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UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN
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2019-2020 Honors Thesis

Delinquency in the Caribbean: Stakeholder Perceptions of
Root Causes

Laura Nolterieke

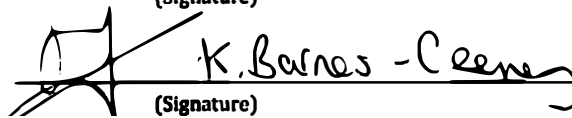
A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Undergraduate Honors
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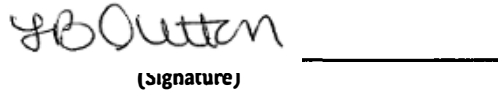
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Delinquency in the Caribbean: Stakeholder Perceptions of Root Causes

University of New Haven

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Abstract

There is a gap in the research on juvenile delinquency within the Caribbean context. As countries such as St. Lucia, Guyana, St. Kitts, and Nevis have growing delinquency and crime rates, there is a need to bridge this gap in the literature. This research sought to examine the main causes of juvenile delinquency within St. Lucia, Guyana, St. Kitts, and Nevis, as described by juvenile justice stakeholders, such as probation officers, prosecutors, and judges, within their respective countries. Through the use of grounded theory, the data were coded and analyzed using a constant comparison method. From these data, six themes emerged in St. Lucia, seven in St. Kitts and Nevis, and six in Guyana. In St. Lucia, these themes were family, education, different world now, meso/macro/neighborhood factors, gangs, and peers. In St. Kitts and Nevis, these themes were parenting, adolescence, peers, education, substance abuse, changing times, and economic structure. In Guyana, these themes were family, environment, peers, media, substance abuse/use, and education. By understanding what juvenile justice stakeholders believe to be the main causes of juvenile delinquency within their respective communities, culturally competent diversion programs can be developed to reduce future delinquency.

Keywords: Caribbean, juvenile, delinquency, crime, youth

Delinquency in the Caribbean: Stakeholder Perceptions of Root Causes

Juvenile delinquency is a concern for everyone because it affects all aspects of a community due to the interdependent nature of society where systems interact and rely on each other. With research identifying multiple causes of juvenile delinquency, such as parent influence, peer influence, biosocial factors, as well as the influence of gender on delinquency, it is important to determine stakeholders' opinions on the topic. Direct experience working within the juvenile justice system can lead to differing opinions concerning the root causes of juvenile delinquency, and it is important to note these perceptions when implementing policies that can target the root causes of delinquency. Furthermore, the Caribbean is an understudied geographical location as it pertains to criminal justice and juvenile justice matters. Therefore, this research sought to determine stakeholders' perceptions of the root causes of juvenile delinquency within St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and Guyana.

Overall, this research sought to develop a deeper, richer understanding of the main causes of juvenile delinquency in three Caribbean countries. Specifically, this research targeted juvenile justice stakeholders, such as prosecutors and police, in St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and Guyana. By hearing from the voices within their respective communities, it allowed for a better understanding of the nuances between them. Such insight may be helpful when developing culturally competent prevention programs.

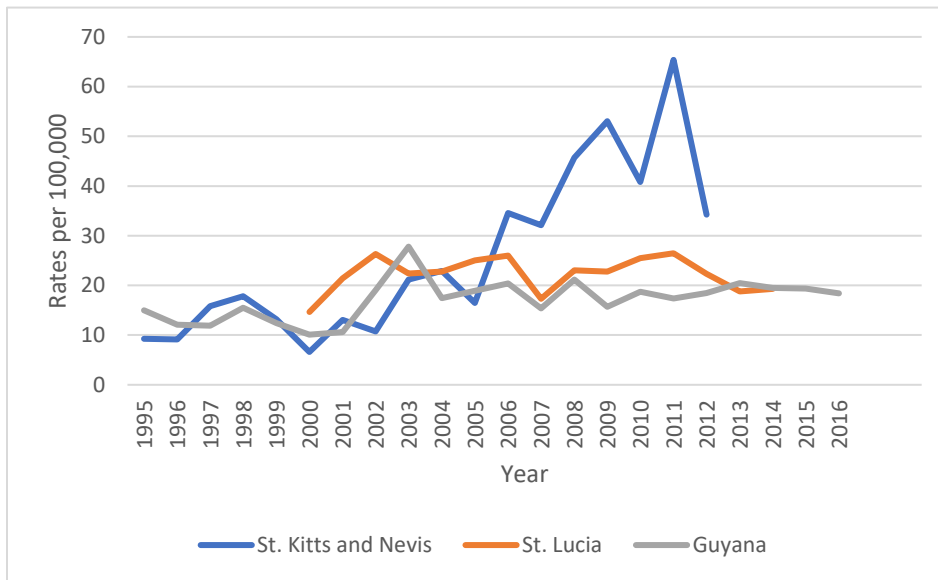
Literature Review

Crime Rates in the Caribbean

Crime and violence rates within the Caribbean have been rising since the 1980s, with 40% of the population believing that crime is the biggest threat to their country (Sutton &

Ruprah, 2017). According to data taken from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and Caribbean Region of the World Bank (UNODC, 2007), homicide rates in the Caribbean are higher than the world average, at 30 per 100,000. In 2015, in Guyana specifically, the homicide rate was 19.4 per 100,000, which is significantly higher than the world average at 6.2 per 100,000 (Sutton & Baxter, 2017).

Intentional homicides per 100,000



Since the 1980s, Guyana and St. Kitts and Nevis have experienced very high homicide rates. The average homicide rate in the Caribbean is 10 per 100,000; however, in 1995, Guyana had a rate of 19.1 per 100,000, while St. Kitts and Nevis were at 31.1 per 100,000 (Harriott, 2002). By 2003, the homicide rate in Guyana was 27 per 100,000 (UNODC, 2007) and back to 19.4 per 100,000 in 2015 (Sutton & Baxter, 2017). However, this is still above the global average of 6.2 per 100,000 by a considerable degree, placing homicide as one of the largest concerns in Guyana (Sutton & Baxter, 2017). The rates in St. Lucia, while not increasing in the a similar time frame to the other countries, increased from 9 to 20 per 100,000 from 1999 to 2005 (UNODC, 2007). Overall, these rates show a marked increase in homicide rates over the past few

decades, as shown by the figure above. Furthermore, the majority of murders and robberies committed in Guyana were perpetrated with a firearm (Harriott, 2002).

In St. Kitts and Nevis, robbery, drug, rape, and property crimes have all shown marked increases (De Albuquerque & McElroy, 1999; De Albuquerque, 1984; UNODC, 2007). In Guyana, there has been an increase in robbery and burglary rates, with a drop during 2015 and 2016. Regardless, the robbery and burglary rates are still higher than the world average at 191 per 100,000 and 278 per 100,000, respectively (Sutton & Baxter, 2017). Lastly, the increase in juvenile crime at the end of the 20th century is also noteworthy. In St. Kitts and Nevis, the juvenile crime rate increased from 1.2% in 1990 to 17% by 1998 (Harriot, 2002).

Throughout the Caribbean, there has been an increase in drug and organized crime incidents (Lashin, 2005). Hill (2013) suggests that increasing gang membership between 2000-2009 had led to a surge in the expansion of drug trafficking crimes, as well as violent crimes. The expansion of the drug trade may be influencing overall crime rates in the countries. For example, local drug operations have “given impetus to illegal gun acquisition and violent crimes.” (Harriott, 2002, p. 7). In other words, to protect the drug trade, offenders are more likely to seek out guns and commit other violent crimes. The increase in drug crimes also impacts the rate of youth gangs, prostitution and property crimes (UNODC, 2007).

In Guyana, De Albuquerque (1984) notes that scholars speculate that an increase in violence is due to a structural proclivity for violence. There has been a historical trend of political leaders condoning violence, particularly concerning the police and military’s excessive use of force (De Albuquerque, 1984). This state-sanctioned violence may have unintended or contradictory influence on the youth, causing them to possibly believe that crime and violence are acceptable. Similarly, if the leaders of a society are using violence to achieve their goals, this

may then increase citizen's acceptance of violence. One method used to perpetuate violence in the Caribbean is through the use of gangs. With rising homicide rates in conjunction with rising gang rates, there have been calls for more focus on gangs within the Caribbean context (Harriott & Katz, 2015). Taken together with the state-sanctioned violence, without effective state-based methods of control, gangs become the primary function of social control (Harriott & Katz, 2015).

