they at home.

*Regine:* And the most handsome prisoner is in love with the prison officer.

*Precious:* All kind of stuff going on. Up there is like their home or like a nice getaway. They don't treat them like before. They do whatever. They're having a good time in prison then. Let me just say.

***Supportive Argument 2: The Courts Need To Get Tough!***

Participants in six out of ten peer group discussions support the frame by fervently agreeing with the second half of the frame's prompt, only when more criminals are made to do 'hard time' will the message get out that 'crime does not pay'. Much like the newspaper writers, peer group participants who make this argument call for stiffer penalties generally, while a small number of participants call for increased use of the death penalty specifically.

In calling for stiffer penalties, participants in four peer group decry seemingly short prison sentences and inexpensive fines as a 'slap on the wrist' that does little to deter the offender from reoffending. In these articles, participants seem more focused on recidivism than on sending broader moral messages reflecting societal outrage. The most powerful example of this line of argument comes from Wayne, a police officer in the Longford discussion group, who eloquently makes the point as he enthusiastically embraced the frame:

Because crime fighting is not just for the police, it encompass the judiciary as well. When the politicians go to parliament, when they go to pass the laws if they don't pass strong laws, it can't help us. Even if we apprehend someone and we take them before the court and the penalty is two weeks probably they will just go spend their two weeks go out and go back and do the same thing. We don't have penalties for repeat offenders. If we had something like that in place – like three strikes – I think that would be very helpful, and it would, to me, be a deterrent. But, we don't have anything like that. We've had cases where some persons do something today, they get out of jail and tomorrow they gone back doing the same thing. Why? Our laws are not preventing them from doing things like that. We don't have strong enough laws. I could remember in either 2004 or 2005 a law was

passed where if you meet anyone carrying an offensive weapon they will be detained. Now, that law deters people from walking around with the knives and cutlasses. We had seen a decrease in those kind of offences like wounding and such. There was a public outcry and they went and repealed that law and everything went back to the way it was...it was acting as a deterrent. So we're out there everyday trying to do our best solving the crimes but it doesn't just stop with us arresting someone and taking them before the court because the penalty has a lot to do with what the person who was arrested may think about whether or not they'll do it again, or they'll stay away from it.

When asked if his comments applied to all laws or whether there were any laws he thought were too harsh, Wayne further commented:

I don't think any is harsh. I think, drawing attention to another thing, before 2004 we had this law that if someone is found with cannabis – a spliff – \$5,000 that was compulsory. The magistrate could not go below that. Now persons are found with so much drugs and the ridiculous penalties that they are given. That does not present anything to them. They go back on the street and they still sell the drugs.

In two discussions, rape and sexual offences dominated the conversation. While N'jaedr in the Blue Waters discussion calls for castration for 'the people who are raping school children,' participants in the Golden Grove discussion demand life in prison for those who rape:

***Group: Golden Grove***

***Participants:***

*Hulette, a Black Antiguan office administrator in her 60s*

*Nadine, a Black Antiguan trust manager in her 30s*

*Anne, a Black Antiguan information technology professional in her 30s*

*Deege, a Black Antiguan education administrator in her 40s*

*Annette, a Black Antiguan counsellor in her 30s*

*Nicola, a Black Antiguan aircraft mechanic in her 40s*

*Neicy, a Black Antiguan producer in her 30s*

*Robyn, a Black Antiguan banker in her 50s*

*Edy, a Black Antiguan human resources consultant in her 60s*

*Deege:* I think in terms of rape and so on, the sentences are not harsh enough and I mean there is provision in the law for it. People still treating rape as if it's just a little sex.

*Edy:* They're definitely not harsh enough.

*Annette:* I don't know about that. I have known of three cases where they get from 18-25.

*Edy:* They didn't get life yet.

*Annette:* They can get life for it?

*Deege:* Yes, you can.

*Edy:* The law does provide that but nobody get life yet.

*Deege:* Nobody.  
*Edy:* When you have a 67-year-old man going with his granddaughter and he getting five years –  
*Deege:* He never supposed to see the light of day again.  
*Edy:* Thank you. Not even in prison.  
*Deege:* For true – supposed to have to feel for he food.

In four out of ten discussions participants call for increased use of the death penalty. In three discussions participants emphasise the general and specific deterrent effect of the punishment while one participant in the fourth discussion argues simply that the state must not have the expense associated with long-term incarceration. For example, in the Redcliffe Street discussion Lavern asks:

...they ever had the death penalty here? Bring back the death penalty. I can tell you it worked in Guyana in the early 80's when it was 'hang them high' with Desmond Hoyte.<sup>52</sup> He brought back the death penalty and crime went zoop, over night. I'm serious. Because they who love to kill, they don't want to be killed. Bring back the death penalty. I would volunteer.

Similarly, in the Lower Nevis Street discussion group, when Timothy responds to general calls for the death penalty by explaining that his experience in England suggests that the death penalty failed to deter offenders, Sam responds:

I think it varies from society to society. It was certainly a deterrent for the longest while here...When I was growing up, young men literally speaking against killing somebody because they were going to get killed. I hear young men say now and I've heard them say, I feel I'll go to jail – relax, watch my TV, work out read my books and stuff like that.

### Rebuttal Arguments

Notwithstanding the fact that Faulty System is the least contested frame in this study, 5.8 per cent of all participants reject one or more of the frame's various components. Participants in three discussions argue that the police are actually doing much more crime solving and therefore enjoying increased public trust. Participants in two discussions argue that the police do not get paid enough to put their lives on the line and are therefore limited in what they can realistically accomplish. But, participants in two peer group discussions lodge more fundamental complaints against the frame challenging its core assumptions. In these discussions participants argue firstly, that crime fighting is not something law enforcement, the judiciary and prison personnel

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<sup>52</sup> Desmond Hoyte was a Guyanese politician who served as Guyana's Prime Minister from 1984-1985 and President of Guyana from 1985-1992. Hoyte is well known for confronting Guyana's crime situation with a call to 'hang them high'.

can do alone. To the contrary, crime fighting is a community effort. Bolivar makes this clear in the Blue Waters group responding to the frame's prompt by insisting:

Disagree strongly! Because, I don't see how you can expect the police to fight crime if they don't get community involvement. Look at that thing in New York last weekend. The community was so involved from the first minute. You know, the guy with the [backpack]...Let's face it, if they're not getting information, what can they do? Let me give you an example right. The guy who used to do our gardening at one time – and he would say to us – he said to me where he used to live he knew of a mechanic who was just a little further down the ally from him. And he said to me he would say to me that many mornings – two, three, four in the morning he would see when those guys come in with car parts. Right. This is car parts from stolen vehicles. He's not saying that to the police. So you have to have the community involvement.

