

THE EVOLUTION OF GANGS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICA

PB ANDREW ^{*}, VINCENT MS ^{*}, RONALD ANDERSON ^{**},
MARSHA PABARUE ^{*}

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: The crime pandemic in Mexico, Brazil and Jamaica owes much of its genesis and coverage to criminal networks, particularly gangs than others. The geo-political zones are somewhat different; there has never been an evaluation of the similarities among these gangs in the different regions, their operations, and how strategies can be employed to normalize their functionalities.

OBJECTIVES: The aim of the current paper is to evaluate the formation and development of the Tivoli Gardens Gang in Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico and the Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil.

FINDINGS: One of the findings which emerged from this study is the hierarchal command structure of gangs in the Caribbean and Latin America based on the studied population. There is a clear leader at the top (or apex) of the command structure and a wider base comprised of many individuals. Decisions are made at the top of the pyramid by a few senior people who stipulate the functions, responsibility, duties, and direct of the organization. The Los Zetas gang in Mexico began out of a need to be a drug kingpin, unlike the one in Jamaica. Like the one in Jamaica, it grew to become a transnational drug, gun, and other criminal activities network. Both Los Zetas and Tivoli Gardens gang had a structure of leadership, responsibilities and purpose in the structure. They were also based on loyalty to the leader, the willingness to execute the commands of the structure, large members, violence, reprisals, and murders.

CONCLUSION: This paper provides a clear understanding of gangs, their similarities and functionalities and such an understanding can be employed to address the crime pandemic by better formulation of crime strategies.

KEYWORDS: Crime, Criminal Networks, Criminal Operations, Gangs, Jamaica, Mexico, Brazil.

* Northern Caribbean University, Jamaica.

** Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), Jamaica.

Correspondence E-mail Id: editor@eurekajournals.com

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two to three decades, Jamaica has experienced doubled digit inflation, financial meltdown, structural adjustment and the cost associated with structural adjustment, mistrust, low confidence in socio-political institutions, financial reform, and financial crises (PIOJ and STATIN, 2007; Powell *et al* 2007; Atkin, 2005; Kirkpatrick and Tennant, 2002; Peart, 1995; Witter and Anderson, 1991). Outside of macroeconomic indicators as outlined above, there are other social issues including crime and violence, which continue to increase and elude policy makers (Sives, 1997; 2003). A national cross-sectional survey conducted by Powell, Bourne and Waller (2007) revealed that crime and violence were identified by Jamaicans as the leading national problem (p. 49). Such a finding means that there is a crime pandemic in Jamaica, which has some socio-historical context.

The contemporary general crime problem in Jamaica is not atypical as it extends beyond Jamaica to the wider Caribbean (Harriott, 2003; Robotham, 2003; Harriott, 2004; Harriott, Brathwaite and Wortley, 2004; Bourne, 2011; Brathwaite, 2004; Brathwaite and Harriott, 2004; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank, 2007) and Latin America (Boxill, et al, 2007; Beittel, 2011; Manwaring, 2007) to the wider world. Bourne, Pinnock and Blake (2012) opined that Jamaica is among the top 10 most murderous countries in the world (see also, Bourne, 2012; Bourne and Solan, 2012), and the World Bank states the extent of the crime problem of the nation when it compared murders in Jamaica to that of New York. The World Bank wrote that:

Between 1998 and 2000, according to police report, drug and gang related murder accounted on average for 22 percent of total murders. Domestic violence represented about 30 percent of total murders. The rising severity of the murder problem is highlighted by comparison

with New York, a high crime city-while both Jamaica and New York experienced similar rates of murder in 1970, Jamaica's murder rate had increased to almost seven time that of New York's by year 2000 (World Bank, 2004,)

According to Bourne and Solan (2012) "The nexus of violent crimes in Jamaica goes back to pre-emancipation, when the revolt of the slaves would lead to their capture and murder" (p. 59) as well as Simmonds (2004) offered a similar perspective on the matter, suggesting that there is a long standing crime and violence survivability and groups coalescing to retaliate against the state. Like Jamaica, groups (referred to as gangs) have longstanding history to Latin America and Brazil owing to the socio-political and economy situations experienced by poor inner-city residents. The aim of the current paper is to evaluate the formation and development of the Tivoli Gardens Gang in Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico and the Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil.