In Trinidad and Tobago, there were difficulties with controlling gang violence due to because the government were funding gangs (Townsend, 2009). In exchange for funding, the gang members will ensure supporting voters are the only ones present on election days (Townsend, 2009). Within Jamaican history, there is also evidence of clientelism, or the relationship between two people of unequal wealth or status where there is a transfer of services based on loyalty (Sives, 2002). In the early stages of Jamaican independence, the distribution of wealth to loyal followers was condoned, and as the government developed, so did violence and drug-related crimes in response to this clientelism (Sives, 2002; Edmonds, 2016). Despite the differences between Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Guyana, Smith (1995) suggests that the capitalist expansion in the Caribbean is similar and influences countries in similar ways. Therefore, the dynamics within the countries due to globalization can lead to similar patterns in their politics. This could also suggest a pattern of clientelism in Guyana because of the effects of globalization. An increasing focus on materialism and consumerism in the Caribbean undermines traditional cultural and ethnic identity (Smith, 1995).

Despite rising crime rates, the Caribbean remains a tourist destination, with many traveling to the location for vacation. However, tourists are more likely to become victims of attacks in the Caribbean. One researcher posits that this is because they are more likely to have money on their person and are less likely to fight back (De Albuquerque, 1984). Similarly, De

Albuquerque (1984) states that East Indian women are more likely to be attacked by Afro-Guyanese juveniles because their culture involves them wearing jewelry. However, Dodd and Parris (1976) noted that it perhaps had to do with jewelry being more noticeable and easier to remove. Gold bangles were more predominantly worn by East Indian women, and therefore, this item was more likely to be taken (Dodd & Parris, 1976). Essentially, showing wealth may be more likely to lead to victimization because the individuals become suitable targets for violence. Similarly, showing wealth could also be a way for young people to show their status. Within North America, due to consumption culture, poor black male youth wanted name brand sneakers and gold chains to show their status (Nightingale, 1993). For girls, there was a focus on jewelry to compensate for their economic and racial disparities. The more jewelry a girl wore, the more “decent” she believed she was (Nightingale, 1993).

To combat the increase of juveniles participating in crime, St. Kitts and Nevis have imposed juvenile curfews (Lashin, 2005). Curfews are set in place to combat illegal activity by having juveniles in their homes by 22:00 each night. An analysis of data in New Orleans found that juvenile curfews were ineffective in reducing crime because they failed to account for older youths and young adults (Reynolds, Seydlitz, & Jenkins, 2000). However, another study conducted in California found that juvenile curfews were effective in terms of fewer youth being arrested during the times that the curfews were in place (Kline, 2011). St. Lucia, on the other hand, has reimplemented the death penalty in an attempt to deter people from committing crime (Lashin, 2005). Proponents of deterrence would argue that people will be less willing to commit crime if they could lose their life because of it. In other words, the perceived cost will outweigh the benefits of committing crime. However, according to an analysis by Radelet and Akers (1996), 80% of criminologists do not believe that the death penalty has a deterrent effect.

Similarly, Siennick (2012) observed that capital punishment shows that capital punishment has little to no deterrent effect on committing crimes.

It is important to note that the varying definitions of homicide throughout the Caribbean, as well as the different definitions used by the police or public health officials (UNODC, 2007). These differences can lead to a disparity in the number of homicides that are occurring and can inflate the rates mentioned above. Relying on police data can be a barrier when looking at other types of crime. This is an obstacle because not all crimes are reported, so they could be occurring at higher rates than what the police state (Sutton & Baxter, 2017). Despite these shortcomings, the data are important to look at and analyze and is the best that is available.

Influences of Delinquency

Parental influence. One theory of juvenile delinquency is that juveniles who come from broken homes, such as having divorced parents, are more likely to commit criminal offenses. Henggeler (1989) stated that youth with divorced parents may have an unstable home, less supervision, and weakened attachment to their parents. Certainly, scholarship seems to bear this out, with children of divorced parents being less likely to finish high school or have a job and are more likely to become teenage mothers (Hetherington, 2009). Similarly, there is a difference in the reactions to divorce between genders; boys are more likely to be violent when their father is the one who leaves, and girls are more likely to commit juvenile offenses if their mother does not cope well with the divorce (Simons, Lin, Gordon, Conger, & Lorenz, 1999). Wells and Rankin (1991) conducted a meta-analysis on the impact of broken homes on delinquency and found that juveniles from broken homes are 10% to 15% more likely to commit delinquent acts than those from intact homes. This relationship was stronger for status offenses than for serious offenses.

Although broken homes can contribute to delinquency, conflict within the home when parents remain together may also contribute to delinquency. Child abuse is one of the leading factors in delinquency; however, it has been found that witnessing the abuse of a parent, specifically a mother, is also a significant factor in predicting future delinquency (Herrera & McCloskey, 2001). Similarly, parental effectiveness can be associated with juvenile delinquency. One measure of parental effectiveness is the frequent use of corporal punishment. In the United States, 94% of parents with toddlers use corporal punishment; however, excessive physical punishment of children has been linked to increased violent delinquency and impacts the psychological well-being of the child (Hicks-Pass, 2009; Landon, Waechter, Wolfe, & Orlando, 2017). Bailey, Robinson, and Coore-Desai (2014) conducted a study on the use of corporal punishment in schools, finding that it was highest in St. Kitts and Nevis, where corporal punishment is legal. Furthermore, 86% of children in Guyana have experienced physical punishment (Landon et al., 2017). Because of this, David Grainger, the president of Guyana, advocates for the removal of corporal punishment in both schools and homes (Rockcliffe, 2016).

Scholars have suggested that the prevalent use of corporal punishment in the Caribbean is rooted in slavery. The majority of people who live in the Caribbean are either descendants of African slaves or the indigenous people who were also forced into servitude (Landon et al., 2017). Therefore, due to intergenerational transmission, the majority of childrearing practices are rooted in the disciplinary actions of slavery. Given that scholars have suggested that Caribbean culture is characterized by subjugation, it is perhaps unsurprising that parents believe that violence will reduce acting out. Bailey, Robinson, and Coore-Desai (2014) conducted a study on the use of corporal punishment in schools, finding that it was highest in St. Kitts and Nevis, where corporal punishment is legal.

Abdirahman, Bah, Shrestha, and Jacobsen (2012) found that about one quarter of students in the Caribbean were bullied. This is important because those who are bullied were more likely to experience mental health concerns. However, those with strong parental attachment and whose free time was monitored by their parents reported better mental health, despite being bullied (Abdirahman et al., 2012). The authors also found that those who had stronger connections to their parents were less likely to report being bullied (Abdirahman et al., 2012). This suggests that there is a relationship between parental attachment and suicide as well. If parents are able to adequately communicate with their children, it may improve mental health. This is shown by Blum et al., (2003), who found that children who felt connected to their parents were less likely to rate their mental health as poor.

This culture of violence leads to the cycle of violence. Widom (1989) found that being abused as a child led to a 53% increase in risk of being arrested for a juvenile offense, and a 38% likelihood of being arrested for a violent offense. However, there are important differences for crimes that boys and girls are committing. Girls are more likely to be arrested for property or drug offenses than violent offenses (Widom, 1989). The connection between abuse and delinquency was larger for Black children, who experience more interpersonal violence within the home and neglect (Widom, 1989). In other words, parental beatings might make Black children at an increased risk for delinquency because of the acceptability of these childrearing practices.

Another important factor in juvenile delinquency is family deviance. Murray and Farrington (2005) conducted a study measuring the effects of parental imprisonment and found that 71% of boys who experienced parental incarceration during childhood exhibited antisocial

personality traits as compared to 19% of boys who had not been separated. Similarly, those who have parents incarcerated are more likely to become deviant themselves.

In the West Indies, there is an important link between class and family structure. For instance, patriarchal households are common in upper- and middle-class homes, but matrifocality, or females as the heads of the household, are predominantly found in lower class homes (Freeman, 2014). Many children raised in single-mother households are raised by the maternal family structure. In other words, the grandparents also help raise the child while the mother seeks employment. The grandmother then takes on a role of mother (Baldassar & Merla, 2015). Such informal fostering relationships also occur between biological mothers and familial or nonfamilial caregivers, where care is provided for an established period of time. This allows for the mothers to move around to find work, providing the children with a stable living environment (Crawford, 2011). Given that migration out of Nevis for work is a regular occurrence, such informal fostering arrangements are unsurprising (Baldassar & Merla, 2015). This migration is seen as a way to better help and support the family. It is seen as a positive step for the mother to take because even if they are not physically present for their children, they are able to better provide for them and give them a life outside of struggling to meet their basic needs (Bladassar & Merla, 2015).