Secondly, participants argue that punishment is simply not a deterrent to crime. Also in the Blue Waters discussion group Elbee says plainly:

I don't think punishment deters crime... Uh, uh. For example, I don't think capital punishment stop people from murdering people. But, I'm all for capital punishment. The state mustn't have the expense of feeding you and looking after you.

In the same group, Bolivar subsequently says:

I do believe in having appropriate punishment, however, what about rehab? We need to start to deal with – I mean significant rehab. Let me give you an example, when I was water engineer, I had a guy came to me, one morning, and this is how he started: 'Good morning sir, I just came out of jail and I'm looking for a job'. That's how he started. 'Um, I have decided to turn my life around and this is the name and number of my probation officer. You can call him and have a talk with him'. And so I got in touch with his probation officer, and we decided to give the guy a chance. A guy name [Johnny]. And he started to work at the Gray's Hill reservoir, and that guy worked his way up from right at the bottom until he came in charge of the reservoir and let me tell you something, that reservoir was his. You could not go there contrary on that reservoir compound. And so, I think you have to err on the side giving people a chance but you have to give them a real opportunity.

### III

#### **Summary**

The Faulty System frame is the strongest performing frame among all newspaper articles included in this study. As compared to the Criminal Culture frame, the disparity is significant. While less than one-fifth of all newspaper articles included in this study display components of the Criminal Culture frame, arguments associated with Faulty System appear in almost half. This disparity suggests that when it comes to governance, culture and crime, more writers appear concerned with the failure of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish offenders generally than they are with the perceived corruption that may simply be one of many specific reasons for this failure. In peer group discussions, however, the Criminal Culture frame performs much better.

Because the Criminal Culture frame emerged organically, unprompted by the interview guide, there are no mixed or weak reactions to the frame. Notwithstanding, this methodological difference, given that both frames enjoy enthusiastic support in eight out of ten peer group discussions and no peer group discussions unanimously rejected the Faulty System frame, it still seems fair to suggest that the reaction to both frames are very strong. That is, it seems that Antiguan and Barbudans are as concerned about the corruption they describe as pervasive as they are with the criminal justice system's failure to apprehend and punish offenders. But, beyond this basic observation, it is clear from the solutions participants proffer that the underlying concern with respect to both frames is the same – ultimately for proponents of both frames the macro issue appears to be the need for a functioning criminal justice system that is efficient, certain and fair.

In the final chapter, the performance of the Criminal Culture and Social Breakdown Frames in newspaper discourse as well as in peer group discussions are compared with that of each other frame in this study.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

*'If actors define situations as real they are real in their consequences'.*

-- William Isaac Thomas (1958: 81)

### **Introduction**

This study was informed by Gamson's (1992) insights that contrary to the way in which the public is often characterised, people are neither 'passive' nor 'dumb' and they make sense of their reality in nuanced and complicated ways. From the participants who use language reminiscent of Beccaria (1738-1794) and Bentham (1748-1833) to rationalise their call for stiffer penalties, to the participants who argue very much like Hirschi (1969) that children who hurt, hurt others, this study illustrates that public crime discourse in Antigua and Barbuda is characterised by the rich sociological conversations that have been at the fore of criminology. Such findings are a testament to Downes and Rock's (2011) observations that sociological theories of crime are often grandiloquent statements of the common-sense understandings that have currency in everyday life. Indeed, for each intuitive explanation of crime that participants in this study put forth as an explanation for Antigua and Barbuda's perceived crime problem, there exists a modified sociological expression. Similarly, this study generally confirms the extant literature on crime and the media, demonstrating that the news media in Antigua and Barbuda construct crime as violent, on the rise, and in ways that appear antithetical to what police recorded crime figures suggest.

This concluding chapter examines these broad conclusions in greater detail and discusses their contribution to the existing literature. Section I provides an overview of the primary and secondary research questions and discusses the findings in relation to each. Additionally, this section will consider the contributions of these findings to the existing literature. Section II assesses the significance of this study and associated policy implications. In this section I will make an argument for a constructionist understanding of crime in Antigua and Barbuda and the importance of avoiding hyperbole, unsubstantiated claims and 'moral panics'. Additionally, I will suggest more productive strategies for engaging in crime talk. Section III acknowledges the limitations of this study and recommends directions for future research.

# I

## Summary of Main Findings

### *Primary Research Question*

The study sought to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation by investigating how crime and associated policy responses are constructed. As such, the primary research question was:

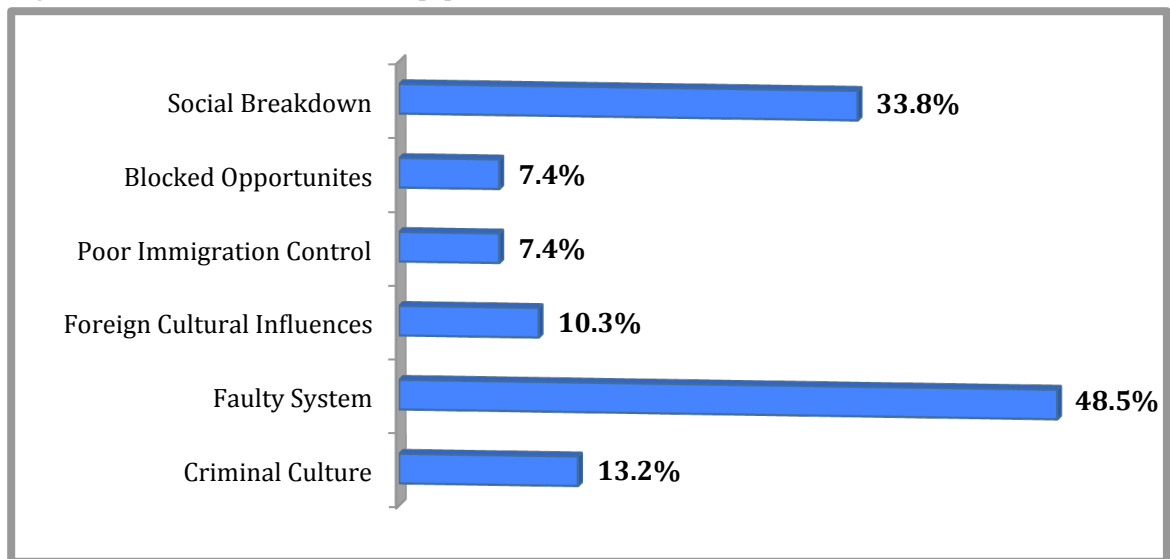
*How do the news media and members of the public in Antigua and Barbuda describe and explain crime and criminal justice policy?*

The data revealed that the news media and members of the public in Antigua and Barbuda describe and explain crime and criminal justice policy in ways that are largely, although not entirely, consistent with the working catalogue of culturally available criminal justice frames that are described in the extant literature. The subsections below report which frames are most prevalent in both the newspaper and public discourse.

