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Crime, Criminality, and North-to-South Criminological Complexities: Theoretical Implications for Policing ‘Hotspot’ Communities in ‘Underdeveloped’ Countries

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Introduction

Studies on marginalized communities, ghettos, and more recently ‘hotspot’ areas in ‘underdeveloped’ countries (Rodney 1972) reflect similarities in their identification of social spaces that prove challenging for law enforcement officials. Researchers argue these communities foster social bonds, as well as intricate social networks and support systems not likely to facilitate ‘outsider’ penetration (Crichlow 2016; Fischer 1977; Riger and Lavrakas 1981). Much of the existing research on dealing with crime in these contexts suggests repositioning law enforcement officers and revisiting policy design (Pino 2009; Pino and Johnson 2011; Pino and Wiatrowski 2006). Discussions have recently shifted focus to include consideration of the suitability of ‘outsider’ theories impacting policies designed to address ‘insider’ issues as well as the shortcomings of adopting a general theory of crime and criminality (Crichlow 2016; Pino 2009).

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The deficiency of generalized criminological positions appears most apparent in underdeveloped societies where there are arguably high levels of societal dysfunction. These societies defy 'first world' arguments on acceptable codes and norms of conduct and behaviors and often receive force-to-fit intervention strategies demonstrating little understanding of the societies within which they are expected to be operationalized. Within these societies, the sense of belonging is described as being linked to locale, familial ties, social networks, external support systems, and other proximal or conditional bonds (Harcourt 1998; Keller 1968). In addition to many citizens' limited access to resources, world views arising out of cumulative historical disadvantage, which do not respond to adopted foreign theorizing and policies, are often shared in the community (Sardan 1999). The ideological alignment informing what norms and values are accepted at the societal level and why remains alien to outsiders (Crichlow 2016). Support for the enforcement of external laws, policies, and intervention strategies can therefore have diverse negative consequences. The complexity of societies with diasporic histories and culturally unique positions on crime and criminality presents a context for discussing policing policies actioned in the Global South. We highlight the relevance of contextualizing criminological thought specific to a 'developing' country and highlight some complexities associated with such contextualizing.

Social, Cultural, and Ideological Considerations: Understanding the Margins

Increasing global manifestations of human dysfunction are at the forefront of international discussions intended to address issues of crime and criminality (Barak 2000). Ambiguity and panic about anticipated threats posed by fanatic groups, social and political instability, and groups/communities at risk propel initiatives to reduce existing global concerns and anxieties. Such strategies, intended to increase global security and promote the maintenance of law and order at a macro level, are matched at the micro level by government bodies within their geographic remit (Friman 2009). These micro strategies include, but are not limited to, border security initiatives, policy reform, citizen security programs, and revised crime fighting tactics (Nordstrom 2007). Despite variation in the form manifestations of dysfunction take, many of the proposed solutions are underscored by contextualization foreign to the complex realities they seek to address and tend to be framed independently of the culture, history, or populace they are reset to serve. Our focus is on the mismatch between proposed foreign solutions from the 'North' and local

problems within a nation in the 'South' (Carrington et al. 2015)—Trinidad and Tobago (T&T).

The colonial and post-colonial histories of Caribbean territories established a tradition of borrowing policy from the Global North (Job 2004; Leichter 1983; Pino 2009). Such borrowing may take the form of foreign policy adoption/and the insourcing of foreign experts with limited knowledge of underdeveloped country contexts (Feeley and Sarat 1980; Payne 1995). Perceptions held by 'policy-relevant elites' about the validity of international responses inform regional reactions to the assumed crisis (Payne 1995: 1). What is often overlooked in the decision to 'borrow'—even when country specialists are recruited—is the defining characteristics of the territory: history, sense of nationalism, political culture, institutional structures, cultural and ethnic diversity, and dominant ideologies.

