Policy Note

DEVELOPING DEMOCRATIC POLICING IN THE CARIBBEAN: THE CASE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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This paper presents the theoretical concept of democratic policing and how this concept might be applied in practice to Trinidad and Tobago. The paper includes an assessment of the current state of policing and police reform efforts in Trinidad and Tobago. Based on this assessment, ideas on what policies might be needed in order for democratic policing to be sustainably implemented will be offered.

Police reform efforts in Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the Caribbean must be tailored to the economic, political, and social realities of that region, instead of a one-size-fits-all approach often promoted by core Western states. In addition, a partnership between civil society, government officials, and police services should lead reform effort development and implementation, rather

than having reforms dictated solely by the government and/or the police.

The ideas presented in this paper will be informed in part by a preliminary analysis of qualitative data obtained from interviews with members of local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Introduction

There are numerous ways to go about developing a Caribbean criminology (see, for example, Birkbeck 1999). But if a regionalized criminology of the Caribbean is to be realized, it must take into account what is distinctive about the region (and the distinctiveness of each country within the Caribbean) while at the same time pointing out the similarities between Caribbean nations and other post-colonial states around the world in terms of their former and current political and economic relations with their former colonizers.

Bennett and Lynch (1996) argue that the Caribbean is unique in terms of its different development trajectory from core states, its processes of urbanization, the importance of tourism in promoting a particular form of social stratification, the role of the Caribbean as a drug transshipment hub, and the recent post-colonial status of Caribbean countries.

At the national and community levels, criminal justice reforms can be influenced by the strength of a country's democratic institutions; levels of corruption; levels of human, social, financial and cultural capital; the amount of political stability and institutional legitimacy present in the country; and levels of social disorganization, civic participation, patriarchy, and ethnic conflict, among others at various levels of analysis (Pino and Wiatrowski 2006a: 12). These factors should also be considered when developing a Caribbean criminology so that criminological research is couched within a subject's historical, social, political, and economic contexts.

While there have been recent surveys of the citizenry and the police in Trinidad, there has been little if any published work surveying or interviewing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) on their views of the police, crime and related social problems, or their willingness to work with the police and others to work on crime prevention efforts (see, for example, Cain, 2000; Deosaran, 2002). Furthermore, given the recent police reform efforts in the country, more research is needed on the effects of these efforts on officer behaviors and attitudes toward these reforms and working with the public.

Snowball sampling was utilized to recruit participants for the study. They were told prior to the beginning of data collection that their answers would remain confidential, that there was no penalty for refusing to answer certain

questions, and that all collected data would be destroyed after the completion of the research study.

Snowball sampling was deemed to be the best way to recruit participants for two reasons: 1) the author's initial lack of familiarity with Trinidad and Tobago's NGOs and police community; and 2) this sampling method could reveal linkages between different NGOs and CBOs to help determine the strength of networking and trust (social capital) among NGOs and between NGOs and the police in the country.

In all but one case interviews were conducted with one person at a time, and notes were handwritten by the author rather than tape-recorded, assuming that participants would feel uncomfortable speaking while a tape-recorder was operating.

In one case a focus group was conducted because five individuals who worked in the same area and knew each other for a long time were present. This research is ongoing, but the analysis for this paper is based on eight interviews and one focus group that contained five individuals.[1]

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1 The local individual that helped the author locate participants, to make initial contacts, and to accompany the author to data collection locations was Keron King, the official research assistant for the Criminology Unit at the University of West Indies in St. Augustine. His assistance was essential to the success of this research project.

Literature Review

Crime in Trinidad and Tobago

The Criminology Unit of The University of the West Indies has compiled police statistics on a number of offenses known to the police from 1962 until 2007. Of the offenses listed, murder would be the most accurate. Since Independence in 1962 there has been a general increase in murders. From 1962 until around 1980 there were approximately 50-60 murders per year. Starting in the 1980s the number gradually went up to and stayed around 100 per year until the year 2000. Since the year 2000, however, violence, and gun violence in particular, have skyrocketed (Wells and Katz 2008).

Murder rates in 2001 and 2002 averaged 160 murders per year, while 2003-2004 averaged 245, and 2005-1007 averaged 385. In 2008 Trinidad and Tobago had 550 murders, which translates into 42.3 murders per 100,000 people.   In 2001 about half of all murders involved guns, but in 2007, 75% of murders involved guns (Wells and Katz 2008).

According to one of the study participants, based on results from a victimization survey that has not been officially released, about 25% of residents in Trinidad have been the victim of a robbery, physical assault (with or without a weapon), or sexual assault over a one year period, and the most crime ridden areas have victimization rates as high as 36%.

While violent crime rates have been increasing dramatically in Trinidad and Tobago, property crime rates show different patterns, at least according to police statistics. Overall property crimes and burglaries peaked between the mid 1980s and mid 1990s (around the time of the country's IMF crisis), and since then these rates have declined somewhat. The homicide clearance rate is only 7-8% (Wells and Katz 2008), partially because citizens feel their lives are in danger if they go to the police (Parks and Mastrofksi 2008). Study participants report that people are indeed fearful of crime, but at the same time are afraid to go to the police due to a lack of trust and fear of retaliation by criminals.

While residents in high crime areas have a lot of knowledge about crime and criminals in their neighborhoods, they keep it to themselves and do not go to the police. It is a common perception in disadvantaged communities that the police associate with criminals (or come from the same households) and that the police will tip off criminals if a citizen reports an offense.