### Newspaper Discourse

With nearly half of all newspaper articles suggesting that crime stems from the failure of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish offenders, *Faulty System* was the most prevalent frame in the newspaper sample. Of the articles displaying the Faulty System frame, approximately half associated high crime rates with police ineptitude and ineffectiveness while slightly less than half argued for stiffer penalties. As seen in Figure 9, *Faulty System* was followed most closely by *Social Breakdown*, which appeared in just over one-third of the newspaper articles included in the sample. These articles unanimously supported the idea that crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional communities. Over two-thirds of these articles were prescriptive calling for collective action as a means of restoring order while slightly less than one-third were diagnostic arguing that Antigua and Barbuda had experienced such moral degradation over time that crime was the inevitable result. Thus, in keeping with Sasson's (1994) work in the United States, Antiguan and Barbudan newspaper discourse appears overwhelmingly to blame crime on a poorly functioning criminal justice system and moral failure.

**Figure 10: Frame Performance in Newspaper Discourse**



However, just as important as what Antigua and Barbuda's newspaper discourse blamed for the country's perceived crime problem is what it rejected and ignored as possible causes. *Blocked Opportunities* was one of the least prevalent frames found in the newspaper discourse, appearing in just over seven per cent of all articles. Each article that conjured the frame did so for the purpose of rejecting it. Consequently, the only newspaper articles in which the Blocked Opportunities frame appeared, rejected the idea that crime stems from such structural impediments as poverty, unemployment, poor education, bad housing and class discrimination. The Poor Immigration Control frame had an equally poor showing in the newspaper discourse also appearing in just over seven per cent of all articles. These articles associated crime not with increased immigration but with indiscriminate immigration. In this discourse, certain immigrants were to blame for increased crime. While the news media locates the causes of crime within individuals, it rejects overtly structural explanations. The Violent Media, Racist System and Cruel World frames were not present at all in the newspaper discourse. Elements of the Faulty Politics frame, was present but as previously explained, those elements were subsumed under the Criminal Culture frame, which captured the sentiments of the discourse more precisely.

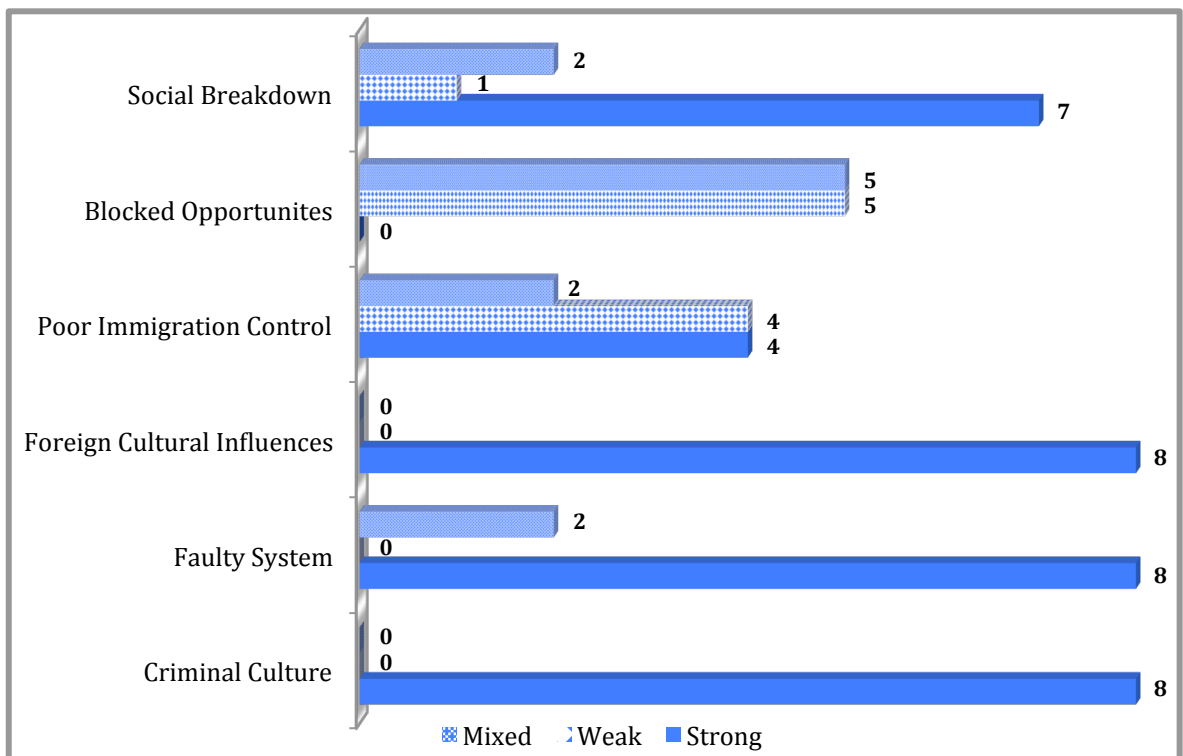


## Public Discourse

*Faulty System* was the most successful frame in public discourse. This success was determined not only by the frame's unanimous support in eight out of ten peer group discussions, but also by the unparalleled support it received from the vast majority of discussion participants (more than nine out of 10) and the fact that it was the only frame that garnered support from participants in every peer group discussion. Nearly all of the participants enthusiastically argued that the institutions comprising Antigua and Barbuda's criminal justice system are broken and thus antithetical to ensuring swift, certain and severe punishment. Additionally, most participants called for stiffer penalties, including increased use of the death penalty. In this regard, these results are in line with the penal populism that has come to characterise such places as the United States and the United Kingdom. As was the case with the newspaper discourse, *Violent Media*, *Racist System* and *Cruel World* were not present at all in the public discourse. Although participants invoked elements of the Faulty Politics frame, again, those elements were subsumed under the Criminal Culture frame.