To fully grasp the complexities specific to criminological North-to-South theorizing and the intricacies associated with transposition of foreign positions or outsider perspectives, it is necessary to understand the 'South' and its multifaceted past marred by historical, cultural, and social -isms. Colonialism and post-colonialism produced specific sociocultural rationalities and economic legacies that we suggest make ex-colonies on the margins, like T&T, distinct from the majority white nations of the Global North socially, culturally, and ideologically. Importantly this makes such societies resistant to the monoculturalism as pursued by neoliberal globalization (Sheller 2012; Mignolo 2000). The colonial Caribbean was forged from an ethos of white supremacy, the violence of that logic, and the imperialist processes of 'accumulation by dispossession' it supported (Fanon 1965; Luxemburg 1913). These realities shaped local Caribbean societies and their social problems of crime and violence in distinct ways from European nation-states (Kamugisha 2007; Scott 2004a).

As such, independence understood from the vista of anti-colonial discourse was essentially a 'speech act', intended to absorb colonialism's impact and overwrite it with post-colonialism. A supposedly different world we are asked to imagine suddenly arrived overnight, as if somehow the structure, disadvantages, and social divisions wrought and territorialized by the colonial system had been instantly erased. The black power riots of the early 1970s were a manifestation of the continuing exploitation and racism faced by the majority of the islands' residents. Today many of the areas of T&T that the Government of the Republic of T&T (GoRTT) considers 'hotspots' are found in geographical locations, which as a legacy of the colonial experience, and then the racialized post-colonial system, suffered cumulative underdevelopment of infrastructure, schooling, social services, and much more (Kerrigan 2015).

These communities developed as hotspots over time in distinct ways and for distinct reasons not simply applicable to Northern theories or interchangeable with those solutions (Gray 2004).

Colonialism

While T&T was a British colony, it is unlike most other former British Caribbean colonies today. For example, Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion, with Hinduism second and Anglicanism third. Amerindian place names survive alongside Spanish, French, and English ones. British-descended families are not found as in other former British colonies such as Jamaica and Barbados because of the nation's checkered colonial history; Hindi, French Creole, Tamil, and other languages were widely spoken until the mid-twentieth century, something in the Caribbean only applicable to Guyana and Trinidad (Meighoo 2006: 5). The most recent 2011 demographic census of T&T lists a population that is 37.6 percent Indo, 36.3 percent Afro, 24.2 percent mixed, and 1.9 percent accounting for the various groups: White/Chinese/Amerindian/Syrian/other, and unknown. In terms of social and ethno-racial divisions, T&T still reflects many of the legacies of colonialism and, in particular, the enforced transportation of enslaved Africans and the indentureship of East Indians during that period.

In economic terms, poverty and social division in the Caribbean were created, produced, and entrenched during colonialism and into post-colonialism, and its legacies can still be seen across the various countries in the development of large numbers of gated communities and levels of income inequality which match the highest levels in the developed world (Seepersad 2016). The bodies that suffer from crime and violence in T&T are predominantly young black males from historically poor areas (Kerrigan 2016). As Kohn (2006) notes, colonialism was 'the practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another', and in practice it was an encounter of actual violence, symbolic violence, and the production of racial hierarchy, which continues today. Understood from the perspective of the Antilles, this poverty-inducing colonialism of the region has been described by Fanon and others as a form of white-collar crime and criminological enterprise (Fanon 1965; Friedrichs 1997; Agozino 2003). The failure of Northern theories to acknowledge or recognize this criminality as such is reflected in the disdain and refusal of reparations demonstrated by Northern nations and their populations (Beckles 2013).

It is useful to consider the colonial beginnings of T&T. The colonial-criminological enterprise was given form and structure by the ideologies of

the criminal colonizers. In the early period of British control of Trinidad, the ideology of political rule locally was achieved with a system called 'Crown Colony Rule'. The Crown effectively governed a Crown Colony. Rule was directed from London and was represented on the island by a governor who kept on the non-democratically chosen Cabildo.¹ The governor had full control over all the affairs of the capital city, Port of Spain, and the island, and as such contributed greatly to the erection of a strict sociopolitical boundary between the elite and the rest, not least through ignoring the rights and wants of the masses. Trotman's work demonstrates how the lower-class Afro and Indo population were criminalized at this early stage by the racism of the colonialists (1986). Hanoomansingh (2010), using the specific case of cannabis, also demonstrates how East Indians and Afro-Trinidadians were criminalized in the 1890s and early twentieth century, while white colonialists were not arrested for the same behavior. Such facts may be historical anecdotes, but they illustrate how, from the founding of Trinidad, some were criminalized more than others based on color and wealth, with long-lasting legacies of such prejudice stabilizing in the Northern premise that colonialism was simply beneficial and developmental for the colonies.