Distrust of the police also comes from a general distrust of state institutions and feelings of abandonment by the government. One participant said, "People in the community could tell you where everything is but why should they tell you if you are part of the oppressive system?" One respondent mentioned that women are more likely to look to the police for protection than men, because while they are abused by the police, they are also abused or raped by men, and in some cases even their sons.

Social and sexual violence have increased in part due to increases in the drug trade (Deere et al 1990). The Caribbean is a major drug trafficking area for drugs from South America on their way to the US. International criminal networks are also involved in gambling, prostitution, and human trafficking (Deere et al 1990). Cocaine trafficking is conducted by freelancers from small organizations who pick up cocaine in Columbia and take it to Trinidad (Klein 2004). The process is disorganized, with many people being killed for their drug supplies as they attempt to ship them.

Drugs are often used as a scapegoat for all of the crime-related problems Trinidad faces, but the petty users and dealers reportedly do not play as large a role in the crime problem as unemployment and other major social issues (Klein 2004). Nonetheless, the larger drug lords are seemingly above the law with traffickers infiltrating the highest levels of society and government; and the illegal drug trade is related to crimes of violence, sex crimes, domestic violence, child abuse, and corruption in law enforcement (Griffith 2000; Nanton 2004).

Economic, Political, and Social Context

Trinidad and Tobago is a prime example of a developing country whose workers produced raw material exports for core countries, creating underdevelopment (Istister 2003). Slaves were used by the British during colonization to export sugar and molasses to England or the North

American colonies. The plantation system did not have any local economic benefits, as plantation agriculture limited industrial growth and stunted modernization (Mandle 1996).

In the current period of neo-liberal globalization, core-periphery relations remain highly relevant to understanding the Caribbean (Klak 1998). The core still largely benefits in terms of power, authority and the accumulation of wealth.   US hegemony is bringing Trinidad and Tobago into the US geopolitical sphere, and the IMF is part of this incorporation (Conway 1998a). The push for foreign investment in oil and gas is part of the enthusiasm for export market niches advocated by neoliberalism (Klak 1998).   Unfortunately, niches are narrow and highly competitive.

Trinidad and Tobago was one of the many nations that fell into a debt crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s in part due to its dependence on energy exports without maintaining the agricultural or manufacturing sectors (Mandle 1996; Payne and Sutton 2001). The government played a large role in the economy, but during the oil bust the government could not offset the negative impact (Mandle 1996).

The government was then no longer seen as the solution for development, and the country engaged in IMF-style structural adjustment policies (Mandle 1996; Payne and Sutton 2001). The State played a much smaller role in the

economy by reducing subsidies and devaluing the Trinidad and Tobago dollar in the hope of diversifying the economy. As a result, cost of living went up while wages froze, oil prices dropped, unemployment rose, banks loaned less money, and GDP was lowered by almost half (Mandle 1996; Payne and Sutton 2001).

IMF agreements mandated that Trinidad and Tobago reduce social spending on welfare, public housing, education and training, and health services, end consumption subsidies, and relax labor standards for employers (Deere, Antrobus, Bolles, Melendez, Phillips, Rivera, and Safa 1990). There was public resistance led by the Summit of the People's Organization on the left, but on the right business groups thought government did not do enough to cut the public sector, so business confidence remained low (Deere et al 1990; Mandle 1996; Payne and Sutton 2001). The legacies of slavery in terms of limited education meant that there were not enough local individuals with scientific or engineering education, leading to technological dependence on the US and other core countries (Mandle 1996). In the early 1990s crime was a major concern and the informal sector grew (Deere et al 1990; Payne and Sutton 2001).

The ethnic tensions between Africans and Indians in Trinidad started when Indians were brought in as cheap agricultural laborers by the British after the abolition of slavery in 1834. The current two major political parties are divided largely on ethnic lines (both parties are trying to

correct the perceptions that one is the African party and the other is the Indian party) (Deere et al 1990). Social stratification in Trinidad and Tobago is class based, but with ethnic polarization and social monopolies characterizing the social and political experiences of the country (Conway 1998b; Deere et al 1990). Bilateral investment treaties were conducted with the US, Britain, France, and Canada, mostly in the areas of energy (oil, gas, ammonia, and methanol), iron, and steel. This investment did allow the government to reduce its foreign debt and to start some social programs to improve public services and infrastructure, increase state pensions, and to put in a minimum wage (Payne and Sutton 2001). Unemployment fell to 13.4% in 1998, but due to a lack of diversification, the country is still dependent on the prices of oil, gas and methanol (Payne and Sutton 2001).

One interesting finding from all of this is that despite different parties taking power since independence, the same policies were put in place, and political stability remained fairly intact. Since its Independence in 1962, Trinidad and Tobago has had free and fair elections held on a regular basis despite its economic, social, and crime-related problems, and the fact that on three different occasions since Independence there have been extra-legal attempts, largely due to economic and social concerns, to dismantle the government (Griffin 1995; Mandle 1996).

During the 1970 Black Power Revolt, there was an army mutiny, and a few years later there was an unsuccessful

coup attempt by The National Union of Freedom Fighters, an urban guerilla movement (Griffin 1995). A Muslim group called the Jamaat-al-Muslimeen tried another failed coup attempt in 1990.