Although the Social Breakdown frame received unanimous support in seven out of ten peer group discussions, the Criminal Culture and Foreign Cultural Influences frames were slightly more successful (Figure 11). Emerging without any prompts from the interview guide, *Criminal Culture* and *Foreign Cultural Influences* appeared spontaneously in eight out of ten peer group discussions. While these frames

**Figure 11: Frame Performance in Peer Group Discussions (N=10)**



were mostly offered as explanations for crime independent of any other frame, many participants invoked the *Criminal Culture* frame to highlight the failings of the criminal justice system and the *Foreign Cultural Influences* frame to show how adopting foreign influences contributes to the breakdown of traditional cultural values. As such, the support for these frames provides further evidence of the notion that Antiguan and Barbudans largely blame crime on a poorly functioning criminal justice system and moral failure. At first glance this finding, coupled with the negative reactions to the *Blocked Opportunities* frame, confirms Sasson's (1994: 162) research demonstrating that public discourse reflects an 'ingrained aversion to structural criminology'. However, a closer look at the peer group discussions also revealed an understanding that is more nuanced. While there was a general aversion to structural explanations of crime, at least one participant in five discussion groups articulated support for the Blocked Opportunities frame and participants in a small number of peer group discussions added a structural dimension to discourse that was otherwise very individual. For example, a small number of participants located family breakdown within the context of a flailing economy that forced single mothers to work two jobs. Similarly, a small number of participants suggested that some parents parent poorly because they were parented poorly themselves. Despite its absence from the media discourse, the presence of a structural understanding of crime in the public discourse, suggests the possibility for a broader political discourse – a more mature political discourse – and by extension better policy decisions.

### ***Secondary Research Question***

A secondary purpose of this study was to create a longitudinal account of crime in Antigua and Barbuda in order to better assess the claims made by the news media and members of the public. The goal of this part of the study was to establish – as best as possible given inherent limitations previously acknowledged – the overall scale of crime, the relative incidence of different types of offences, trends in those offences from 1970 to 2010 and their geographical distribution. Accordingly, the secondary research question guiding this study was:

*What are the basic crime trends and patterns in Antigua and Barbuda from 1970 to 2010?*

The data suggest that the rate of recorded property crime increased significantly from 1970 to its peak in 1995 and declined, albeit unsteadily, from 1995 to 2010.

Unlike most other countries in the Caribbean, property crime reports in Antigua and Barbuda have remained more prevalent than those of violent crime. In fact, since 1974, at least 70 per cent of all crimes reported have been property related. The vast majority of these property-related reports involve larceny and appear to be largely opportunistic crime. Reports of this type of crime appear to more frequently involve the three streets in downtown St. John's most travelled by tourists. Although property crime reports are more prevalent than those of violent crime, the data nevertheless revealed disconcerting trends with respect to violent crime.

Over the course of the 40-year time period, the overall rate of reports of violent crime remained relatively stable although there was a slight downward trend from 2007 to 2010. However, although the level of violent crime reports has remained relatively stable, there have been significant changes in the ways in which the violence manifests. That is, there have been changes in the types of violent crimes reported. Since the mid-1990s there has been a slight upturn in the incidence of homicides while there has been a corresponding decline in reports of wounding. With the simultaneous increase in reported gun crime, it seems plausible that the number of violent altercations may not have changed significantly, but the increasing use of guns may have ensured more deadly outcomes. That is, the use of guns may have caused death in cases where the victim in earlier years may otherwise have been wounded. The most dramatic increase in homicides occurred between 2007 and 2009 during which time police documented a major conflict between international illegal drug suppliers and local drug dealers. The homicide rate in 2010 decreased dramatically returning to a rate more in line with pre-2007 levels. While homicide continues to account for a very small percentage of total crime and of violent crime more specifically, since 1990 there has been a relatively steady increase in robbery, which comprised approximately one-third of violent crime from 2006 to 2010. The data also suggest that, compared to other Caribbean countries, the rate of sexual violence in Antigua and Barbuda is high. In recent years rape and indecent assault have accounted for as much as 20 per cent of violent crime. This trend became more acute between 2006 and 2009 when the incidence of rape doubled. During this time it is alleged that there was 'serial rapist' at large. Even with these trends in violent crime, however, at no point since 1982 have reports of violent crime exceeded 18 per cent of total crime reports.

## **Contributions to the Literature**

This study adds to the existing Caribbean crime literature by providing one of the first case studies of Antigua and Barbuda. It is also one of the very few studies focused exclusively on a country belonging to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (“OECS”). In this way, the study extends the literature beyond Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago providing the OECS with an example that may be more applicable than studies from the larger Caribbean countries. With respect to the broader crime literature, this study adds to the social construction literature by expanding the working catalogue of culturally available crime frames. Additionally, the study extends the literature on frame analysis beyond Europe and North America to a much smaller region.

## ***Public Knowledge of Crime***

Although further research is required, this study suggests that Antiguan and Barbudans are generally ill informed about crime though they may have a clearer sense of the trends in the crimes that matter most to them. In keeping with the findings of Hough and Roberts (2012) covering England and Wales, the participants in this study overestimated the magnitude and direction of crime when compared to official crime data. Amidst falling property crime rates and a relatively stable but downward trend in rates of violent crime, the vast majority of the participants in the study claimed that crime was increasing. Similarly, the claims that participants made with respect to the *Social Breakdown* frame, that there was much less violence in the past and homicides in the 1970s and 1980s were virtually non-existent, are not borne out by the data. Official crime data suggest that in fact violent crime was as prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s as it is now and there were as many as 10 and 14 homicides per 100,000 people in the 1970s and the 1980s respectively. Additionally, official crime data disproves claims that crime has ‘skyrocketed’ or ‘increased tremendously’ since 2004 when the United Progressive Party won the national election. In fact, as stated earlier, property crime reports were on the decline and, with few exceptions, the general trend for violent crime is downward.

The study also suggests, however, that Antiguan and Barbudans may have a better sense of contemporary crime trends with regard to robbery, homicide and rape. Despite the sharp decline in the robbery and homicide rates in 2010, the general upward trend confirms claims that both offences are increasing. Similarly, the prevalence of reported sexual offences and the increase in reports of rape between

2006 and 2009 confirm claims that rape had increased. However, as is the case in Barbados (see Nuttall et al. 2003), it is likely that most participants overestimate the level of increase. More research is required in this area.

### ***Newspaper Portrayals of Crime***

This study confirms Surette's (2003: 41; 2015: 59) 'law of opposites' or 'backwards law'. Antigua and Barbuda's newspaper crime articles overwhelmingly emphasise the opposite of whatever crime trends and patterns emerge from official crime data. While official crime data suggest that incidents of property crime outstrip those of violent crime at a ratio as great as 8 to 1, newspaper articles reflect almost exactly the opposite. With nearly 60 per cent of the newspaper sample focused on incidents of violent crime and less than 10 per cent focused on incidents of property crime, the ratio of property crime stories to violent crime stories is roughly 1 to 8. These findings are also in keeping with Chadee and Ditton's (2005) work in Trinidad and Tobago. The 'law of opposites' similarly holds true with respect to homicides, violent crime and characteristics of the victims. While official crime data suggest that homicides represent less than 1 per cent of all recorded crimes, in the newspaper, stories about homicide account for approximately 13 per cent of crime related articles. While official crime data suggest a relatively stable rate of violent crime, newspaper crime articles suggest that this rate is increasing by making such declarations as '...the ever-increasing incidences of violent crimes...seems to be gaining a toe-hold in this once peaceful country' (*The Daily Observer* 2/23/95: 7) and 'the trend [of elderly women being brutally attacked in their homes] is disturbing. It would seem that violent crime is on the rise in Antigua' (*The Daily Observer* 2/13/96: 1). The latter article is also an example of this newspaper's tendency to exaggerate the risk of victimisation for the elderly and others who are the least likely to be victimised. Nearly one-third of the articles in the sample reflected this tendency, which also confirms Greer and Reiner's (2012) findings in Britain.