During the Crown Colony rule, the governor never considered the brown and black 'masses' as equal to 'the people'. 'The people' were not the workers, the peasants, the unemployed, and the indentured laborers. For the governor, the 'people' were a small number of merchants, the sugar planters (predominantly British and Protestant), and the cocoa planters (predominantly French Creole and Roman Catholic), a mostly white- and light-colored group. As such, the Crown Colony Government deliberately impeded the development of any kind of alternative government system to the Western colonial form (Phillips 1984: 433). It was a means of establishing and maintaining white supremacy and economic superiority over a supposedly inferior mass. It was designed to deny the possibility of Afro-Creoles² or any other localized group exercising any say in the island's system of government or distribution of economic resources (Millette 1970). In an anti-colonial sense, the Crown Colony Government was a mechanism to maintain white-collar control/supremacy and capital and to ultimately ensure the maintenance of power through laws and committee that represented the capital interests of the elites and offered nothing to the interests of labor. This triumph of capital over labor was evidence of the growing capitalist political economy in the island. The system of government, described as undemocratic and criminal, remained largely unchanged from 1831 to 1924 (MacDonald 1986: 26).

The conflict between the organized workers' union and the local middle classes allied to the capital interest of the colonial administration marked a

new stage in the economic development of the island between 1919 and 1937 (Santiago-Valles 1997: 333). Constitutional reform commenced at the beginnings of the 1920s when the Trinidad Workers Association, representing the urban workers, in conjunction with members of the colored and black middle classes, led the reform campaign's struggle for adult voting rights. The campaign led to the Wood Commission, a Colonial commission sent from London in 1922 to make recommendations on constitutional reform. As this quote below suggests, the head of the Royal Commission of Enquiry and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Major EFL Wood, out of apparently ethnocentric assumptions, racism, and historically inaccurate anthropology, suggested an early discursive example of 'force-to-fit' as the solution to the colony's needs.

Mr. Wood related the demand for representative government to the historical circumstances of the African population of the West Indies. Their whole history, he wrote, 'inevitably drives them towards representative institutions fashioned after the British model.' Having lost their indigenous social systems, their language and traditions of slavery, 'they look for political growth to the only source and pattern that they know, and aspire to share in what has been the peculiarly British gift of representative institutions. (Quoted in Craig 1988: 29)

Post-colonialism

In Southern theory, as distinct from Northern theory, post-colonial independence can be read in decolonial terms (Connell 2007). In this version, epistemic decolonialization describes post-colonial independence in neocolonial ways as an economic and cultural movement involving the socioeconomic assimilation and class consolidation of indigenous colonial elites and local masses in the successful expansion of global capitalism. It is the era before and after independence in which foreign elites are replaced by local ones, such as the 'Afro-Saxons'³ in Trinidad, as the former colonial powers manage to export their internal problem and conflict between rich and poor 'from the national to the international stage' (Nkrumah 1966: 1–2). It is a period where the local populations of former colonies are seduced by political talk of rapid socioeconomic development and progress but instead experience underdevelopment, dependency, and persistent subordination to the politics, beliefs, and political economy of former colonial masters and also the predominantly white settler nations like the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Racial hierarchy and ideology produced in the original colonial-criminological encounter is still salient in the post-colonial era. The supposedly new era not only fails to redress the violent legacies of colonialism, both symbolic and real, but instead inscribes within the foundations of post-colonialism a cultural logic of racism tied to transnational forms of wealth creation and economic inequality. The prefix 'post' in post-colonialism then, implying succession and a break with the former colonial period, is seen as disingenuous because there is substantial continuity between the eras with a relationship of domination and subordination maintained through control of the international marketplace, culture industries, and local political leaders educated in and by the metropole (Kamugisha 2007; Mignolo 2000). As such, what Northern outsiders and technocrats might describe as 'progress' in the Caribbean can also be represented in post-colonial class and race terms as a succession of defeats suffered by the already repressed and excluded groups (Benjamin 1999: 257–258). Such a bottom-up sociological perspective on 'progress' immediately problematizes any borrowed criminological theories and solutions from the Global North, which are not specifically designed to include, be cognizant of, or redress the structural inequalities established in the formation of colonies and later ex-colonies. These include the implications of what Iris Marion Young called 'positional difference' and include important cumulative features of unjust systems such as exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (1990), which inform the economic, social, cultural, and ideological realities and rationalities on the ground in T&T.