Since the mid-1990s the Trinidad and Tobago economy has done well in terms of economic growth, but most people have not improved their quality of life, due in part to levels of unemployment and inequality, and the very high crime rates that plague the country (Levitt 2005). There is a high percentage of female-headed households or households with female primary providers in Trinidad and Tobago because of male out-migration and low levels of legal marriage as part of the colonial and slavery legacies (Deere et al 1990).

Numerous participants of the present study mentioned that one of the biggest problems Trinidad and Tobago faces is the perceptions of inequity in the areas of economics, education, and access to services. According to one respondent, the government used to subsidize farmers, buy the farmer's produce, and then sell that produce on the market at reduced prices. After structural adjustment those programs ended and they have not been restarted.

A related issue discussed by a few respondents involves work programs that are controlled by gangsters. Gang leaders force government employees to provide them with work contracts to do work that is never completed. CBOs

and others interested in economic development therefore do not gain access to most contracts used to promote work, micro-credit schemes, and the like.

There are other social problems mentioned by respondents as being major impediments to change, and the most frequently cited problems are increasing murder rates and gang activity, a reduction in social capital in neighborhoods, a general lack of leadership and vision at various levels, and a lack of respect, recognition, or resources from the government for CBOs, particularly those in the most disadvantaged areas of the country.

Members of CBOs interviewed for this study were angry and upset about the lack of legitimacy received from the government even though a number of research participants had been active in their communities for two decades. Gang activity was a particular issue, as they would disrupt activities set up by the CBOs or would get work contracts from the government while the CBOs didn't. These CBOs are arguably less sophisticated and have less-educated staff than the more organized NGOs in the country, but the CBOs do have more familiarity with the communities they operate in than many of the more organized organizations.

The reductions in social capital (the author's term, not those of the respondents) include factors such as decreased trust and networking among members of various neighborhoods. A number of respondents said that at the same time people "got along" but this was not

characterized in such a way that one could call it evidence of social capital.

A number of research participants argued that increases in gang activity and violent crime are at least partly to blame. Fear of crime, distrust of neighbors who may be criminals, and the hardening of gang turf lines reduce social interaction in neighborhoods. In some of the most disadvantaged parts of the country, gang turf is such that if non-gang members live in a particular gang's turf area they cannot walk in rival gang areas because they are at risk as much as the gang members.

A sizeable number of respondents complained of weak leadership in the government. A common complaint from almost all respondents, though at times coming from different angles, was that the country's leadership did not listen to the people, acted in its own self-interest, required complete servitude from their supporters, relied too much on Western ideology or experts, and failed to make use of indigenous approaches to problems.

A Brief History of Policing in Trinidad and Tobago

Policing in the formal sense began under Spanish occupation starting in 1592, where in Port-of-Spain six officers served under the management of the mayor, and a ward-watch system of sorts existed on other parts of the island in country districts (de Verteuil 1986; Ottley 1964).

This arrangement lasted for two more centuries until the expansion of sugar, coffee, and cocoa plantations increased the island's population (Ottley 1964). When the British took over control of the island, Governor Picton mandated compulsory enlistment of "colored men" to serve in the police force, leading most people to believe that service in the police force was more punishment than reward (de Verteuil 1986: 29; Ottley 1964). In much of the Nineteenth century few wanted to join the police, so men from Ireland came to fill the void (de Verteuil 1986).

A comprehensive set of rules to govern the police was issued in 1835, and by 1844, trial by jury and English law was instituted (Ottley 1964). Justice reform, including strengthening and increasing the pay of the police, only happened when things were considered to be out of control (Ottley 1964). In 1874, five members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) were appointed to reorganize and strengthen a plain clothes inspector branch that was started in 1862, and by 1884 the police force in Trinidad numbered 435 men (de Verteuil 1986; Ottley 1964).

The largely Irish police in Trinidad were busy in the late 1800s squelching riots (the Carnival riots of 1881, and the Hosay Riots of 1884), but in Arouca in 1891 a riotous crown beat up policemen, and from then on the policemen were provided with firearms (de Verteuil 1986; Ottley 1964). The water riots of 1903 led to more protests of police brutality, but only one officer was put on trial and he was acquitted (Ottley 1964). Changes in 1905 to the police

service provided the basis for how the police would function well into the second half of the 20th century.

The Constabulary Ordinance of 1905 changed the police into an armed constabulary charged with paramilitary duties (Ottley 1964). In addition to the detection of crime, the police force was charged with repressing internal disturbances and defending the colony "against external aggression" (p. 115). The police continued to be used to squelch riots, contain feuds between religious groups, and to control steel band activity in the first half of the 20th century, including in 1942 when the Governor ordered no Carnival celebrations, all-night police car patrols began, and 15 men were formed into a local commando unit (Ottley 1964).

In the 1950s the police started the 999 emergency call system, a police association was authorized, female officers were hired, new systems for recording crime were instituted, police dogs were starting to be used, and officer strength exceeded 2,000 officers (Ottley 1964).

The legacies of colonial policing did not go away after Independence. The Committee on the Restructuring of the Police Service (CRPS) (1984) reported that relations within the police service were poor and that morale was low. Leadership was seen as extremely weak due to managerial inefficiencies, a lack of communication among senior officers, ineffective disciplinary procedures, high turnover among supervisors, uneven and unclear workloads among

officers, and lack of respect for senior officers among junior officers (CRPS 1984). According to the same report, the police were seen by the public as "a repressive force ready to harass people at every opportunity" (CRPS 1984: 138).   Urgent calls for assistance were ignored on the account that there are no vehicles or insufficient men at the police station.