### ***The Social Construction of Crime in Antigua and Barbuda***

Only three out of five of Sasson's (1994) crime frames – *Social Breakdown*, *Blocked Opportunities* and *Faulty System* – were deployed in Antigua and Barbuda's newspaper and public discourse. The Violent Media and Racist System frames were noticeably absent although the underlying concerns of both frames manifested in the form of the Foreign Cultural Influences and Criminal Culture frames. For example,

the primary concern of Sasson's (1994) *Violent Media* is with the violence depicted in television, the movies, popular music and video games. In Antigua and Barbuda, participants expressed similar concerns but because virtually all of Antigua and Barbuda's television, movies, video games, and (to a lesser extent) popular music are imported, participants were concerned about the foreign nature of these media and the perceived transmission of foreign culture and values. This set of concerns is best captured by *Foreign Cultural Influences*. Similarly, at the heart of Sasson's (1994) *Racist System* frame is a preoccupation with legitimacy and procedural justice. The frame's proponents argue that Black offenders are more likely than Whites who commit comparable offences to be arrested, convicted and sentenced to prison. Given Antigua and Barbuda's relative racial homogeneity (91 per cent of all inhabitants are Black), it is unsurprising that participants did not express this concern in terms of race. However, in arguing that Antigua and Barbuda's criminal justice system favours corrupt politicians and those perceived to be wealthy and 'powerful', similar concerns about legitimacy and procedural justice were evident. Also absent from Antigua and Barbuda's newspaper and public discourse was Boda et al.'s (2011) *Cruel World* frame. Although participants mentioned the political corruption at the heart of Boda et al.'s (2011) *Faulty Politics* frame, they did so in ways that were more precisely captured by the Criminal Culture frame that emerged from the analysis. This finding suggests that crime frames are not universally applicable but are context specific. While the fundamental concerns may be similar, their manifestations are rooted in environmental particularities.

The findings of this study also suggest that Antiguan and Barbudans are not passive consumers of news media. While over 90 per cent of the participants in the group discussions cited the news media as their source of crime and criminal justice knowledge, the frames that were most prevalent in the newspaper discourse were not the frames that participants most widely embraced (Figure 3). For example, *Foreign Cultural Influences* and *Criminal Culture*, two of the least prevalent frames in the newspaper discourse, were among the strongest performing frames in the public discourse. As was the case in Boda and Szabó's (2011) research in Hungary, some Antiguan and Barbudans had little faith in the news media expressing extreme scepticism about many of the criminal justice claims made in the newspaper. Antiguan and Barbudans were more inclined to trust the information they received from close friends, family and acquaintances. Indeed, 95 per cent of participants cited 'word of mouth', 'reports from friends' and the experiences of family members as the

sources of their crime knowledge while a much smaller minority cited their own personal experiences with the criminal justice system. As such, there is support for the proposition that Antiguan and Barbudans acquire social knowledge and construct their own version of reality in much the same way that Gamson (1992), Surette (2015) and others have described elsewhere. That is, Antiguan and Barbudans derive their crime knowledge from a combination of what Surette (2015) calls the ‘engines of social construction’ – direct first-hand experience with crime, information received directly from close friends, family and acquaintances (“Engine 1”), the news media (“Engine 2”), and statistical and other crime information disseminated by criminal justice agencies and organisations (“Engine 3”) (Figure 12). Gamson (1992: 180-1) sheds additional light on this point by suggesting:

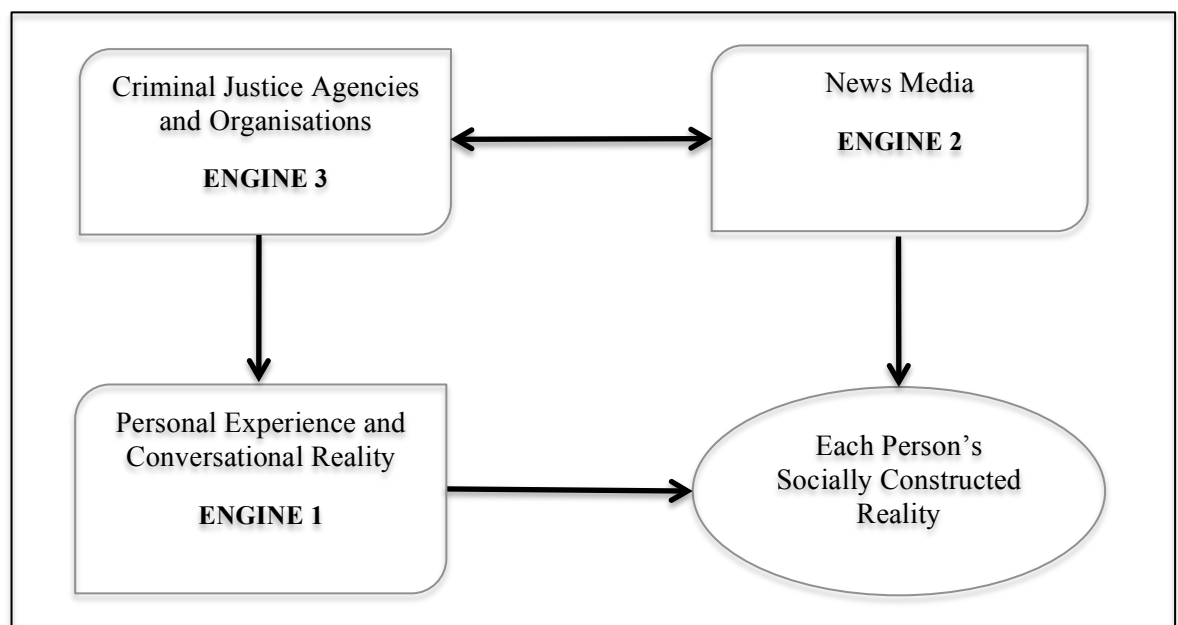
People who [derive their crime knowledge from a combination of sources] are selectively influenced by the relative prominence of media frames, responding to the degree that these frames are consistent with their popular wisdom and experiential knowledge. They are constrained by omissions from media discourse but relatively immune to differences in the relative prominence of visible frames.