Northern Theories as Southern Solutions: The Force-to-Fit Matrix

Policing initiatives in T&T have undergone significant changes as authorities attempt to address escalating crime. Many of the reform efforts, however, have been influenced by Northern 'one-size-fits-all' approaches (Pino 2009: 214). These efforts often perpetuate ideologies of modernization and assumptions about borrowing from the North (Connell 2007), as a requirement to advance developmental status of the subordinate Caribbean South (Watson 2016b). Addressing societal manifestations of dysfunction is dealt with as a domestic project but subject to significant foreign epistemological colonizing. This is made worse if a project fails to acknowledge the distinctiveness of the local space and the implications for addressing the issue of crime and criminality (Harkness et al. 2015; Watson 2016b). Instead of an unassuming

extension of imported positions about criminal justice and policing, we suggest the need for productive local adaptation informed by indigenous research. Criminological discourse should be informed by contextual specificity cognizant of the historical, social, political, economic, and ideological realities appropriate to the context (Pino 2009). In this regard, we now present four areas of significance to the formulation of Southern solutions that are somewhat overlooked. These include: foreign signifiers of appropriateness, borrowed solutions and theories, borrowed policies, and knowledge foundations of foreign experts.

Foreign Signifiers of Appropriateness

Systems designed to regulate human behavior are premised on notions of established standards of appropriateness. These standards are actioned by the process of law and 'handed down' to the population to aid governance. Prescriptions for policing assumed manifestations of dysfunction require the balancing of law and upheld value systems (Cohn and Viano 1976). Where laws contradict upheld value systems, there is the likelihood of problematic interface between upholders of the law and the populace. Not unique to underdeveloped countries is the difficulty encountered by law enforcement officials as they navigate social spaces well known for frequent occurrences of difficult relations between police officers and civilians. While the reality of problematic police/civilian interface in marginalized communities aligns with Northern experiences of policing in marginalized communities (Crichlow 2016; Fischer 1977; Riger and Lavrakas 1981), a point of variation exists in the social, cultural, and ideological positions underscoring acceptable codes of conduct and behaviors. In the context of policing, for example, what needs to be brought to the forefront of discussions are local communities and problematic relations between law enforcers and civilians, where these are premised on ideologized codes of conduct and moral appropriateness of foreigners or an elite few.

In many Caribbean territories, there still exists a cultural taste that preferences foreign and colonial outlooks, which differ radically from local ideological positions upheld by civilians on the margins. Remnants of a colonial past are still evidenced in the T&T Constitution with continued reference to publications in the UK's *Gazette* newspaper, laws referencing appropriate treatment of property, indicators of appropriate or offensive language, and the Privy Council in London as the highest court of appeal. State criminal laws largely based on the status quo, shift power away from the majority of the

population to contradictory globally accepted behaviors (Pino 2009). Marginalized communities in T&T are bound to maintain their position of inferiority reinforcing their labelling as societal misfits in not dissimilar discursive terms to those held in colonial times.

Borrowed Solutions/Theories

Criminological theories, specifically policing theories, focus primarily on responses to societal manifestations of dysfunction. Such responses are believed to be most effective when they are informed by relevant content and contextual grounding. Much as in other territories in the Caribbean region, responses to issues of crime and criminality in T&T are marred by political and economic constraints, extemporized strategies, and quick-fix solutions (McDavid and Cowell 2013). The last two decades have marked the initiation of multiple policing initiatives, several of which have been abandoned for new positions deemed more suitable. Here, we elaborate on four such foreign positions adopted and implemented as crime-fighting strategies specific to a T&T context: broken windows policing or zero tolerance policing initiative, model station initiative, community policing initiative, and the introduction of the special anti-crime unit.