Peer influence. There is evidence that peer relationships may also have an influence over whether young people commit delinquent acts. For example, as youth age, they begin to form cliques that determine their status in school, and their interactions with peers is related to their self-esteem (Giordano, 1995). Therefore, young people may be more willing to commit delinquent acts if their friends are. Furthermore, many crimes are committed in groups (Warr, 2008). The most common delinquent acts that are committed in groups in the United States are

drinking and drug-related offenses, as well as property and public order offenses, while assault is frequently a single-person offense (Warr, 2008). Warr (1993) also found that new friends had a larger impact on delinquent behavior than those that the youth have had longer. Furthermore, in the Caribbean, cannabis and alcohol are typically used in peer groups (Pilgrim & Blum, 2012). Warr (1993) found that new friends had a larger influence over delinquent behaviors than childhood companions. In the Caribbean, it has been observed that if a young boy does not participate in risky behavior, then it can lead to his peers believing that he is “soft.” This perception could ultimately be dangerous for him if this softness is perceived as homosexuality and can lead to violence or death (Plummer, 2013). Furthermore, having peers that used drugs and alcohol is associated with gang involvement (Pilgrim & Blum, 2012).

One characteristic of youths offending in groups involves them joining gangs. A gang is a group of people aged 12-24 that share a common identity and view themselves as a gang (National Gang Center, n.d.). Gangs have historically increased due to the proliferation of drugs in the communities (Padilla, 1992). This is important because gangs tend to evolve in disorganized neighborhoods. Therefore, if members feel like they cannot enter the workforce in a legal manner, they may be more inclined to join a gang to make money. It can be the way that children survive as well, joining the gang for protection and a semblance of family. With the decrease in factory jobs, people are staying in gangs longer, and the ability to make money has influenced youth to join (Jackson, 1991; Moore, 2010). This is because there is less availability in the job market; therefore, youth who would have left gangs to join the work force no longer have that option. Furthermore, while there is an association between gangs and selling drugs, Warr (2008) posits that there is also a correlation between drug use and crime in groups. This,

again, is because youth typically use drugs together. In other words, it might not just be selling drugs that links the gang to each other, but the use of them as well.

Gangs may also provide protection for adolescents. Youth are more likely to be victimized in school and being a member of a gang may provide protection against this abuse (Warr, 2008). There is also a sense of protection that comes from being in large groups in general. Gangs may be more likely to form if a large group of, typically, males are together, one is at a less risk of victimization than if one is alone. This is also relevant in terms of disorganized neighborhoods; if youth are more likely to be attacked in their neighborhood, they are more likely to join a gang for protection (Warr, 2008). Furthermore, it was found that girls may be more likely to join gangs to escape abuse at home. Rather than fear of attack on the street, they join a gang because of the turmoil in their homes (Fleisher & Krienert, 2004). Despite the risk of exploitation, girls may still find that the gangs will offer them more rewards than remaining in the home (Miller, 2001). In other words, they can gain status and money in the gangs, whereas this is not the case in their home life.

Gang members are more likely to commit crime than non-gang members. Drug use is common, and some gangs are characterized by violent acts and weapons dealings (Battin, Hill, Abbott, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1998). Gang members are also more likely to carry weapons than those not in gangs (Vaughn, Howard, & Harper-Chang, 2006). Therefore, gang members are at an increased risk of being involved in a violent offense. The use or presence of a weapon acts as an aggravating factor, so if they are arrested, it is more likely to be a violent offense. In order to join the gang, members may need to go through a ritual to prove that they are loyal and reliable. This can involve committing a violent offense. Violence might also be used when the member of the gang is dishonored. This means they may need to win a fight after losing one, or if someone

makes direct eye contact for too long, this could incite a fight because they were questioning their dominance (Decker, 1996). Furthermore, gang members may feel that they need to save face, otherwise they would be ridiculed (Warr, 2008). Fear of ridicule is associated with compliance because juveniles are more likely to commit delinquent acts because they do not want to be the one person who does not. Warr (2008) furthers the discussion on loyalty by stating that this is often present in peer relationships. Loyalty is considered one of the most desirable traits in friendships and romantic relationships; subsequently, it is also a large factor in gang relationships. Risky behavior demonstrates loyalty and also ensures loyalty because both would risk getting into trouble if one person discussed their delinquent behavior. Furthermore, being in a gang and committing violent acts may establish status. If the member is feared because of their reputation, their status in the gang rises (Warr, 2008).

Status among peers is one of the reasons why youth may join gangs in the first place. Another factor, often seen as the primary reason, is the fact that poverty and social marginalization increases gang involvement (Cohen, 1955; Harriott, 2002; Vigil, 2010). There is also a link between economic inequality and crime. People who are more affluent may not be associated with the gangs because they do not need to resort to socially unacceptable methods of obtaining money. Therefore, those who experience economic inequality are more inclined to join gangs to offset the imbalance. Similarly, those in gangs are more likely to be involved with drugs, which is another factor for joining the gangs. The influence of drugs and the ability to make money in the drug market may be seductive to youth with little money (Harriott, 2002).

One method used to describe why inner-city children are more likely to commit crime is the middle-class measuring rod. According to this theory, all children are ranked by middle class values. However, those in lower classes do not always have the same resources provided to them

that the middle class do, such as effective education (Cohen, 1955). Standardized tests are based on knowledge that the middle class would readily know and are worded to better suit how middle-class youth speak. This could have an impact on test scores simply because the lower-class youth do not have the same level of general knowledge. The tests are not indicative of their intelligence; rather, it is the writing of the questions that limit their ability to score well (Lomax, West, Harmon, Viator, & Madaus, 1995). Similarly, the middle class holds certain values that may not be feasible for the working class. The focus on ambition is combined with the belief that if one is ambitious, one will succeed. When the working-class youth have ambition, they also need to work harder than the middle-class youth to obtain their status. This lack of instant gratification can lead to status frustration (Cohen, 1955). Therefore, the youth may be more likely to resort to criminogenic actions to obtain their goals because the socially accepted method of “work hard, get ahead” is not working.

Delinquency, however, should not be labeled a working-class concern. Middle-class youth are also likely to commit delinquent acts. Cohen (1955) speculates that the reasons behind delinquency may not be the same in middle-class youth. It was found that youth in more affluent areas are more likely to engage in car theft (Cohen, 1955). This also shows that the types of crime may differ in the middle-class youth, as well as the motivations behind the crime. Chambliss (1973) discussed the differences between the perception of crime in middle-class youth and lower-class youth. He found that while both groups would participate in delinquent acts, the middle-class youth were able to use their higher status to their advantage, with teachers and police believing that they were good kids, while the lower-class youth were more likely to be perceived as deviant and thus get into trouble.

Biosocial Influence. The neocortex of the brain processes emotions. It is the rational portion of the brain that hinders impulsive acts (Fishbane, 2007). However, the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC), a portion of the prefrontal cortex, is what allows the regulation of emotions. “The OFC is active in processes of self-awareness, response flexibility, regulation of emotion, and empathy” (Fishbane, 2007, p. 399). In other words, the ability to act rationally is directly contingent on the OFC. However, the OFC can be damaged due to trauma. Therefore, early childhood abuse can lead to the breakdown in the function of the OFC, and thus individuals would be more likely to act on their impulses and emotions. If a child experiences abuse, their brains are less able to process their emotions, and they are more likely to lash out. Casey, Jones, and Somerville (2011) posit that although adolescents are capable of making rational decisions, in emotionally charged situations, juveniles may be more likely to engage in risk-taking behavior. Furthermore, if adolescents are more prone to accepting immediate rewards, this may predispose them to future substance abuse (Casey et al., 2011). Similarly, Kang and Burton (2014) found that race-based trauma may be just as important as childhood abuse trauma in predicting the incarceration of African American youth. Those who experienced trauma were more likely to be delinquent; however, after controlling for trauma, those who had experienced racial discrimination were still more likely to be delinquent (Kang & Burton, 2014).