Beyond the suggestion that Antiguan and Barbudans do not passively receive the news media, the inverse relationship that exists between certain frames in the newspaper and public discourse may have another meaning. This disconnect provides support for the structural argument that Antigua and Barbuda’s newspaper reproduces dominant ideology, promotes the interests of the ruling elite and legitimates the existing system (see for example Greer and Reinder 2012). Put differently, Antigua and Barbuda’s newspaper appears to frame crime in ways that do not significantly undermine the Members of Parliament responsible for public safety and other high-ranking government officials. For example, the *Foreign Cultural Influences*, *Poor Immigration Control* and *Criminal Culture*, the frames most critical of the criminal justice and political systems, are the frames that are least prevalent in the newspaper discourse. Similarly, every article that displayed the *Blocked Opportunities* frame in the newspaper discourse did so in order to reject its veracity. This finding is consistent with the structuralist approach to news media research, which is informed by Marxist and critical theory. Greer and Reiner (2012) argue that the most coveted sources of statements and crime information are the police, Members of Parliament responsible for public safety and other high-ranking government officials who are

deemed to be most credible. As such, crime reporters become the mouthpiece of the police and the criminal justice system as they depend on an amicable relationship with these sources. The result is crime reporting that inevitably relies on and reproduces the institutional views of these sources. But, the relationship is a symbiotic relationship because these sources also rely on the media to disseminate their claims. As Surette (2015: 53) explains,

‘[l]ittle knowledge can be disseminated directly from these institutions and organisations to individuals, so agencies and institutions of the third engine must utilize the media for effective distribution of their factual and interpretative claims’.

**Figure 12: Surette's Engines of Social Construction**



SOURCE: Adapted from Surette, R. 2015. *Media, Crime and Criminal Justice*. Pg. 54. Stamford, CT: Cengage

## II

### Significance of the Study

This study is important because of its contribution to the body of Caribbean crime literature specifically and the body of literature on crime and criminal justice more generally. The addition of the *Criminal Culture* and *Foreign Cultural Influences* frames to the working catalogue of culturally available crime frames is particularly helpful for smaller developing countries with economic and political realities that are closer to those of Antigua and Barbuda than to the United Kingdom and the United States. Beyond its contribution to the literature, however, this study has practical implications for Antigua and Barbuda and its residents. These implications are explored further below.



### ***Policy Implications and Recommendations***

As Sasson (1995) and others explain, constructionist investigations of crime are important because understanding how crime is framed in terms of causes and remedies necessarily influences who we criminalise, what legislation we pass and how we allocate our tax dollars. As such, framing crime in ways that are tinged with hyperbole, or that run contrary to evidence is unlikely to result in effective policy responses. The way in which crime is currently framed in Antigua and Barbuda – as a relatively recent phenomenon that is spiralling out of control and is characterised by increasing violence, as a phenomenon that is perpetuated by predatory young people with individual pathologies, as a phenomenon that is increasing largely because police and politicians are corrupt and young people are being inculcated with foreign cultural values – has resulted in punitive policy and ‘tough on crime’ rhetoric that do not appear to have had a substantial effect on the country’s crime rate. However, this study finds that there might be room for more progressive crime policy – policy that is informed by an understanding of crime that does not have at its heart notions of law and order or getting ‘tough on crime’.

First, criminal justice policy that is rooted in overtly structural conceptions of crime is not likely to succeed in Antigua and Barbuda. As the *Blocked Opportunities* frame was the worst performing frame in the study, both the news media and the public seem to have an aversion to explicit causal connections between crime and poverty, unemployment, poor education, bad housing and class discrimination. This finding is hardly surprising given that Antigua and Barbuda is not a country with many social safety nets or the expectation thereof. While there are national social security and medical benefits schemes, there is no welfare, unemployment insurance or universal healthcare scheme. Government subsidies are few and far between. Personal responsibility is a strong cultural meme. You pull yourself up by your bootstraps because there is no one else who will pull you up. Government surely does not have the means to assist when there have been so many times that government has been unable to pay its own workers. Against the backdrop of Antigua and Barbuda’s slave and colonial history, as one participant explained, most Antiguan and Barbudans are not more than a generation or two removed from poverty. Most Antiguan at some point would have had to overcome structural obstacles. Structural obstacles then are not excuses to turn to crime, they are the impetus to better oneself and get ahead. It is important to note that rejecting this frame also insulates and protects politicians and

public figures. Politicians and government agents are not held accountable in ways they might be if crime was seen more as a public failing.

Interestingly, however, attributing crime to a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community resonates strongly with both the public and the news media. One could argue, that this is very much a structural argument especially given that some members of the public demonstrated a more nuanced understanding by locating the causes of this social breakdown in economic insecurity and inequality. As such, reframing the crime debate in terms of the *Social Breakdown* frame while incorporating subtle structural arguments will likely allow for more mature political discourse and as a result, a criminal justice policy differently oriented. It may be that Antiguan and Barbudans do not see this frame in such stark structural terms because the frame seems to contemplate a public private divide. That is, there is no reliance on or expectation of government. The unemployment, discrimination, poverty, and inadequate schools described by the *Blocked Opportunities* frame may well feel more like public problems falling squarely within the ambit of government while family, parenting and neighbours looking out for each other may better comport with individual choice and personal responsibility. The government has no control over how and by whom children are disciplined and whether neighbours speak to each other. The components of *Social Breakdown* may initially be understood as private issues within the private domain. As such, although a recent evaluation of the Chicago Area Project did not support its crime preventive effects, criminal justice policy should nevertheless exploit the resonance of the *Social Breakdown* frame by incorporating a bottom-up approach focused on social organisation and community stability.

This study also finds that members of the public have a deep concern with issues of procedural justice, legitimacy and ‘broken’ institutions even where media discourse does not. The *Daily Observer* may be less inclined to print articles invoking the *Criminal Culture* frame because newspapers rely on politicians and government officials in ways previously discussed. Again, ignoring such issues as procedural justice and ‘broken’ institutions may be a way to insulate politicians and government officials from being accountable. But given the purchasing power that the frame enjoys with members of the public, criminal justice policy should focus in part on transparency and reflect as much concern about corruption and white-collar crime as it does about street crime and low-level drug offending. Additionally, the criminal justice system must be seen to treat everyone equally irrespective of wealth or status. A recent UNDP (2012) found that Antigua and Barbuda is the only Caribbean country

included in the study not to have an internal police investigative unit aimed at investigating corruption and ensuring professional standards. This deficit should be rectified as a first step towards transparency and repairing the negative perceptions that Antiguan and Barbudans have with respect to notions of a 'criminal culture'.