The Northern notion of community-oriented policing adopted by Caribbean territories in 1993 depicts a policing initiative impacted by Southern realities marred by problematic police/civilian relations and other resultant factors of poor feasibility assessment. Many Caribbean territories have either had great difficulty in ensuring the continuance of the initiative or done little to action it beyond the point of political appeal (Deosaran 2002; Guy 2000). The success of the policy in US states is underscored by a desire for police intervention by residents of hotspot communities, where residents feel vulnerable and fearful of crime (Cobbina et al. 2008; Kochel 2016). In T&T, issues surrounding the organizational readiness of the T&T Police Service to deliver the program, as well as the culture of lawlessness and high levels of civilian disdain with law enforcement, point to the need for contextual modification of the community policing initiative to comply with variables and culture specific to its jurisdiction (Deosaran 2000). Such a policing strategy requires matched efforts across other sectors, an overall assessment of the availability of continued human resources, and an assessment of frontline officers' willingness or capacity to carry out reform at the community level. The argument for diffuse support for police in the US (Gallagher et al. 2001) and positive legitimacy assessment positions (Brandl

et al. 1994), which precede Northern notions of community-oriented policing, do not capture the historical and cultural dynamics specific to hotspot communities in T&T. Nor do they adequately capture the power haggling and informal processes specific to police/civilian relations in contexts of unconventional or failed social systems (Watson 2014, 2016a). The argument also fails to acknowledge the increasing rates of violent crimes, low levels of homicide clearance (Wells and Katz 2008), high levels of police corruption, and low salaries (Nanton 2004; Pino and Johnson 2011). Within these communities, talk about fear of crime indicates civilians' fear of police officers as they consider law enforcement officials to be the greatest threat to their safety (Kerrigan 2015; Pino and Wiatrowski 2006; Watson 2016b).

The model station initiative (MSI), a precursor to the introduction of community policing, was implemented in T&T in 2007. The initiative, intended to change police culture from a general complaints authority to one of service-oriented policing for the people, designed to strengthen the elements required to move community policing forward (Wilson et al. 2011). These elements include: improved leadership, facilities, equipment, and station staffing; prioritized training; victim support; technological advancements to documentation and analysis; and on-the-job field advisors (Parks and Mastrofski 2009). Wilson et al. describe the initiative as 'a program intended to reshape everyday police practices to conform to a more democratic model of policing' (2011: 377). The intent was to improve civilians' experiences with law enforcement by altering the supercilious and distancing habits handed down from the British colonial policing model of their predecessor (Mastrofski 1999). The good intent and sound theorizing of the foreign consultants hired by the Ministry of National Security in a time of escalating crime and decreasing public confidence in law enforcement provided another quick-fix solution of radical change (Wilson et al. 2011). The two-year intervention found minimal significant overall effects on crime and citizens' perceptions of law enforcement. This was not surprising as an initiative underpinned by 'reassurance policing and accountability model' (Skogan 2009) requires a longer citizen acclimatization period in a context of historical citizen distrust in law enforcement and standoffish policing. Like many other initiatives, MSI practices were not implemented throughout the country or continued past the budgeted two-year period at the model stations. The program was shelved as a political casualty following a change in local government. The consultants also acknowledged the challenges associated with overcoming historically entrenched practices and policing customs (Wilson et al. 2011). The policing culture of regular officer shuffle across divisions practiced in T&T, as a strategy to deter corrupt policing practices, also contributed to the difficulty of

program continuity. Reversion to previous practices at the station level signaled a lack of readiness on the part of the organization.

Broken windows or zero tolerance policing (ZTP), a term which continues to be debated, was introduced in T&T in 2013 (Crichlow 2016). This approach to policing, initiated in New York, necessitated an increase in active police officers, decentralization of police power, and the introduction of performance indicators (Goldstein 1990; Mawby 2008). It was proposed by the then New York City Police Department Commissioner Bratton as a strategy to remedy civil disorder and improve quality of life for citizens (Crichlow 2016). The ideologies informing this initiative have since become somewhat disconnected from the initial conception as a long-term preventative crime formula preceded by addressing quick and minor issues (Rosenbaum et al. 1998). In T&T, the broken windows has become synonymous with all acts of policing as evidenced in references in leading local print media from 2001 to 2015. While there is merit in the transfer of lessons emerging from the implementation of the strategy, the confrontational approach to policing required failed to acknowledge the history of problematic relations between police and members of disadvantaged groups in the specific Caribbean context, or more specifically T&T with its history of civilian rebellion, police officers recruited from other islands, uprisings, and an attempted coup. T&T's high crime rate, low detection levels, police officer shortages, lacking police resources, dated infrastructure, and clogged legal systems and criminal processing also present a context dissimilar to New York. The issue is not the value to be derived from the adaptation of such a strategy but its contextual applicability.