Because trauma, such as childhood abuse, can impact brain development, looking at rates of childhood trauma can help determine the possible impact on brain development. The Caribbean is rife with interpersonal conflicts. In 2015, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia were among the top 20 countries with the highest homicide rates, and Guyana had the highest suicide rate (Landon et al., 2017). Furthermore, Guyana had the sixth highest rate of suicide for males aged 10-14 and the fourth highest rate for males aged 15-19 (Kolves & De Leo, 2014a). Guyana

was also ranked highest for females in both categories (Kolves & De Leo, 2014a; Kolves & De Leo, 2014b). Blum et al. (2003) found that knowing someone who had committed suicide and history of physical and/or sexual abuse were risk factors associated with attempted suicide. This, connected to the violence in the Caribbean and the high suicide rates, could impact others. Blum et al. (2003) found that 23.1% of those who had experienced sexual abuse were likely to have attempted suicide versus 9.1% who had not. As females are more likely to experience sexual abuse (Tolin & Foa, 2008), this could explain the high rates of suicide in the Caribbean.

Certainly, high rates of physical and sexual abuse and suicide suggest that young people in the Caribbean are exposed to cycles of violence and trauma, which in turn could affect their brain development. As such, this could help explain why juveniles commit crimes from an individual perspective.

Gender. Girls are socialized differently than boys (Carter, 2014; Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990; Morrongiello & Dawber, 1999; Root & Denham, 2010; Wallace, 2007). Generally, girls are more likely to be pushed towards education and may receive more food and medical resources, while boys are taught to be tough and fend for themselves; this, however, leads to the increased sheltering of girls (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2017). Given the home-focused socialization of girls, they may be at a greater risk of witnessing domestic violence than boys (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2017) Boys, on the other hand, are more likely to be introduced to drugs and weapons (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2017). Conversely, Herrera and McCloskey (2001) found that girls with a history of physical abuse in the home were more likely to be arrested for violent crimes than boys with similar histories.

Furthermore, scholars have suggested that children's socialization in the Caribbean differs from Western socialization practices. For example, Baldassar and Merla (2015) state that

from a young age, children are also seen as workers; the females begin to learn how to take care of the home and other siblings, while the boys do yardwork (see also Blank, 2013). This helps further their socialization into their gender roles. Girls are also socialized towards being independent and boys are more likely to receive corporal punishment to correct behavior (Blank, 2013). Mothers, on the other hand, may be stricter with their daughters than sons (Quinlan, 2006). As physical violence within the United States has been shown to lead to increased delinquency among girls (Herrera & McCloskey, 2001; Hubbard & Pratt, 2002), work on building bonds between mothers and daughters could have an effect on delinquency within the Caribbean (Quinlan, 2006).

For both males and females, there is an increased level of aggression and delinquency during puberty (Najman et al., 2009). For females, however, early or late onset of puberty is associated with increased levels of delinquency throughout the life course (Najman et al., 2009; Johansson & Ritzén, 2005). Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, and Silva (1993) found that early onset of menarche for girls was more likely to impact delinquency in mixed-gender schools. In other words, being around males and having an early period led to more delinquency in females than when they were at all-girl schools. Warr (2008) suggests that this could be because girls who mature earlier are more attractive to older men who may negatively influence them. Furthermore, Warr (2008) mentions that women are more likely to commit delinquent acts in mixed-sex groups.

Furthermore, the types of crime that females are committing are different than the crimes that men commit. They are less likely to commit violent offenses yet are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system (Chesney-Lind & Paramore, 2001). They are more likely to be arrested for status offenses, such as running away (Tracy, Kempf-Leonard, & Abramoske-

James, 2009). This could be a response to the fact that females who are delinquent are acting against their social roles. In other words, by running away from their family life, they are running away from the role that society dictates for them. Chesney-Lind, Morash, and Stevens, (2008) discuss the cycle that then comes from running away. Girls who run away are more likely to have experienced abuse in the home, and their risk for more victimization increases the longer they are on the streets (Chesney et al., 2008).

History of the Caribbean

Many Caribbean countries were subject to colonization, with persons being brought over to the countries through the African Slave Trade (McGowan, Rose, & Granger, 2009). Guyana, surprisingly, had a lower volume of forced slaves migrating into the area, compared to other Caribbean countries, such as Jamaica (McGowan et al., 2009). Similar to the United States colonization, most plantation workers in St. Kitts and Nevis originated as poor, White indentured servants, which eventually gave way to slave labor of people of color when the cost of indentured servitude became too costly (Dyde, 2005). The progression of slave trade was slow in St. Kitts and Nevis because the populations were small, with over half the population being slaves; furthermore, the transition from tobacco to sugar was not seamless, and thus the countries could not sustain slave labor (Dyde, 2005).

After rebellions in St. Kitts, Nevis, and Guyana, there were acts placed to emancipate the slaves, leading to a post-emancipation period of struggling growth (Dyde, 2005; McGowan et al., 2009). In Guyana, there was a political power struggle between ex-slaves and ex-owners, leading to increased subordination of the Creole peoples (McGowan et al., 2009). Due to limited job prospects, many of the Creole population had to migrate to find employment (McGowan et al.,

2009). Following emancipation in St. Kitts and Nevis, the value of sugar estates continued to decrease in value, resulting in an economic depression (Dyad, 2005).

It would be remiss when discussing modernization to not discuss the ramifications and impacts of globalization. Globalization refers to the reliance on global trade, interdependence of global systems, as well as global consciousness (Waters, 2001). The result of a globalized world would be a globe consisting of one single society and culture. As globalization progresses, the world heads towards a single system; however, there is conflict among countries about how this system should be run (Waters, 2001). However, despite the global spreading of Western culture, consumption, and capitalism, globalization introduces the possibility of mitigating inequality and diluting power and opening action to previously excluded groups (Waters, 2001).

The next shift in Guyana, St. Kitts, and Nevis was towards modernization. Guyana labeled itself a co-operative socialist republic, focusing on clothing, housing, and feeding the public (McGowan et al., 2009). There was also a shift towards focus on education, as much of the Afro-Guyanese population was illiterate and not completing primary school (McGowan et al., 2009). In St. Kitts and Nevis, the change was gradual. Poor peoples were unable to pay for adequate health care, leading to strides towards breaking the country up into districts, where a physician was mandated to take care of those under nine years old, and those that fell ill suddenly (Dyad, 2005). There also began an increased focus on education, as previous governments had been unkeen to overeducate the working class (Dyad, 2005).

Despite the abundance of research on juvenile delinquency within the United States, there is little research that has been conducted in the Caribbean. To better understand the causes of juvenile delinquency within the Caribbean, it is useful to ask stakeholders in the juvenile justice system about their perceptions of the main causes of delinquency. Therefore, one can better

understand perceived sources of delinquency within a Caribbean context and bridge this gap in the literature. To this end, this study draws on interviews with juvenile justice system stakeholders to understand their perceptions of the causes of delinquency. Specifically, this study answers the research question what do juvenile justice stakeholders in the Caribbean identify as the main causes of delinquency.

Method

Dataset

This study was a secondary data analysis of qualitative interviews. The dataset consisted of 47 transcripts detailing interviews with police, probation officers, magistrates, correctional staff, counselors, and prosecutors working in St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Guyana. In St. Lucia, these participants included a research and policy analyst, a senior magistrate, a program manager, a director of education, a permanent secretary, the Organization of East Caribbean States, a counselor, and the Center for Adolescent Renewal and Education. In St. Kitts and Nevis, the participants included a probation and child welfare board member, a child protection officer, a director of New Horizons, the head of probation, someone who was unknown, an acting chief education officer, two clerks, the director of social services, the Ministry of Community Development, two probation officers, a school attendance officer, the director of public prosecutions, and two sergeant. In Guyana, participants included two court members, three senior probation officers, the assistant chief of probation, the Rights of the Child Commission, two probation officers, a pastor, the director of public protection, a child care and protection agency, the director of social services, two crime chiefs, and two managers for the Community, Family, and Youth Resilience Program.

The original study formed part of a five-year evaluation of the progress toward juvenile justice reforms. The interviews were undertaken for the midline review, where juvenile justice stakeholders and juveniles, when possible, were asked about the current progress of juvenile justice reform and challenges to implementation. There were four research questions that the researchers were looking to answer. First, what progress has been made towards juvenile justice reform? Then, what is the nature of juvenile justice reforms? Third, how have juvenile justice reforms been experienced by staff and young people? Finally, what were the challenges and barriers to juvenile justice reform? Among the questions that were asked was “what are the top three drivers of juvenile delinquency,” which was the main focus of my research.