Police were seen as indifferent, unresponsive, and unsympathetic; overly harsh in their treatment of suspects; engaging in arbitrary search and arrest; ignoring serious crimes while attending to minor offenses; destroying the homes of squatters; not conducting internal investigations of police misconduct; and failing to engage in foot patrols (CRPS 1984). O'Dowd (1991) wrote a separate report for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and found similar problems seven years later, including weak leadership, lack of internal investigations of misconduct, widespread accusations of corruption, lack of response by the police after receiving calls for service, and so on.

The most damning report of the TTPS was conducted by Seaby (1993), who conducted a thorough investigation into accusations of police corruption, and found that corruption was endemic and existed at all ranks. Citizens had to pay officers for service, and officers would blackmail people as a means to not arrest them or to hide evidence of a crime (Seaby 1993). Police officers would also steal from each other and from the canteen; and there were accusations of police shootings and rapes (Seaby 1993). Senior ranking

members would live beyond their own means by embezzling police service monies, but most money made from corruption came from protecting drug dealers, drug routes, and drug supplies (Seaby 1993). Some officers were even found to actively engage in transporting cocaine, growing marijuana, and selling drugs. Groups of officers from higher to lower ranks would help each other in corrupt activities, and they would promote individuals within their own group.

Seaby (1993) reported the same weak leadership, management, discipline, and accountability issues previous reports had found, concluding that the colonial style of policing was still present, and that local commanders had too much control over their own areas. There was no use of scientific investigation techniques or technologies, and police were unskilled at taking statements from victims or witnesses (Seaby 1993).

Furthermore, as other reports had found, there was no sense of community service among members of the TTPS. In addition, problems in other areas of the criminal justice system, such as long court delays, allowed for more corruption and unlawful activities such as the destruction of records and evidence, and police only showing up at court if they felt like it (Seaby 1993). Drugs and other evidence must be exhibited during a trial, and this outdated practice makes evidence tampering and destroying too easy due to the long windows between an arrest and the trial. In order to keep their jobs, officers

developed a fatalistic attitude and allowed the status quo to continue, finding a cozy niche in an office rather than engaging in patrols, and using knowledge of other officers' corruption as a way to keep their jobs (Seaby 1993).

The criminal justice system in general in Trinidad and Tobago is also fraught with problems that must be considered in concert with police reforms if these reforms are to be sustainable. The country has one of the highest rates of prisoners awaiting trial in the Caribbean (Singh 2004).   The judiciary is ill informed about the prison system, and while the police receive some resources, the prison system gets far less (Klein 2004). Prisons lack drug treatment programs even though approximately 30% of Trinidad and Tobago's prison population consists of drug offenders, mostly for petty dealing and possession of marijuana (Klein 2004:42). Trinidad and Tobago spends roughly 30% of its health budget on drug rehabilitation programs (Griffith 2000:129).

The colonial legacy of policing and criminal justice in general continues in the 21st Century, with officer training centering on riot suppression, and citizens having to solicit police services (Parks and Mastrofski 2008). Police stations are dirty and decrepit, and the TTPS suffers from poor pay and inadequate staffing and equipment, such as few usable vehicles (Parks and Mastrofski 2008).

In addition, problems of corruption still persist, and there is frequent turnover and weak management and supervision, as police leaders want to avoid controversy

(Mastrofski and Lum 2008; Miller and Hendrix 2007; Parks and Mastrofski 2008). The police service has also been accused of favoritism, bias, and nepotism in recruitment (Police Service Commission 2004).

Issues of legitimacy plague the police service, and this makes sustainable reform more difficult. In Trinidad the lack of legitimacy and support stems partly from charges of drug corruption and favoritism, the convictions of police officials, and the perception that the police are indifferent and incompetent (Bennett and Moribito 2006).

There have been numerous instances of police use of excessive force that are criticized by the public and the media (Deosaran 2002). Internal investigations rarely if ever occurred on time, and according to a 1999 report 18 officers who had been convicted of serious crimes were allowed to continue working in the Police Service (Deosaran 2002). The police do not engage in proactive crime prevention activities, and the public must solicit most police activities (Johnson 2006). To make matters worse, surveys reveal that around 60% of residents in Trinidad have a high fear of crime (Deosaran 2002).

As Bennett and Moribito state (2006): "…this has evolved in Trinidad into a culture of alienation from the public. The police are demoralized, socially isolated, and antagonistic toward the public, and they provide little in the way of unsolicited police services" (p. 243). The Police Complaints Authority (PCA) was created in 1993 by an act of Parliament in order to ensure that an independent body

was hearing and compiling citizen complaints (Deosaran 2002). The 2003 report is the most recently available online at the Complaint Authority's website. Based on the report, the number of formal and informal complaints had been increasing dramatically (PCA 2003). Complaints included accusations concerning the following: battery, criminal damage, failure to perform duty, harassment, impolite behavior, wrongful arrest, extortion, malicious prosecution, and miscellaneous civil complaints. There is variation in the number of complaints from year to year, but the disturbing trend was that the number of complaints was not being reduced despite the presence of the PCA. The author asked one respondent why the most recent report online was from 2003, and the respondent replied that "The PCA is largely defunct."