Borrowed Policies

Despite becoming a Republic in 1976, T&T's reliance on foreign entities for strategies to address spiraling crime has been continually evidenced in policing policies and anti-crime initiatives. Strong elements of the Royal Constabulary colonial model with minor emphasis on service provision endure amidst policy provisions to facilitate local employment of the commodified Northern Irish policing model (Ellison and O'Reilly 2008). The model was accepted as a contingency plan to boost police legitimacy, accountability, and professionalism (Mastrofski and Lum 2008). It promotes a shift away from policing being constructed as a technical task and instead highlights community support and involvement as crucial to law enforcement processes (Marijan and Guzina 2014). Though admirable with its proven success in Ireland and similar first world countries, the failure to

consider T&T's cultural, political, and economic climate, let alone the enduring history of problematic police/civilian relations, is likely to impede dispersal of the model. Much like the borrowed Irish policing model, policing policy documents intended to guide behavior reflect positions not relevant to local contexts (Pino 2009). The T&T 'Use of Force Policy', strongly influenced by 11 foreign documents, refers to the use of intermediary methods not facilitated in the training of officers locally. The document, which recruits rarely interact with during training, also refers to resources not available for use locally and depicts ignorance of culturally acceptable discourse and the local language of power relations within marginalized communities most known for high instances of documented complaints about misuse of force by police (Watson 2014, 2016a).

Borrowed Experts

Northern policies sometimes give way to Northern experts serving as authorities on issues in territories such as T&T. Such individuals are touted as foreign authorities on issues of crime and criminality, paid relatively high salaries, and charged with the responsibility of devising quick-fix crime fighting solutions (Deosaran 2002). The merit of collaboration with 'foreigners' on local issues pertaining to crime and criminality is sidelined by disgruntled responses to the outsourcing of foreign experts who derive positions indistinguishable from those put forward by local experts (Pino 2009). Two popular examples receiving significant media attention were the team of foreign consultants brought in to devise strategies geared toward addressing the spiraling crime situation and police reform and the import of two Canadian nationals to head the T&T Police Service. Neither the Mastrofski-headed consultant team nor the Gibbs and Ewatski 'top cop' duo were able to impact significant changes in the South despite marked expertise and success within their respective fields in the North. Negative attitudes toward foreign input are likely to contribute to resistance to changes among different ranks of police officers and persons involved in law enforcement. Limited knowledge about the local context is likely to force foreign experts to rely primarily on theory and experience not specific to T&T. Evidence of this is seen in the hegemonic influence of policing in T&T by the USA which serves to exclude civil society from reform efforts and trivializes the relevance of social, political, cultural, and contextual specificity to policy reform and adaptation efforts (Griffith 2000), not to mention the more general trend of militarized policing.

Relevance of Research from the Margins: The Case of the Citizen Security Program in T&T

In this section, we now suggest and highlight two implicit factors impacting the success of Northern theories in T&T. These two factors encompass local political culture and the institutional structures of the GoRTT. They emerged—among other implicit levels such as general cultural attitudes, social/personal relations, the culture of local decision-making, and a local type of post-colonial governmentality—as part of a rapid assessment ethnography undertaken in late 2016 over a period of three months. The ethnography undertook open-ended interviews with 23 senior persons connected with the implementation and execution of the citizen security program (CSP), including former and current GoRTT ministers, permanent secretaries, and both the funding agency and CSP staff, to understand why the GoRTT was not more enthused about the project.