Analytic Approach

Using a grounded-theory approach, these data were analyzed and coded using the constant comparison coding method. All processes of the analysis were synthesized through the use of memo-writing. Grounded theory coding is characterized by breaking the data into components to determine what constitutes the data (Charmaz, 2014). In the beginning phase of grounded theory coding, one goes through the transcript line by line to create initial codes. Then, one delves deeper into the data to “sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize” the data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). Coding in the initial stage should reflect the actions of the data, while allowing for an interactive experience in the analysis. The constant comparison coding method allows one to make connections within the same interview, as well as between interviews. This allows the individual to look through the eyes of the respondents, rather than just viewing the data from their own perspective (Charmaz, 2014).

After the initial coding was completed, focused coding was utilized. This entails focusing on the initial codes that are of most interest based on the comparisons that were made.

Comparing data can lead to the codes, but then comparing the codes to the data allows one to refine the code (Charmaz, 2014). Focused coding moves away from description and into analysis. Another method used to develop the analysis was memo-writing. By interacting with the data on every level, memo-writing can make one more aware of one's own preconceptions. Memo-writing allowed an interactive space to focus on the codes, comparisons, and future direction of the research. Memo-writing forces the researcher to interact with their data and develop ideas about the data (Charmaz, 2014). Memo-writing should occur at every stage of the research whenever the idea surfaces. Instead of waiting to write the memo, it should be written immediately so as not to forget about the connections.

Using a grounded theory approach allowed for interaction and immersion in the data. The initial codes were used to establish broader themes. Within these themes, there were clusters of codes that then helped determine the second-level codes: a code that encompassed the meaning of the cluster, taken directly from the codes and the narrative followed suit. The data were broken up by country: St Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and then Guyana.

There was one research question being asked through this research: what do juvenile justice stakeholders identify as the main causes of delinquency? With qualitative research, there are no hypotheses because the data are not being quantified. Qualitative researchers are not looking for a statistically significant response to the data provided; rather, the analysis seeks to develop a richer, more nuanced understanding of Caribbean delinquency.

As a White, female, middle-class, young college student, I have my own inherent biases that need to be addressed in the context of my coding. Everyone is suspect to bias, especially in the subjectivity of creating codes. I also work in one of the poorer districts of New Haven with youth in an afterschool prevention program targeting literacy. The majority of the children that I

work with are Black, which could introduce another layer of bias, especially when reading about the education system and children that “fall through the cracks” in the Caribbean. Similarly, as a college student, I am interacting with the data on a scholarly level devoid of experience within the field. While the data are with stakeholders, I come from a research perspective, as I do not have the hands-on experience that they would, meaning there might be aspects that I am interpreting through the lens of academia rather than field work.

Results

St. Lucia

There were six emerging themes in St. Lucia: family, education, different world now, meso/macro/neighborhood factors, gangs, and peers.

Family. Participants in Saint Lucia believed that family structure was an important driver of delinquency. Specifically, participants were concerned about single mothers heading their households, and the decline in extending family networks. In terms of parental style, participants stated that there is limited or no supervision or support in the home. In addition, participants felt that poor parenting was exacerbated by poor parent-child communication skills. Participants felt that as many single mothers need to work, their jobs are taking away time in which they can give attention to their children. Subsequently, children do not receive the attention that they seek and are often left on their own. Although it is recognized that children needed direction, it was generally accepted by stakeholders that children were raising themselves. There were indications that single-headed homes are a stronger influence when it comes to delinquency, there is evidence that problems at home and domestic violence could both be indicators of future delinquency. Therefore, it is not strictly about single mothers, but it could also be about violence within the home.

Education. Among the theme of education, there are concerns associated with universal secondary education that engenders certain students “falling through the cracks” because there is a lack of responsivity to different learning needs. To counteract this, stakeholders felt that there needs to be multiple programs offered in order to ensure that students are receiving the help that they need so they do not “fall through the cracks.” By having access to resources that are at based on education level, students can thrive in their educational process.

Furthermore, to guarantee that everyone is receiving the programs that they require, stakeholders identified a need for multiple diverse programs. As such, there should be a focus on programs for 13-17-year olds. Similarly, there needs to be vocational programs because not every student is going to be an academic. By having different programs for different needs, stakeholders felt students will be more motivated to engage with programming. Such motivation would likely reduce the number of children losing interest in their education; therefore, there will be fewer students being left behind. For those that do lose interest, however, there needs to be programming that allows them to get back into the school system.

Different World Now. Participants mentioned that the types of music and video games that children listen to and play, respectively, influence their delinquency. For example, participants noted violent video games that involve shooting for points may increase the likelihood that children feel that violence is rewarded. The presence of the media also influences the style of clothing that children may want. Stakeholders were concerned that the media would expose children to brands and fashion, influencing the desire for said brands. As stated earlier, in St. Lucia, stakeholders were concerned that there is a breakdown in the family structure; however, participants stated that there is an overall breakdown of social networks. This means that parents are no longer holding youth accountable, and therefore their children are more likely to become

delinquent. The changing environment has also allowed for an increase in the ability for juveniles to access guns.

While the outside world is shifting and changing with media influences, participants felt it is important to note that institutions are undergoing a structural change as well. This is specifically identified as the removal of the practice of corporal punishment in detention facilities. While participants were wary to say that beatings have fully ceased, there is a general belief that it has overall. Some participants felt that the removal of beatings led to children being spoiled, and some juveniles felt that they would prefer the beatings to alternative punishments, such as time out. In order to ensure compliance with the new juvenile justice reform, the detention facility is removing officers that are not complying. Similarly, the facility management are incentivizing compliance by promoting officers who show responsible behavior.

These changing attitudes are evident in the participant reports of changing policies at the Boys Training Center (BTC). For instance, the BTC director is allowed to administer strikes, but corporal punishment is not encouraged throughout the institution. If abuse is suspected, the director will write a report and send it to their supervisors. Instructors are made aware that they are not allowed to administer beatings. They are told to seek assistance from security personnel instead of hitting the children. Since the abolishment of corporal punishment in school, there has been some backlash by parents according to participants. The parents would say that they themselves received licks growing up and that they turned out fine. Participants noted that in some children's backgrounds, beatings are the norm and that is all children know. Similarly, some parents feel that the school is trying to tell them how to raise their child by abolishing corporal punishment. Despite the shift towards removing corporal punishment in the institution, there are still people who believe that it should be used. Some participants felt that children were

deserving of corporal punishment. Similarly, there is a general idea within the institution that things are different on the weekend when there are fewer administrative staff. Participants reported that corporal punishment may still be occurring within the institution, even though it is not encouraged.

Meso/Macro/Neighborhood. Participants noted that poverty was a key indicator of crime. Some juveniles were caught stealing food in order to feed themselves and their family. This ties into children raising themselves, as their parents are unable to provide the basic necessities due to their social economic status and other societal pressures. Some participants stated that unemployment was a cause for concern. Families either did not have a stable income or were working multiple jobs in order to pay rent. The overall economic status of the household influenced the individuals, as some families are better off than others. In addition to inequality in economic capital, participants highlighted the differences in social capital. They mentioned this in terms of sports facilities, as some children had access to recreational activities and could afford to go to gyms, while other children could not. There was a general perception that there was a missing link between children and resources. There was no one around to bridge the gap for adolescents, and therefore, they did not know about certain resources and were “caught up” in crime and the environment that they are in.

Gangs. Gangs can provide support that children are lacking. Rather than going into programming, the youth may find gangs more appealing because the gangs will give them attention that they are not getting from their parents. More than that, gangs can get the individuals drugs, which some participants noted by stating that gangs would drop of marijuana for the children at BTC. Furthermore, there were some children who did not use drugs prior to coming to the facility and associating with the gangs. It was also explained that parents

normalize smoking marijuana because they also smoke marijuana and do not see the harm in their teenagers smoking it as well. Other drugs of concern included hash and brownie cake.

Participants also discussed the associations between certain neighborhoods and crime. They stated that children were more likely to “gravitate towards the block” and come from “ghetto” neighborhoods. Overall, there is a general assumption that coming from “that” neighborhood can be an indicator of delinquent behavior.