Police constables in Trinidad also feel that there is little community support for their activities and that they lack legitimacy in the eyes of the public. This perception is more negative when comparing Trinidad to Jamaica and Barbados (Bennett and Moribito 2006). Organizational factors including the effectiveness of supervision of the officers and the adequacy of training affect attitudes. The more effective the supervision and the more adequate the training of the officers, the more positive constables are about their perceived support and legitimacy from citizens (Bennett and Moribito 2006).

Research participants for this study also noted various problems regarding policing, including corruption,

brutalization of citizens, incompetence, collusion with criminals, lack of concern for crime victims, and a lack of faith in the police to protect people from victimization.

The author was told by a number of respondents that when citizens go to a police station or call the station to report an incident, the police tell them to go to the next station, or tell them that they do not have any cars, and basically do not respond. While the police will say they actually do not have cars and other resources, citizens feel that the police are avoiding work. People appear to want more police presence, but then when accusations or observations of police brutality occur, people will not go to the police for help.

Another frequently cited problem by respondents was the harsh treatment of citizens who report crimes. Those who report crimes feel like they are being accused of the crime during questioning, and numerous respondents also claimed that the police lack basic skills in questioning crime victims and suspects.

The lack of legitimacy of and trust in the police does not necessarily mean that the population is against working with the police, however. In 1999, a random sample of 451 households was surveyed on the willingness of respondents to work with the police in COP programs and their knowledge of COP activities (Deosaran 2002). Respondent's answers to the survey revealed that while 71% were willing to work with the police in COP activities, 70% thought the police were helpful when interacting with

citizens, and 63% were satisfied or very satisfied with police handling of crimes, only 51% thought their district was patrolled adequately, 36% knew that there was a COP unit was in their district, 25% new much or very much about what COP is, and 9% were involved in some sort of COP activity in the year prior to the survey being administered (Deosaran 2002).   Program awareness, therefore, appeared to be one of the major problems.

Recent Police Reforms

The Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police decided to implement community oriented policing (COP) in 1993, but by 2000 the organization noted that not all of the participating nations had been fully committed (Deosaran 2002).   Deosaran (2002) noted at the time his article was written that Trinidad and Tobago appeared to be the most committed in the region to COP. The police leadership was behind the concept of COP, but there remained concerns surrounding police capacity and conduct as well as citizen support.

One member of the police service who used to act as a COP officer was interviewed for this research.   This individual noted that COP was spurred by foreign assistance. Senior officers went to the US and England to see how COP was implemented there.   These senior officers then returned to Trinidad and Tobago in order to train officers (including the person interviewed) in transactional analysis and conflict resolution.   The COP

officers would speak with people in different communities each day of the week, and over time relations and trust improved, even with teenagers, according to the respondent.

As time progressed youth groups were formed that engaged in sports and academic activities, where officers would tutor children in math and other subjects. Neighborhood watches were also started. The respondent said that COP "fizzled out" by 2002 because people were hired to be COP officers that were "not cut out for it." The respondent claimed that poor recruitment policies were to blame, and it appears that a lack of supervision of the officers was a problem as well.

Deosaran (2002) argued that before successful COP implementation could occur, human resource development of the police force, and the democratization of the command structure away from the old colonial and paramilitary style, was necessary. In an earlier report, Deosaran (2000) also made recommendations for improving community policing, such as instituting oversight and evaluation, building awareness, training all officers for community policing, and other oft-seen recommendations for success.

Currently, the government is attempting to reform the police services by consolidating more administrative authority into the hands of the police commissioner, giving the government more opportunities to help direct policy,

and by trying to improve civilian oversight (Mastrofski and Lum 2008).

As Mastrofski and Lum (2008) point out, however, the entire government and its agencies must improve governance in order for this not to just be symbolic. The two major parties currently cannot come to a consensus on many issues, and there are concerns regarding legitimacy, accountability and transparency, control over important functions, and internal governance of the police (Mastrofski and Lum 2008).

Current reforms are modeled on the recent reforms seen in Northern Ireland (Mastrofski and Lum 2008). First, there is external and independent oversight of the police through the Police Complaints Authority, but policy direction is directed by the Ministry of National Security in order to provide political weight and to make the politicians stakeholders. The police commissioner will have more power to direct hiring, discipline, promotion, and training. Police pay and educational requirements are planned to increase in order to recruit more qualified people who may be less corrupt.

Mastrofski and Lum (2008) argue that bad managers should be removed and that better work should be demanded from officers. Officer review procedures are supposedly being updated, and there are also attempts to make the police more service oriented (Mastrofski and Lum 2008).

As part of these reforms, in 2007, Parks and Mastrofski (2008) led a team to create a model station program for the police service based on Mastrofski's "service oriented" community policing model called "Policing for People." Five model stations were created in high crime, racially varied and geographically diverse areas: Arouca, Chaguanas, Morvant, San Fernando, and the West End. These stations were provided extra resources, such as vehicles, and officers were trained or coached on-site by field advisors coming from police forces in the US (Parks and Mastrofski 2008). Officers at these model stations were expected to show up to work, engage in patrol, and to spend time with community residents.

What were the results of this model station program? Based on a pre-test, post-test survey of residents in the model station areas carried out by a hired local firm, officers were engaging in more foot and car patrols, and police visibility increased in four of the five stations (Parks and Mastrofski 2008). Police activity increased, citizens largely thought that their areas were safer, and citizens who reported crimes were happier with the services they received.