Finally, Surette (2015) and others have found that while the news media are not often found to be direct causes of criminal justice policy shifts, they do contribute to a larger social system that generates and preserves the dominant attitudes about crime and criminal justice. In Antigua and Barbuda, as is the case in other jurisdictions, the news media constructs crime as being divorced from other social realities, perpetrated by predatory young people with individual pathologies, who have free will and a wide range of choices. News coverage of crime does not often provide the public with enough contextual insight to evaluate the criminal justice system's performance or better understand individual criminal incidents. Given that the vast majority of participants (more than nine out of 10) cited newspapers as one of their sources of crime knowledge, better crime coverage could influence shifts in criminal justice policy. Following Surette's (2015) suggestion, that the news media cover crime in the manner in which they cover sports, may positively influence criminal justice policy in Antigua and Barbuda. According to Surette (2015), the news media provide comprehensive, contextual coverage for sporting events on a daily basis. Reporting may still focus on individual events, but reports include statistics, trend analysis, forecasts, commentary and discussion. In much the same way that sporting events are constructed to emphasise both historical understanding and current significance, so too should incidents of crime.

The point of this study is not so much that Antiguan and Barbudans ought not concern themselves with the country's perceived crime problem because the crime situation is so much better than they think it is. To the contrary, this study suggests that Antigua and Barbuda has always had disconcerting levels of crime deserving of attention. And, such historical understanding can temper the hysteria and impulse to 'just do something' without thinking through solid evidence-based approaches.

### III

#### **Limitations of This Study**

While this study makes important contributions to the existing body of crime literature, it is not without limitations. The first limitation deals with the sample of newspaper articles that was used in this study. Because Antigua and Barbuda does not have a digitised archive of newspapers and because a number of individual issues were missing – including entire months – I was forced to use what amounted to a convenience sample of sorts. While the convenience sample used was sufficient, it is possible that my analysis does not include every relevant article or commentary expressing a crime frame. My research would have benefited from a complete digitised database of newspapers. Additionally, given that Antigua and Barbuda has a vibrant radio culture and so many Antiguan and Barbudans receive their news and information from radio, it would have been ideal to include news radio in the sample of news media discourse.

A second limitation of this study is the omission of Barbuda. This study is essentially one of Antigua rather than Antigua and Barbuda. Ideally, I would have liked to travel to Barbuda to conduct research on that island as well. As Antigua's smaller sister island, Barbuda is often marginalised in the country's national discourse. While Barbuda does not represent a large percentage of the country's population, Barbudans share different cultural realities, sensitivities and lived experiences. Barbudans may well blame all of the country's crime on Antiguan. Accordingly, it is not possible to generalise these findings to Barbuda. My research would have benefitted from including Barbudan perspectives.

A third limitation of this study concerns the interview sample. The interview sample is more female, Antiguan, white and middle eastern than the general population. Additionally, participants between the ages of 30 and 59 are overrepresented. Notwithstanding the skew of the sample, given the homogeneity of crime views and beliefs in Barbados, a country culturally and geographically similar to Antigua and Barbuda, as well as the findings of the UNDP crime study, as previously discussed I am confident that this study is able to tell us something useful about the common sense of Antiguan and Barbudan culture.

Finally, a fourth limitation of this study is the scarcity of evaluative judgments with respect to claims made in the media and public discourse. Throughout the media

and public discourse authors and participants make specific claims – claims that crime increases whenever there is a period of political crisis in Antigua, claims about prison conditions, claims about the effectiveness of certain policies – and part of understanding the social construction of crime is the ability to identify falsehoods and alternative interpretations. The dearth of primary and secondary research on Antigua and Barbuda makes assessing the validity of some of these claims extremely difficult. In many instances, it was not my intention to accept what was claimed in an unproblematic way, but, I lacked the research to make a proper evaluative judgment. Where I could draw on international research, I did, but certain specific claims pertaining to Antigua and Barbuda did not allow me to do so. Including the longitudinal analysis of crime was a partial attempt to cure this defect.

Rather than diminish the value of this study, however, these limitations provide an impetus for further research on Antigua and Barbuda's crime situation.

## APPENDIX A: CODING GUIDE

Virtually all of the media and public discourse in this study were coded using the following catch phrases and key ideas. Discourse was coded to each frame if it contained at least one element of the key ideas or catch phrases listed below. As previously discussed, some discourse was cross-coded.

### Faulty System

Crime stems from the failure of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish offenders. It's no wonder there's so much crime, criminals know they can do whatever they want to do and get away with it. If we're serious about fighting crime then the police need to get 'tough'. Only when more criminals are made to do hard time will the message get out that 'crime doesn't pay'.

#### A. Catch Phrases

- i. Get tough on crime
- ii. Castration for rapists
- iii. Community policing
- iv. Police ineptitude
- v. Spare the rod, spoil the child
- vi. The sentences must send a message loud and clear
- vii. The system is inefficient
- viii. The system is ineffective
- ix. Antiquated laws
- x. Education
- xi. The system 're-victimises' you
- xii. Insufficient resources
- xiii. Death penalty
- xiv. Professional apathy
- xv. Broken institutions

#### B. Key Ideas (Support)

- i. The system is too lenient especially with young people
- ii. Lack of police visibility and community policing
- iii. Lack of resources allocated to law enforcement
- iv. Lack of public confidence in law enforcement
- v. Abuse of process and police discretion
- vi. Inconsistent sentencing
- vii. Call for increased use of the death penalty
- viii. Solutions should focus on military or boot camp interventions for young offenders
- ix. Criminal justice institutions are broken
- x. Lack of confidentiality across entire criminal justice system
- xi. Conditions in the prison and juvenile facilities are deplorable
- xii. Offenders leave correctional facilities worse than they when they entered
- xiii. Prison is a country club – offenders purposely try to go to prison especially during Christmas

#### C. Key Ideas (Rebuttal)

- i. Costs of long term incarceration are greater than alternatives to prison and rehabilitation
- ii. Offenders are not rational
- iii. Violence spawns violence
- iv. The police are solving more crimes and are inspiring greater trust amongst the public
- v. Punishment is not a deterrent to crime
- vi. Government can't do it by itself, people need to help law enforcement and other government agents
- vii. It's not the system, some people just bad

### **Blocked Opportunities**

Crime stems from poverty, unemployment, poor education, bad housing and class discrimination. Kids come from places like Gray's Farm and Point turn to crime when they don't see any opportunities for legitimate work. If we're serious about fighting crime, we need to create more opportunities for disadvantaged kids. We'll only make progress in the fight against crime when we begin to seriously address these 'root causes'.