Participants posited that another explanation for delinquency is in the socialization of children. For instance, allowing boys to be boys. This associates boyhood with violence, and boys are able to get away with more troublesome behavior than girls may. Girls and boys are treated differently within the culture, and these expectations can exacerbate conflict. By allowing boys to be more rambunctious, boys may externalize their delinquency. There is an understanding that adolescents are different from adults; yet, participants also showed concerns about what little the participants know about adolescent development. They discussed the developing brain of the individual, and also how this impacts their cognitive functioning and decision making. Similarly, adolescents behave differently and are trying to figure themselves out. This means they may put on a macho attitude to save face.

Despite common perception, stakeholders believed that children in conflict with the law have minimal gang involvement. For the most part, they noted, the gang-involved kids were operating at totally different levels and were seen to be outside of the system. However, they did note that this does not mean that gang members were not committing crimes, but that they were just not getting caught. In addition, they acknowledged that gang members learn from others in the gang. The gang would give youth boundaries and an honor code that they were missing in their homes, according to some participants. The individuals would be trained by the drug dealer,

and that meant they would also be involved in illicit activities for the dealer, such as running drugs for them. Moreover, gangs give family structure to the children. They are able to deal with their tenuous home lives through the gang, and they look up to the gang leaders. A youth's desire for belonging can lead to him or her being influenced by the gang members. Selling drugs provides access to money, so that children can get the latest shoes that they desire. Gang membership is therefore enticing because it offers the opportunity to overcome poverty. As the gangs give family structure, some participants also noted that being gang-involved ran in families. Such as, the father would be involved with a gang before being arrested or dying, and the child would want to emulate his father and joining the gang themselves. Similarly, rather than encouraging children within the gang to attend pro-social activities, they may be influencing them to go in different directions, such as illicit behavior.

Peers. Participants in Saint Lucia did not identify peers as one of the largest influences of concern, however there was a general idea that peer pressure was a factor in delinquency. More specifically, tagging along to belong and identifying with peers. In addition to saving face and wanting to belong in gangs, peers would follow through with any dare that they are given because they feel that it would lead to them being accepted. The belief is that peer influence is more significant than that of parents because children spend more time with their peers. Overall, peers learn from each other and embody behaviors that they feel would lead to the acceptance that they crave.

St. Kitts and Nevis

For St. Kitts and Nevis, there were seven emerging themes: parenting, adolescence, peers, education, substance abuse, changing times, and economic structure.

Parenting. Participants in Saint Kitts and Nevis acknowledged that the family structure present in Saint Kitts typically involved an absent parent, usually the father. Absent fathers have visiting and weak relationships with their family, and therefore the children do not have consistent access to their fathers. Furthermore, participants noted that the father may be in prison, and that is why they are not with their children. This then means that there are more single parents, working mothers, and mothers as the head of the home. Furthermore, the poor relationships that parents have between each other could be an underlying cause of tension. There may be parental conflict at home, and participants were concerned about extramarital pregnancy. This is seen as being more indicative of a more unstable and a weak family structure. Some parents have contentious relationships, while others just lack a relationship in general. This can lead to a lack of communication about their children, which can lead to the child being unsure about who to go to or which advice to take.

Participants noted that just because the parents were in the home did not mean that they were present. Parental neglect was one of the other causes of delinquency that participants stated. Stakeholders believed that parental figures lacked the skillsets to parent, specifically the ability to co-parent with their ex-partners, which can lead to them responding to incidents with violence. This further increased the beatings meted out by parents in the home, and exacerbates the potentiality that the child does not receive love within the home. In addition, there was a perception that young people within the home are very rarely properly supervised by their parents. Some associate this with the fact that single parents lack leverage for discipline. Others observed that it is more likely that parents are working and therefore are not present when the children get home from school. This leads to a cycle where the child is unsupervised because the parent is at work and gets into trouble because they are unsupervised, and the parent cannot

provide timely discipline because he or she is at work. The cycle continues when youth are suspended from school. Suspended children are then being sent home where there is no one to supervise them, which can then lead to more delinquency.

Stakeholders believed that children may be used as pawns between parents in contentious relationships. The mothers tend to focus on needing child maintenance payments, while fathers focus on the quality of care their child was receiving. Participants noted that both are necessary in order to sustain a child, but they are often too busy fighting each other. This then leads to the child acting out because they see their parents fighting, and possibly sees it as the mother keeping their father away from them, which can lead to deviant behavior.

Adolescence. Participants highlighted that identity was an important factor during adolescence. They felt that children need to have an identity, which means they also need self-esteem and self-worth. However, they noted that there is a minimal awareness of sense of self during the teenage years, and therefore, adolescents are often searching for a place to belong. Stakeholders were concerned that young people, by not being rooted in anything, not knowing anything, and not having anything, can become anything. This was considered to be a core reason why young people start committing delinquent acts. However, for some participants, it was less about identity, and more about young people wanting to do things their own way. The adolescents are acting out because that is just who they are. They start rebelling because that is what they are thinking and how they are, and then that rebelling escalates into deviant behavior. They are acting on their own impulses. Therefore, to combat delinquency, there needs to be a focus on anger management and tolerance. Participants noticed that as youth do not have fully developed brains, they need support on how to keep their emotions level. Similarly, it was felt that girls needed mindfulness training so that they are able to see their self-worth and find their identity

without misbehavior. In addition, the need for a focus on dealing with abandonment was identified, as many of the children have an absent parental figure.

Furthermore, stakeholders commented that many of the youth have unaddressed mental issues that can lead to them committing delinquent acts. Instead, the youth get labeled as crazy, and do not seek treatment. Participants noted that there was a stigma around mental health, as many individuals are unaware of their mental health needs, and if they do seek treatment, they are treated as weak, especially males. This means that there are youth in the community who are not receiving the help that they need because of the stigma towards counseling and mental health. Participants felt that within both the community and the classroom, a label is placed on the adolescent that follows them throughout life. For instance, some educators associate certain families with deviant traits, and they begin to treat every child from that family as deviant. This can lead to them becoming regarded as a dunce in the classroom because everyone begins to associate them with the label they are given.

Peers. Participants in St. Kitts and Nevis noticed that peer influences on delinquency were important. They stated that the breakdown of the family meant that children are susceptible to negative influences. Given the breakdown in family structure, adolescents may seek out others who will give them the love that they need and crave. They also will look for male leadership and are influenced by older members in the community, as they do not have the same guidance at home.

Some participants in St. Kitts and Nevis felt that adolescents were susceptible to negative peer influences because they want to belong. They need to feel like a member of a group because they feel ostracized from people in school and the home. Therefore, they prefer to associate with people outside of school because those are the people that they feel accepted by. By longing for

acceptance, they are more willing to commit deviant acts in order to belong. Other participants noted that most gang members do not know why they are involved in gangs. They are just following, and therefore, they may be committing delinquent acts for no other reason than that. Others state that it is the company they keep. So, if you are friends with a gang member, you join the gang. Even more, others state that it could be because of the area that they live or that they are looking for protection from other gangs. Lastly, young people may join a gang because they are avenging their family members who were killed in gang violence.

Participants in St. Kitts and Nevis established that the gang problem is continuing despite major leaders getting incarcerated. They state that this is because the incarcerated leaders are still influencing members in society. Despite being behind bars, they are able to give out orders, and these orders are being carried out by the younger members. There was a concern that gang members are becoming younger, and they look up to the older members and take over from them. There is also a problem with intergenerational gangs, so children are being born into the gang culture. Gangs are influencing the youth, but participants noted that young people cannot articulate why they are involved in gangs. Furthermore, participants also do not know how to address the gang issues. There is a cycle of unfortunate gang culture that leads to violence in the community, whilst increasing the gun culture so that individuals are gaining access to more guns and using them to carry out their orders. This increases the amount of violence that youth are witnessing. Moreover, there is also the idea that the lack of positive influence within the community is what influences youth to join gangs. Therefore, to combat gang influence, there may need to be an increase in pro-social mentors.

Education. When discussing schools, participants noted the shift away from corporal punishment. This led to a mindset that the children knew that they could not get licks and

therefore, if they acted out, they would just sent home. They believed that the lack of leverage that teachers have is one of the reasons why children commit delinquent acts. Some participants believe that juveniles choose not to better themselves. However, others noted that there is an interwoven cycle that occurs instead that is less about choice. Some individuals have unaddressed learning disabilities, and therefore they start failing. Because they are unable to keep up with the work, they then lose interest in school, which then contributes to them failing even more.