Political Culture and Institutional Structures of the GoRTT

A syncretic, local political culture formed out of the clash of colonialism and post-colonialism has shaped the wider culture and society by influencing general behavioral logics. Elements of the local political culture and logic include such things as nepotism, solidarity networks, negotiation, redistributive accumulation ethno-racial political competition, ‘thin simplifications’ informal systems and processes, ‘metis versus techne’, resistance to change, promises as the language of politics, party politics, and anti-evidence (Scott 1998; Sardan 1999). These logics can be imagined as a type of languaculture (Agar 1994) specific to everyday cultural attitudes in T&T and form a type of local and situated knowledge.

One important structuring element of this local political culture to consider is how political competition is played out in election cycles. In many ways election cycles premised on the localized historical reality of ethno-racial politics between two main parties bequeathed by the social divisions manufactured during colonial times can present obstacles to national social development. This is because election cycles, quick wins, and political competition, not long-term national development, structure and shape the context within which political and governmental decisions are made locally and the behavior of those individuals making them (Meighoo 2006).

Anthropologists of development might describe a national development strategy premised on local political competition as a ‘thin simplification’

(Scott 1998). And within the GoRTT, some suggested during the open-ended interviews that the only real long-term solution to the local reality of crime and violence is for both political parties to work and come together instead of changing plans and directions on the whims of party politics at each election. This suggestion, however, does not change the reality that as a legacy of history, it is the present considerations of political culture—that is gaining access to government and its resources—driving political decision-making locally, and this includes theories and strategies to combat criminality and violence. Other thin simplifications emerging from the local political culture include such things as repression as the solution to social problems and the use of informal systems like personal experience or party politics over citing evidence.

In the context of party politics, there is the impression that ministers are surrounded by a variety of different voices, when in fact the political party acts like an echo chamber to constrain people's ideas, reinforcing itself and ignoring evidence. This is because the very things needed to be an organized political party locally can get in the way of accepting and using evidence. Another way to think about these logics is to use political anthropologist Scott's analogy of *metis* versus *techne* (1998).⁴ According to Scott, local political culture in T&T is a form of *metis* rather than *techne*. He suggests *metis* can be seen within a political culture wherein political actors like ministers regard themselves as 'far smarter and farseeing than they really were' and fail to recognize their own 'incomplete knowledge' when making decisions (1998: 343). The suggestion here is that anti-evidence is a symptom and behavioral logic of a local political culture whose first priority is securing control of government and not long-term, evidence-based, sociological solutions to problems of crime and violence.

Political culture in this sense in T&T then can be imagined as a space of 'metis-laden skills' that foreign agencies and Northern theories would not necessarily be privy to because politicians and their political parties/supporters are constantly trying to outfox and beat their counterparts based around local parameters and expediencies disconnected from inclusive national development. In such a situation of local political culture, it is hard to see how the purposeful yet generic development plans and projects of foreign agencies and their crime initiatives can counter the dominant purpose of local political culture or even make it change, not least because this political type of *metis* is socialized as a necessary skill set in local politics and is resistant to change.

Of course for any GoRTT to follow through on its policies and borrowed ideas, it must use its various institutions like ministries and their staff. These ministries and other agencies/elements can be imagined as another implicit

layer driving and determining the success of local crime initiatives. The institutional structures of the GoRTT include such things as the behavioral logics and expediencies of political culture, GoRTT bureaucracy, policy structure/failure, social networks of power, data illiteracy, social and organizational culture, individual agency, the legacies of colonialism, and the effects of current imperialism, including both antagonism toward and desire for foreignness.

However, the institutional structures and culture are not monolithic. The evidence collected in the rapid assessment ethnography suggested different ministries have distinct structures and cultures. In this sense, each ministry—the Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Planning, for example—involved in the implementation and execution of an initiative like CSP can be conceived as its own small society with its own social system of norms and values.

Alongside explicit problems then, like borrowed experts, borrowed policies, foreign signifiers of appropriateness, and borrowed solutions/theories, consideration of the implicit level too, such as local sociocultural issues like the political culture and the structure/culture of local institutions, is important. Attending to, and understanding, such complexities and how they are entwined together will aid foreign Northern initiatives and Southern stakeholders involved in policing hotspot communities.