#### **A. Catch Phrases**

- i. Crime and poverty
- ii. Victims of circumstance
- iii. Gray's Farm
- iv. Point
- v. Lack of opportunity
- vi. Selective employment
- vii. Brain drain
- viii. Unequal Opportunity

#### **B. Key Ideas (Support)**

- i. Crime is born of necessity
- ii. Stressors push people toward crime
- iii. Jobless youth turn to crime
- iv. Cultural symbols of success are only attainable to some through crime

#### **C. Key Ideas (Rebuttal)**

- i. Young people do not want to work
- ii. Young people want fast money
- iii. There are enough existing opportunities you just have to look for them
- iv. People feel certain types of jobs are beneath them
- v. There is a stigma attached to manual labour
- vi. Antiguan do not pump gas
- vii. There is not a causal connection between crime and poverty
- viii. It's not only kids from Gray's Farm and Point who commit crime
- ix. Criminals come from all communities
- x. There are good people from Gray's Farm

## Social Breakdown

Crime stems from a breakdown of the traditional family and traditional community. In the past there was less crime because neighbours looked out for one another and parents supervised and disciplined their children. The best way to fight crime is for neighbours, in partnership with the police, to band together to restore order to their communities.

### A. Catch Phrases

- i. Before time
- ii. Church
- iii. Single mothers, absent men
- iv. Take our country back
- v. It takes a village
- vi. Cultural values
- vii. 'Licks' (e.g. corporal punishment)
- viii. Kids are having kids
- ix. Children who hurt, hurt others
- x. Our brother's keeper
- xi. Gangs
- xii. Shifting cultural values
- xiii. Poor in pocket but not in spirit
- xiv. Our population now is transient

### B. Key Ideas (Support)

- i. Neighbourhoods were ethnically homogenous
- ii. People do not have shame like they used to have
- iii. Neighbours knew each other and everyone in the neighbourhood
- iv. Interdependence rather than individualism
- v. Ineffective/'lax' parenting
- vi. Mothers are working two and three jobs and have no time for the children
- vii. If you never received love you can't give love
- viii. Parents rely on financial help from children and therefore condone illicit activity
- ix. Community members must resort to self help
- x. Teachers are not teaching, they're simply lecturing and not reaching the children
- xi. Teachers are not trained and are not properly equipped to teach

### C. Key Ideas (Rebuttal)

- i. We're a slavesome society, our families were never in tact
- ii. Children need a support network, if the mother or father is not present aunts and uncles can fill the void
- iii. The traditional family and traditional community were sites of such crimes and violence as incest, domestic violence, child abuse
- iv. Cultural arguments about tradition facilitate corporal punishment and other forms of violence
- v. No causal connection between fragmented community or family and crime
- vi. The good ol' days were horrible
- vii. Neighbourhood watches do exist



## **Poor Immigration Control**

Crime stems from poor immigration control. Most of the crime that occurs is committed by ‘non-nationals’. If we’re serious about fighting crime, we need to crackdown on the number of non-nationals that come into this country – especially those from Jamaica and Guyana.

### **A. Catch Phrases**

- i. The wrong immigrants
- ii. Mafia Hill
- iii. Free movement of people
- iv. The bottom of the barrel
- v. Foreigners
- vi. Non-nationals
- vii. Human trafficking
- viii. Whore houses
- ix. Prostitution
- x. Demographic shift
- xi. Cultural differences

### **B. Key Ideas (Support)**

- i. Certain nationalities commit certain types of crime
- ii. Immigration causes crime
- iii. We do not attract highly skilled migrants
- iv. There is a hierarchy of Caribbean immigrants – those from the Eastern Caribbean are perfectly acceptable but those from Jamaica and Guyana are not
- v. Immigrants put stress on the system
- vi. Immigrants do not contribute to the economy
- vii. Violent crimes are committed by non-Antiguans
- viii. Some immigrants are working in tandem with Antiguans
- ix. A significant number of crimes committed are committed by non-Antiguans

### **C. Key Ideas (Rebuttal)**

- i. It’s mostly Antiguans involved in crime
- ii. It’s mostly Antiguans in the prison
- iii. There is nothing different about Guyanese and Jamaican immigrants – immigrants come to a new country for more opportunity and to work hard
- iv. There is no causal connection between immigration and crime
- v. The statistics do not bear out the connection

## **Criminal Culture**

Crime stems from excessive contact with systems and authorities that send pro-crime messages. It’s no wonder there is so much crime, when there is widespread corruption among government officials, prominent business people and in government institutions, and when the justice system treats people differently based on who they are and who they know, people feel justified in cutting corners and breaking the law themselves. If we are serious about fighting crime, we need to stamp out corruption,

in all of its forms, wherever it occurs and maintain a transparent justice system that treats everyone equally irrespective of wealth or status.

A. Catch Phrases

- i. Corruption
- ii. All men are created equal but some are more equal than others
- iii. It's all about who you know
- iv. 'Friendism'
- v. Who's policing the police?
- vi. Blue collar crime
- vii. White collar crime
- viii. Check book settlement
- ix. If the top is slack, the bottom can't be tight
- x. 'Victimless crime'

B. Key Ideas (Support)

- i. The criminal justice system is not transparent
- ii. There is a set of rules for the wealthy and another set for the poor
- iii. Politicians and government agents are easily bribed
- iv. Government officials break the law with impunity
- v. Members of the police force are engaged in criminal activity
- vi. Politicians encourage crime

C. Key Ideas (Rebuttal)

- i. Antigua and Barbuda is no more corrupt than anyplace else

### **Foreign Cultural Influences**

Crime stems from foreign cultural influences. Most of the crime that occurs reflects patterns of criminality that are not indigenous to Antigua and Barbuda. If we are serious about fighting crime we need to protect our culture from outside influences that have crept into our society through the Trojan Horse of criminal deportees returned from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as the Internet, American cable television, music and Caribbean immigrants.

A. Catch Phrases

- i. Dancehall music
- ii. Cosmopolitan society
- iii. Deportees
- iv. BET
- v. Gaza v. Gully
- vi. MTV
- vii. Americanised
- viii. Other Caribbean islands
- ix. Bigger islands

B. Key Ideas (Support)

- i. Our culture is under threat
- ii. Television is playing the role of parents
- iii. Antiguan children are learning North American values from cable television

- iv. Deportees may not be causing more crime but when they do reoffend they do so with greater sophistication and help home grown criminals to become more sophisticated in their offending
  - v. Young people are becoming more materialistic as a result of North American influences
  - vi. Deportees must be returned to the country with full details as to their offending background
- C. Key Ideas (Rebuttal)
- i. There is no evidence to suggest that deportees are involved in crime at higher rates than anyone else

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