Similarly, the focus on academic achievement means that the education system is not meeting the needs of all the young people. Stakeholders felt that children lacked extracurricular activities that do not focus on education, such as cricket club, drama, and dance. This furthers the fact that some students' needs are not being met because they may excel at the extracurriculars that are not being offered more than academia. This then leads back to them losing interest in school and failing.

Some participants were concerned about the gang presence in schools. They noted that some students had to transfer to other schools to escape the gang influence. They also noted that some of the misbehavior that occurred in school was a continuation of gang behaviors from the street.

Substance Abuse. Stakeholders noted that drugs were a concern within St. Kitts and Nevis. They were concerned specifically with marijuana, stating that it was one of the main drivers of delinquency. Selling drugs is also a concern stated by participants. As stated earlier, some youth sell drugs for gang members; however, some participants noted that there were other reasons as well. For instance, selling drugs to support the family, either by buying food or to take care of their younger siblings. This adds another layer to the drug concerns, as it also stems from family

situations. Some youth are selling drugs in order to obtain enough money to help their family; however, participants also noted that some sold drugs to buy the latest name brand fashions. This could be tied to wanting to fit in, as having the name brand shoes dictates a status.

Changing Times. Participants noted the changing times within St. Kitts and Nevis. Participants were concerned about the Americanization of the community, where youth are lacking awareness of cultural history and not knowing their natural dress or speech. The Americanization of St. Kitts and Nevis engenders greater individualization, which leads to young people becoming more self-absorbed. Stakeholders yearned for a time when people in the community supported each other, but now there is a decline in those community values. The youth are not respecting their elders and are no longer attending Sunday school. As community values are no longer being taught, there is a breakdown in the community. This means that community members are also no longer correcting behavior and families are no longer disciplining their children. All of this is then used to describe the breakdown of the extended family system, but overall, it is encapsulated by the idea that people do not look out for each other anymore and discipline is largely dedicated to the immediate family, rather than at all levels of socialization.

Economic Structure. Participants noted that the economic structure can hinder or allow for economic opportunities. The need for money leads to individuals working two or three jobs to sustain their status. Similarly, within the economic system, people lack opportunities because they do not have access to them. Resources are not being mobilized well, which connects back to involvement within the community because some families are not able to get involved due to an economic barrier.

Guyana

In Guyana, six themes emerged: family, environment, peers, media, substance abuse/use, and education.

Family. Participants in Guyana noted family to be a main driver in delinquency. The family structure of Guyana, according to participants, is typically a single parent household headed by a young mother with an absent father. As such, participants noted that the parents are constrained by work schedules. With the single parent needing to earn a living to support their children, parent's long work hours diminish opportunities for parental supervision.

Environment. Participants also stated that the environment that the children experience can impact their delinquency. For instance, one participant stated that there are secret pains, such as sexual abuse, neglect, and abandonment that causes adolescents to act out. Other participants also noted child abuse, the cycle of abuse, abusive homes, and perceived rejection in childhood as explanations for juvenile delinquency. They also noted that some parents got divorced, while in other family dynamics the father was not taking responsibility, and that across the country domestic violence is underreported.

Participants also noted a lack of supervision in homes, usually in relation to the fact that parents are working. Participants felt that children learned the schedules of their parents, would stay out all day, and would return to their house without the parent's being aware of their activities. Participants were concerned about children taking care of themselves. Parents were also perceived as lacking or having poor parenting skills. There was also a general consensus that adolescents are looking for support, but there is a lack of role models in their environment. Similarly, participants felt that parents are not supportive, and there is a lack of caring relationships in the home, according to participants. Along with a lack of support, there was also

the perception that adolescents are looking for guidance. However, where there is a lack of parental guidance and care, other children in the home are being looked to for guidance. This is also connected to the oldest sibling being put in charge and taking care of the younger siblings.

As stated earlier, many single parents need to work in order to provide for their families. Participants noted that other causes of delinquency directly related to the economic conditions of their environment, such as underemployment and unemployment. Parents were juggling the need for employment to survive, and the expectation to supervise their children. Similarly, participants noted that certain communities have a lapse in services and that there is both economic and social deprivation.

Participants acknowledged that culture impacts delinquency. They stated that there is a culture of marrying young, which also connects to the fact that many of the parents are young as well. Furthermore, they said that everyone stays home instead of going out into the community. One stakeholder felt that there was a link between lack of spirituality and criminality. They felt that overall people were questioning practicing their faith. Participants felt that the community played a factor in delinquency because of labeling. When a person has a criminal conviction attached to them, it led to the community seeing that person as only a criminal and then ostracizing them, causing a labeling effect. Furthermore, this individual then contributes to the self-fulfilling prophecy because when the community only sees them as a prisoner, they then act accordingly.

Some participants discussed how society is failing children. The overall functioning of the environment is what was perceived as a root cause of delinquency. One participant coined the term “multidimensional child poverty” to explain the link between underemployment and child poverty to educational failure. Other participants noted that there is a general sense of

hopelessness in the communities attributable to the historical roots in slavery. When White men left the communities, they left people that were “worked to the bone” with nothing and refused repatriation. Participants felt that a sense of hopelessness pervades generations, with children viewing their parents and grandparents smoking and drinking instead of working.

Peers. While acknowledging that familial influence was important to juveniles, participants noted that peer influence seemed stronger. They also noted that older juveniles and adults would influence youngsters to commit crimes. Young people mimic the bad habits that the people around them do, such as smoking and drinking. However, there was disagreement among the participants over whether there is a gang problem in Guyana. Some participants noted that they did not have gangs, rather groupings of two or three children. Rather than organized crime, the juveniles tend to commit opportunist crimes in those groupings. Other participants, however, stated that they did have gangs but there was no intergang rivalry. The gangs typically partook in robbery offenses, according to the participants.

The notion of belonging appeared when discussing delinquency with participants. Juveniles, according to them, wanted to “be the cool guy” and stay in the group, so they are more likely to be influenced in order to keep this status. Similarly, stakeholders felt that juveniles are trying to find themselves, and that means garnering approval from their peers, who make them feel wanted and treat them with respect.

Media. Participants were also especially concerned about the influence of media. They felt that media impacted positive relationships between peers and family. Instead, they are being influenced by media, technology, music, and social media. Participants were concerned about who juveniles were connecting to on social media. Through the use of their phones or computers, juveniles can become more immersed in juvenile delinquency. Similarly, there were concerns

regarding access to technology that connects back to parental supervision. With the parents at work or not monitoring their children, juveniles are able to access whatever websites they want to.

Substance Abuse/Use. Numerous participants were concerned about substance use as it pertains to juveniles. Participants were overall concerned about marijuana and alcohol use, while others mentioned narcotics, ecstasy, and cocaine when listing the substances that they believe juveniles use. Participants also noted that many of the juveniles they come in contact with are “hooked on” some type of substance. However, there were larger concerns about the school’s influence on substance abuse. When doing prevention programming, some participants noted that the majority of juveniles were able to identify almost every substance. This awareness led to concerns about schools being a gateway to drugs because it is where they can access substances, as well as where they could learn about different types.

Education. When discussing education, participants were especially concerned about the lack of education among juveniles. However, they noted that there were multiple external factors influencing educational trajectories. For instance, some juveniles did not go to school because they had to go to work to help support their families. Some parents were also unable to send their children to school, causing juveniles to drop out of school because of poverty or their home situation as well. Within the school environment, participants mentioned that some students were “falling through the cracks” of the education system because they were suspended or expelled. Without education, participants feared that this was the stem of the students’ delinquent behavior, specifically in terms of illiteracy. Furthermore, participants noted that the education was failing to inspire the kids that are involved in the educational process. For instance, different children have different learning styles, which is not being acknowledged within the school

environment. There also is not a system, according to some participants, to identify where juveniles are academically challenged. This all cumulates in youth becoming frustrated with the education process, thus falling out of the education system.

Discussion

While St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Guyana are all different countries with rich history, there are commonalities between stakeholder's perceptions of delinquency. Each country had a theme relating to family, peers, and education, albeit in varying degrees of importance. For example, whereas family was an essential theme in St. Lucia and Guayana, parenting was of particular focus in St. Kitts and Nevis. Within the themes of family and parenting, there were also similar subthemes. Both St. Lucia and Guyana noted that family structure was a concern in their respective countries, specifically in relation to single mothers as the heads of households. All three countries had participants discussing how there is lack of supervision within the home, especially in relation to parents working and absent fathers.