However, citizens were less likely to think that they police would solve their problems, and thought that the police had less respect for citizens, leading to a lack of improvement in overall satisfaction after the implementation of the new program (Parks and Mastrofski 2008).

There are numerous reasons for the failures cited above according to the research by the author. First of all, none of the NGOs or CBOs interviewed for this research, except for one, played any kind of role in the recent foreign assistance.   CBO and NGO member participants were largely unaware of the recent foreign assistance and the outcomes of the assistance, and they said that citizens were largely "in the dark" about the reforms as well. Most had heard of Professor Mastrofski from news paper reports, but really had nothing to say about the foreign assistance due to a lack of knowledge.

Some research participants spoke of past dealings with the police; including the above mentioned sports programs for youth and general methodological assistance, but recent reforms for the most part did not involve civil society groups. One NGO participated as part of a panel in the hiring process for the new police commissioner, but the government rejected the candidate forwarded by that panel and a different police commissioner was selected. This same NGO did help with one of the model stations in the area of domestic violence.

Interview participants involved in some way with recent reforms argued that reforms had few positive effects, and that paying foreign assistors was a waste of money. While respondents thought that foreign consultants were professional and tried to do some good things (increasing officer education and pay, restructuring of the police service, creating model stations, a new customer service

orientation to police work, and more proactive strategies), they thought that some of the police leadership was forward thinking, local officers did not want to listen to the foreign consultants, and (as Mastrofski and Lum (2008) argued) respondents argued that further systemic changes were needed before training and other forms of assistance can work.

Respondents also disliked the fact that the foreigners were playing the lead role in initiating changes. Participants did not perceive changes in officer behavior and felt that the systemic changes were inadequate. One respondent said, "Why are we paying all of these dollars to have Mastrofski come in here telling us shit we already know?"

Another problem mentioned by one respondent was that the process for hiring a foreign consultant was flawed. Teams had to bid on a series of projects spaced out over time; making the entire process more difficult. Currently, police service members in charge of carrying out reforms have to work within a plan that was put together in a piecemeal fashion by design, and according to the respondent, the budget for the transformation is under-funded (because, according to the respondent, a lot of money went to foreign consultants).

Current Reform Effort Lessons

History often repeats itself in terms of police reform (as in virtually everything else). The policing model used in

Ireland was exported abroad by the British during its colonial empire (Ellison and O'Reilly 2008a). Trinidad was no exception, but recent reforms in Trinidad are now based on the currently popular and relatively recent reforms in Northern Ireland.

These reforms have been hailed as a resounding success, and many have promoted the idea that these reforms ought to be modeled by other countries seeking to reform their policing systems (Ellison and O'Reilly 2008b). The Northern Ireland experience has been branded and marketed for global diffusion in the areas of general police reform, counter terrorism activity and other forms of security policing, even though this branding and marketing has been done without careful consideration of the political, economic, and cultural contexts that have hindered long-term success in Northern Ireland and can thwart successful diffusion of this model to other countries (Ellison 2007; Ellison and O'Reilly 2008b).

It is apparent that the Trinidad and Tobago experience with police reform has suffered from this same lack of critical thinking. While Mastrofski and Lum (2008) noted the problems of capacity, corruption, and the like hindering the prospects for successful reform, it appears that the foreign trainers and advisors, Mastrofski included, did not or could not create a reform program that took into account the complex political, social and economic difficulties that Trinidad and Tobago uniquely face. The reform program adopted was still based largely on the

functionalist notions of community policing and the problem-solving model that assume healthy institutions and an empowered citizenry (Brogden 1999; Miller and Hendrix 2007). In particular, civil society groups and NGOs were not truly involved in the reform process from the beginning, even though legitimacy, accountability, and adherence to civil authority are necessary components of democratic policing.

As with economic policy, the US has used its hegemony to influence criminal justice and law enforcement policies under the justification of the war on drugs and the war on terrorism. Transnational crime discourse is used to deepen the coerciveness of the state in terms of capacity and power (McCulloch 2007). It is well known that drug war countermeasures are costly and counterproductive, but McCulloch (2007) argues that notions of transnational crime and terrorism have successfully extended social, political, and economic hierarchies between and within states.

For example, Trinidad and Tobago signed "ship rider agreements" at allow US law enforcement to engage in hot pursuit and boards ships suspected of shipping drugs in Trinidad and Tobago's territorial waters (Trinidad and Tobago law enforcement cannot do the same in US territorial waters) (Griffith 2000). Trinidad and Tobago also signed extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties, and the EU and US have funded demand reduction programs (Griffith 2000).

Distinctions between military and police functions become blurred in these situations, and transnational and anti-terror crime arguments are used by states to justify extra-judicial actions that deny civil liberties such as punishing individuals before there is evidence that a crime has been committed (McCulloch 2007).

In addition to attempting to reform the police in general, Trinidad and Tobago created a paramilitary unit in 2004 based on the American CIA and trained by the British called the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SAUTT). SAUTT includes officers who were previously in the police service or members of the armed forces, including the coast guard. The organization was recently tasked to address the increase in gang-related homicides (Browne 2008). SAUTT has had legitimacy concerns since its inception, with many questioning its legality, but the legal dilemma has been recently solved by placing SAUTT within the police service and under the direction of the police commissioner (Browne 2008).