Final Considerations

Modern before modernity (Scott 2004b), yet underdeveloped during modernity (Rodney 1972), any formulation of Caribbean criminology requires a recognition of a region unique in its historical, social, economic, and political configuration. There is also the need to acknowledge the diversity and distinctiveness of the territories despite what might be described as a common colonial past and similar, yet complex, histories. Strategies to address societal manifestations of dysfunction are as effective as the acknowledged operational frames or principles informing their creation. Policies and practices intended to action change in the Global South should, therefore, be primarily reflective of experiences from the Global South and positions informed by southern historical, cultural, and ideological underpinnings. This is not to dismiss all worldly influences from the Global North, as behavior patterns emanating in the North do impact and shape southern contexts, but to highlight the need for contextually specific action plans.

Strategies to address crime and criminality in T&T continue to be largely politicized. Political promotion of ethno-racial competition and T&T's

history of failed institutions provide context and understanding for continued crime, criminality, and community ties (Job 2004). The ease of abandonment and discontinuity of various crime-fighting strategies as governments change, as well as the failure to implement evidence-based recommendations put forward to improve policing, can be extensively discussed in a context of a local political culture of disloyalty to positions of the 'othered' group among other things. This suggests in terms of success that local political culture and its logic of ethno-racial competition should be included contextually in any potential crime and violence initiative plan for T&T.

The region remains scarred by histories of underdevelopment and processes of inequality. More specifically in the context of criminology, T&T, much like many other ex-colonies, was founded and built on a history of violent dispossession on murder, rape, and kidnapping directed and sanctioned by elites but not recognized as such today. The colony and its legal imaginary were bound by the ideologies of the criminal colonizers. This means historical inequalities produced in the collision of slavery, colonialism, and post-colonialism in the expansion of global capitalism were entrenched locally, and while not the sole cause of local social problems today, such long-standing cumulative inequalities provide a partial backdrop unfamiliar to 'developed' Northern nation-states. Alongside the practical explicit factors like foreign signifiers of appropriateness, borrowed solutions and theories, borrowed policies, and knowledge foundations of foreign experts, implicit factors too shape local realities and rationalities. Elements of culture, ideology, and local sociology are critical to understanding transnational policing agendas and international (albeit provincial) 'best practice' and the shortcomings of Euro-American developmental solutions to crime and violence in and for the Global South.

Ideas generated independently of the anticipated operational context are likely to present low-impact strategies or force-to-fit solutions on some level, and this may impact probabilities of attaining anticipated outcomes. Our intention in this piece was not to discredit the validity of all northern influences on localized crime control in the Global South but to question the generic applicability of such responses to a foreign context. We looked specifically at international responses to policing and explored the transference of such initiatives to a specific Caribbean territory. We explored the intersection of the power of Northern criminological theories, policing policies, and positions transposed, whether in entirety or partially, to the T&T context and commented on the complexities of accepting Northern theories as Southern solutions in the context of a deficiency of generic criminological positions. Our contribution to the Southern Criminological debate therefore

interrogates the suitability of ‘outsider’ positions, what anthropologists call the Etic—as a strategy to address ‘insider’ or Emic issues, relating to policing the margins in T&T. As such, we ask for more complexity on the explicit level, better use of local evidence and local knowledge, and better understanding of the implicit levels at play—like local political culture—in policing hotspot communities in underdeveloped countries.

Notes

1. ‘[I]n those days, everything and everybody in Port of Spain were under the jurisdiction of the Illustrious Cabildo. It was at that time of its history an omnipotent body. There was no appeal against its decisions. It made its own laws and punished those who broke them’ (Ottley 1962: 29).
2. Afro-Creoles were persons of African heritage born in Trinidad. In the period before 1797, Trinidad had the largest free Afro-Creole population in the Caribbean, many of whom were free and possessed lands. It was a larger group than the merchant class, the members of the civil service, and the plantocracy, and as such these groups had little interest in extending or improving the rights of Afro-Creoles.
3. Lloyd Best invented the term to describe the post-colonial elite and British West Indians in the island who had internalized the values of their former masters.
4. Metis refers to local knowledge, learned through experience. It is practical knowledge, local and vernacular. Metis is ‘a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing’ environment, be they natural or cultural. Techne on the other hand is technical and agreed-upon knowledge. It can be ‘expressed precisely and comprehensively in the form of hard-and-fast rules (not rules of thumb), principles, and propositions’ (Scott 1998: 313).

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