Despite the similarities between family being a driving force in delinquency, the three countries continued to differ within the nuance of the theme. St. Lucia participants were concerned specifically with the changing family structure, which was moving away from extended families. Participants in St. Kitts and Nevis noted both differing expectations for children by parents, as well as poor relationships between the parents. Stakeholders were concerned about out-of-wedlock pregnancies, which was inherently deemed more unstable than between two married persons. Once the child is born, the mother and father may have different expectations, with the mother requiring child maintenance payments and the father towards quality of care. Participants in Guyana, on the other hand, were more concerned with the specifics of the home environment. Guyana stakeholders mentioned that children might be going

through “secret pains,” such as sexual abuse and neglect, that influence juvenile delinquency. Therefore, while all three countries discuss an overarching theme of family, the nuances show that the concerns within the family can and do differ.

In relation to the theme peers, participants in Guyana and St. Kitts and Nevis were more concerned with peer relations than gangs, while St. Lucia thought that gangs were just as or more concerning. Peer pressure was identified as an important factor of delinquency in all three countries. In Guyana, peer influence was underpinned with mimicking, as stakeholders believed that juveniles emulate learned behavior from older juveniles and adults. In St. Kitts and Nevis, however, stakeholders believed that peer influence was in part due to juveniles seeking out male leadership that may not be present in the home. Other factors of peer influence within both Guyana and St. Kitts and Nevis include wanting to belong. In Guyana, this was characterized by wanting to stay a part of the group, while in St. Kitts and Nevis, wanting to belong meant seeking out those who did not make them feel ostracized.

While all three countries had a theme of education, the subthemes within differed. In St. Lucia, participants were especially concerned about the lack of differential teaching, diverse programming, and investing in students. Specifically, St. Lucia stakeholders believed that students were falling through the cracks and not being reached because students are not being seen as diverse; rather, everyone is measured with the same educational standard. They believed that there needed to be extracurricular activities beyond academic subjects, to service all students. In St. Kitts and Nevis, there was a focus on the lack of corporal punishment being used in schools being a cause of delinquency. There was also a perception that students were dropping out of school simply because they were not trying hard enough. In Guyana, however, participants noted that there were external factors that led to individuals dropping out of school. Rather than a

lack of motivation, which both St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis posit, Guyana participants stated that juveniles might be leaving school because of poverty, the home situation, or because they had to work to support their families. They also noted, however, that education is failing to inspire children, which can also lead to children falling behind, especially if they have different learning styles that are not being accounted for.

One area in which all three countries differed is in relation to gangs. St. Lucia participants felt that gangs were a larger issue than peers, while participants in St. Kitts and Nevis connected peers and gangs to each other. Guyana, on the other hand, had participants who differed on whether or not Guyana had gangs at all. In St. Lucia, gangs gave a family structure to juveniles, as well as the ability to obtain fashion brands that the juvenile may want. In St. Lucia, participants also believed that gangs operated outside the system, and therefore juveniles are not being caught if they are gang-involved. In St. Kitts and Nevis, however, participants believed that the gang problem was persisting because even though gang leaders were being incarcerated, they were still giving orders from behind bars. Similarly, gang members are becoming younger, and thus are being indoctrinated into the gangs sooner.

Lastly, both St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis had themes surrounding a change in times, with St. Lucia's theme being Different World Now and St. Kitts and Nevis being Changing Times. St. Lucia focused on both structural changes, such as the removal of corporal punishment, as well as media influences. Participants in St. Kitts and Nevis however discussed a loss of national identity and a breakdown of the community. In St. Kitts and Nevis, participants were concerned about the fact that juveniles could no longer identify their national identity, as well as the fact that people in the neighborhood no longer look out for each other. In Guyana, there was little discussion in changes of national identity, but participants were very concerned about

media influence. In St. Lucia, participants were especially concerned about the violent nature of music videos and video games. In Guyana, however, participants were less concerned about the nature of the content and more concerned about who juveniles were talking to. Without parental supervision, participants felt that juveniles could access any website that they wanted, thereby exposing them to negative influences.

While it is important to note similarities and differences among the stakeholder's perceptions of delinquency among the three countries, it is also important to note how they differ from the scholarship. Discussion with the stakeholder's allowed for a more nuanced view of certain categories that were mentioned in the scholarship. While the influence of family and peers are both identified in the literature as important factors of delinquency, both were also noted by participants. For example, Widom (1983) found that children who were abused were more likely to be arrested for a juvenile offense than those that were not. Furthermore, for peers, Warr (2008) posits that youth are more likely to commit delinquent acts in groups rather than alone. Family structure as it pertains to broken homes was also a common thread in both. For example, Wells and Rankin (1991) found that juveniles from broken homes were 10 to 15% more likely to commit delinquent acts than juveniles from intact homes. However, participants were focused more on the impact of poor parental supervision when it comes to juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, peer influence was deemed more influential in delinquency trajectories than parental influence, which was indicated by both participants and the literature. There were concerns about youths committing crimes in groups throughout all three countries, even if Guyana participants did not believe that gangs were a concern in Guyana. For Guyana, there was an increased focus on substance abuse, however. Within the literature, Pilgram and

Blum (2012) found that associations with peers that use drugs and alcohol was correlated with gang involvement.

Surprisingly, education was deemed one of the largest influences on juvenile delinquency. While this thesis notes parental, peer, and individual influences, the stakeholders focused more on education than individual sources of delinquency. Failing at school was a major concern, especially when met with the lack of parental supervision in the home. Participants wanted to focus on creating extracurricular activities outside of education to better connect with students who are not as academically inclined. They noted that even if one is not academically intelligent, there are multiple kinds of intelligences, and that if one of those was explored, juveniles may remain interested in school.

Limitations

As with all research, this research has limitations. To begin, it is secondary data analysis. The researcher was not present for the initial interviews, and thus the data were analyzed strictly from the words that were said at the interviews. Therefore, body cues given by the participants were not taken into consideration during this part of the research. Furthermore, the dataset was limiting because it was cross-sectional, taking place during one time period. The interviews were conducted during one set time frame, in one set location. It was a convenience sample, taken from those who were willing and able to be interviewed. However, efforts were made to interview a broad range of people from different areas of the countries.

Another limitation is the lack of inter-rater reliability. In St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia, the data were analyzed by two parties, allowing for better inter-rater reliability than Guyana, which was only analyzed by one person. However, this is still limiting, as the data were analyzed together, rather than completed individually and then compared. As such, it is largely

one voice conducting the analysis, especially considering the secondary analysis and narrative was done solely by one researcher.

Despite these limitations, the results from this thesis are important because the Caribbean is an area that is very rarely studied. Similarly, it adds another layer to the discussion of juvenile delinquency by analyzing juvenile justice stakeholders' perceptions of delinquency within three countries that are typically not included in the discussion. Another strength is the rigorous qualitative analysis. By analyzing the transcripts through a grounded approach, the data were analyzed thoroughly and through the eyes of the participants, thus grounding the data within the context of the communities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, growing rates of crime in the Caribbean is cause for concern and this research sought to bridge the gap between current ethnocentric studies of crime and understanding towards a more culturally competent understanding of juvenile delinquency root causes. The secondary analysis methodology utilized allowed for a deep, rich understanding of the nuances of stakeholders' perceptions about juvenile delinquency between St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Guyana.

Multiple themes arose from the data: family, education, different world now, meso/macro/neighborhood factors, gangs, and peers in St Lucia, parenting, adolescence, peers, education, substance abuse, changing times, and economic structure in St. Kitts and Nevis, and family, environment, peers, media, substance abuse/use, and education in Guyana. While there is overlap in the themes, overall, they exhibit the nuance between the different countries, allowing for different aspects of the themes to be at the forefront. For instance, while peers and gangs

were considered in tandem in St. Kitts and Nevis, they were separate for St. Lucia, and according to participants, not a concern in Guyana.

Future research should seek to expand on this study's perception research. There are other Caribbean countries that could be looked at outside of the three examined here, each with its own culture and understanding of juvenile delinquency. In addition, there is a need for quantitative surveys in Caribbean countries, which can help understanding juvenile delinquency in the Caribbean. To ensure prevention programs that are tailored to the unique concerns of specific communities, participant voices need to be heard and specific concerns addressed.

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