As with socio-economic policies, these transnational crime and anti-terror initiatives are part of a neoliberal agenda that allows the US to internationalize pro-market, deregulatory policies. Because neoliberal policies erode public enterprises, subsidies, and welfare programs, national security replaces social security as the primary focus of state activity and political legitimacy, combining neoliberalism and militarism in order to reshape relations between states (McCulloch 2007). Security issues and the

fear associated with them also allow the state to harshly deal with internal resistors and political enemies while avoiding international rebuke (McCulloch 2007).

The problems of orientalism and occidentalism have also helped prevent successful criminal justice reform in Trinidad and Tobago, and it has also perhaps prevented an independent Caribbean Criminology from developing (see Cain 2000). Orientalism involves the Western romanticization of another little known country or culture, and the colonial idea that this romanticized place requires aid from the West in order for it to become a part of the larger world as designed and controlled by the West (Said 1978).

The lack of knowledge, misdiagnosed problems, and faulty policies based on orientalism are exacerbated by occidentalism, which refers to the presumed similarity "…of key cultural categories, practices and institutions" (Cain 2000:239). One area where this becomes apparent is the concept of "community" or that of "neighborhood," both of which can be defined quite differently than in the United States or the United Kingdom (Cain 2000).

Another area includes the patterns of crime. Cain (2000) argues that the relationships between poverty, age, and crime differ somewhat in Trinidad from what is observed in the US, even though it is often universally accepted by academics that these relationships are constant throughout the world.   Finally, the functionalist notions of the police

reforms noted above are related to orientalism and occidentalism.

Democratic Policing in Trinidad and Tobago?

Democratic policing is the latest in a line of policing models or theories that have been advocated by academics and practitioners. This newest theory attempts to move beyond the shortcomings of the professional and community policing models. The professional model of policing, which noble in intent, has numerous flaws. New officers are often told by seasoned veterans to ignore everything they learned during their training; the reactive nature of the professional model and the use of paramilitary tactics lead to a lack of effectiveness and increases the chances of police abuses; and hiding the profession behind a veil of secrecy runs counter to democratic values, avoids accountability, and promotes corruption (Pino and Wiatrowski 2006b).

The community policing model, which encourages proactive and co-productive activities between community residents and the police to prevent crime and disorder, attempted to improve on the professional model. However, the organizational structure of the police has not changed in most all of the places where it has been tried, the rhetoric of COP has been used to mask traditional approaches (such as paramilitary tactics) that are overly aggressive and threaten civil liberties, and there have been inequitable outcomes and unequal participation based on

race, social class, and home ownership status (Pino and Wiatrowski 2006b).

The democratic model of policing rejects overly simplistic functionalist arguments and explicitly reorients police organizations so that these organizations conform to democratic values and promote human rights through their actions in order to complement other democratic institutions as well as human, social, and economic development (Pino and Wiatrowski 2006c).

The police help strengthen democratic institutions and the social capital that sustains them by forming trust and networks with community residents. NGOs and CBOs can play a crucial role in this process as well, acting as liaisons between community residents and the police. The strengthening of social capital in communities can enhance informal social control mechanisms that reduce crime and fear of crime without increasing coercive police activities.

Crucial in all of this is civilian participation from the beginning of the reform process. Otherwise, the police and/or particular government officials might dictate changes themselves without public input, which makes it more likely that repressive measures will be introduced in the name of the people and without adequate civilian oversight. At the same time, one cannot allow a "mob rule" mentality that could pit powerful groups against less powerful ones, so adherence to universal human rights is also paramount.

There are a number of principles of democratic policing outlined by Pino and Wiatrowski (2006c). These principles include: 1) *The Rule of Law*: the police should uphold and be bound by the law rather than upholding a particular regime; 2) *Legitimacy*: police actions are based on the consent of the governed, and the police are seen as legitimate by all social groups in a society; 3) *Transparency*: internal actions of the police should be open and visible to the citizenry; 4) *Accountability*: police plans and actions are accountable to the citizenry, the government and media, and in the case of lower ranking officers the police leadership. Governmental, civilian, and media oversight is crucial in maintaining transparency and legitimacy; 5) *Subordination to Civil Authority*: police plans and behaviors are dictated by the people and their elected representatives.

While the police should not be tools of a particular political party or regime, this does not mean that the police can be completely removed from all politics in a democratic society (Pino and Wiatrowski 2006c). If the police adhere to these principles, the citizens and their government must also do everything to provide proper education, training, and support.

In addition to reorienting police organizations and their oversight based on democratic values, the sustainability of democratic policing depends on other agendas that strengthen civil society and democratic institutions, including democratic reform of other governmental

institutions including the other elements of the criminal justice system, pursuing state autonomy to achieve its own objectives in its own interest, including independent socio-economic development policies, the building of social and human capital, and equity in democratic participation, including the equal participation of women (Pino and Wiatrowski 2006c).

Based on the research conducted for this paper as well as other scholarly work in the country, there is potential for the success of democratic policing and other crime reduction activities in Trinidad and Tobago in part because of the existence of a strong civil society (Cain 2000; Klak and Conway 1998). There is evidence of communal collective action at local and regional levels, as well as innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship (Klak and Conway 1998).

Alternative paths to sustainable development must take into account gender divisions and relations, the strengths and weaknesses of local informal economies, the need to manage tourism policies, the need for innovation and diversification of the economy, the unrealized potential of the country's diasporas, empowerment of local communal agencies, and the need to keep environmental concerns in mind (Klak and Conway 1998: 268-269).

Klak and Conway (1998) call for the equal involvement of women, and the normalization of non-criminal informal economic activities.   The use of formal and informal

networks with family and friends who are part of the Caribbean Diaspora can also be used to spur development by enhancing regional integration (Klak and Conway 1998; Mandle 1996).

Deere et al (1990) call for unions and workers in general to benefit more from foreign investment including democratizing workplaces, and they want policies that diversify the economy, including agriculture, cancel debt, enhance regional integration through organizations such as CARICOM, push for new local and indigenous employment intensive industries, have the state play a larger role in the economy along with NGOs with experience in the informal sector, and more community participation in decision making in general. Deere et al (1990) also call for gender equity in the household, more aid for single-headed families, and to give women more access to land and credit.

Neighborhood groups that organize to fight crime can build social capital and empower themselves to engage in other activities to improve quality of life. In Trinidad, Cain (2000) found that groups set up to do neighborhood watches with the police in the 1990s became interested in doing other activities such as the preservation of communal facilities, improvements in trash service, and environmental concerns. When neighborhood groups are allowed to set their own agendas crime reduction may become imbedded within a larger set of issues related to quality of life in a neighborhood, and improvements in

quality of life may on their own reduce crime, disorder, and fear of crime in an area.

NGOs and CBOs may be a good intermediary between the public and the police to build social capital between all parties. NGO bridging and activist activities may also be able to increase the percentage of residents willing to work with the police. In a recent UN report on crime in Africa and the Caribbean, it was suggested that there be meetings with NGOs in order to gauge the level of civil society support for crime prevention and criminal justice reforms (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008), and Miller and Hendrix (2007) advocated involving civil society groups in reforms, but it doesn't appear this was done in Trinidad and Tobago adequately.

Solutions to various problems must be comprehensive in the sense that they attempt to account for all of the risk factors inherent in that problem. Programs that have this kind of potential include the drop in centers in Trinidad. On Saturday nights one drop in center would sell fruit juice and show videos (Klein 2004). Proceeds are used for issuing micro-credit at 25% interest, which reduces the need for begging and petty crimes, and puts loan sharks charging 200-500% interest out of business (Klein 2004).

Research participants echoed many of these same arguments in their interviews with the author. NGOs and CBOs want active involvement of citizens with the police from the beginning in designing programs for reducing

crime as well as the evaluation and oversight of those programs.

One cooperative activity multiple respondents mentioned was to create centers in neighborhoods where citizens could receive information about services they might qualify for, but this center would also be a place where people could anonymously report crimes. Because the center would be a multi-purpose operation, respondents thought that it might be safer from violent retaliation by gangsters and other criminals.

Respondents (police service interviewees included) argued that larger social and economic problems had to be addressed in order for crime to be reduced. Ideas for addressing these problems included micro credit schemes, improving access to education, and reforming job creation programs.

Respondents (police service members included) for the most part wanted foreign assistance to continue, but in a much more limited way. One area where people thought foreign training would be useful is in technical assistance involving police investigation, DNA testing, and the like. Another area mentioned was in the investigation of corruption. The idea was that foreigners with no ties to local government and police could impartially investigate corruption. Participants also thought that local actors should   have   the   lead   in   reform   planning   and

implementation, with foreign consultants simply facilitating the reforms by providing ideas and research.

Discussion

In 1987, the Development Group for Alternative Policies submitted a report to the US House of Representatives criticizing the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which was a pre-NAFTA trade agreement. Their criticism was based on six principles that have relevance not only for development but also for criminal justice reform and police reform in particular.

These six principles include: 1) *Self-determination* to shape Caribbean development policies within rather than from outside the region; 2) *Participation* of the Caribbean people in definition and implementation of policies; 3) *Self-reliance* to build local structures and capacities that reduce dependence; 4) *Regionalism* for strengthening cooperation rather than competition between countries in the region and to strengthen regional organizations; 5) *Equity* in the distribution of opportunities, resources, burdens and benefits of development; and 6) *Sustainability* for the long term preservation of a secure and healthy resource base, economic relations, and local human capacity (Development Group for Alternative Policies 1987: 6).

These six principles are similar in numerous ways to Pino and Wiatrowski's (2006c) principles of democratic policing. Policing policies should be dictated by the

country affected and its people rather than outside forces that might not have the interests of the reforming country in mind; the people need to be equitably involved in policy making; local structures and capacities ought to be strengthened by enhancing social and human capital; and the goal of sustainability must always be present, keeping long term goals in mind.

These ideas are not just from the author or other individuals or groups from outside of Trinidad and Tobago. Based on the results of the research conducted for this paper, participants articulated these same principles and aspirations for their country, and there is clearly a collective will among members of civil society groups and in the police service to engage in sustainable, locally driven reform.

This does not mean that foreign donors, educators, trainers, and funders cannot help facilitate reform efforts, but it needs to be in the interests of the local society rather than that of the donor, civil society should be involved; and local interests rather than outside interests should lead efforts with the aid of outside assistors. But if plans are created they must be focused and based on consensus. Not everyone's individual ideas can be implemented, and people have to focus on the larger goals that have been laid out.

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