BACKGROUND

The contemporary crime problem in Jamaica (Powell, Bourne and Waller, 2007; Boxill, et al., 2007; Headley, 1994; Bourne, 2011, 2012; Bourne and Solan, 2012; Bourne, Pinnock and Blake, 2012) and the wider Caribbean and Latin America (Harriott, 2003, 2004; Brathwaite, 2003; Beittel, 2011; Manwaring, 2007) is such that they are among the highest in the world. There is empirical evidence to support the fact that the high crime statistics reported on Jamaica, Mexico, Brazil and other nations in the Caribbean and Latin America is a product of organized criminality (Harriott, 2008; Beittel, 2011; Manwaring, 2007).

The execution type killings in many Latin American nations as well as Mexico and Brazil, the prevalence and gruesome murders in Jamaica

as well as other Caribbean nations have resulted in increasing attention being placed on these countries to address the crime problem. Owing to the unabated crime problem in the Caribbean at the Twenty-second Meeting of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) Heads of Government Conference held in Nassau in 2001, Harriott (2004) noted that participants expressed dissatisfaction with the level of crime and victimization in the region (see also, Headley, 2002). The same can be postulated for Mexico and Brazil (Beittel, 2011; Manwaring, 2007) in which crime and violence have risen to unprecedented levels.

The crime problem in the Caribbean and Latin America is aptly described by some scholars who depict the severity of the situation, and its coverage on the general society using words or phrases like 1) 'crisis proportions' (Headley, 2002, vii), 2) 'major concerns during the 1990s' (Harriott, 2004, 1), 3) 'in recent years has been unprecedented' (Beittel, 2011, 1), 4) 'Criminal values are derived from norms based on slave holding, sexual activity with minors and their exploitation in prostitution, the farming of humans for body parts, and the killing and torture of innocents for political gain and personal gratification (as sport)' (Manwaring, 2007, iii, iv). Manwaring's perspective opens the linkage between politics and criminality and a historical context to crime (See also, Sives, 2003; Simmonds, 2003). Statistics from the Jamaica Constabulary Force highlights the fact that gangs account for the majority of the murders and that is equally the same across Latin America, Mexico and Brazil.

In a text entitled 'Shower Posse: The most notorious Jamaican criminal organization', Blake (2002) noted that during the 1980s, the Tivoli Gardens Gang known as **Shower Posse** was responsible for 1,400 deaths. Writing on gangs in Mexico, Jamaica and other Latin American nations, Manwaring summarizes the crime problem by saying that:

Another kind of war (conflict) within the context of a "clash of civilizations" is being waged in various parts of the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere around the world.¹ Some of the main protagonists have been designated as first-, second-, and third-generation street gangs, as well as more traditional Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), such as Mafia families, illegal drug traffickers, warlords, terrorists, insurgents, and so on (Manwaring, 2007, 1)

The elements of the war that is waging within these gangs are 1) brutality, 2) crime and violence, 3) fear and victimization, 4) politicking and 5) power relations. This brings the discussion to a more comprehensive examination of Jamaica's first gang, the Tivoli Gardens Gang. It may appear that a study on the tracing of the development of gangs, particularly Shower Posse in Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico, and Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil, is simply an academic experience. But it is much more than that! It offers insights to a historical basis for these gangs, how they function, and similarities across different geo-political regions, and thereby provides a supporting platform for current policy recommendations, intervention strategies, and further research to examine more gaps that emerge owing to this inquiry.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is a self-conscious set of (a) fundamental principles or axioms (ethical, political, philosophical) and (b) a set of rules for combining and applying them (e.g. induction, deduction, contradiction, and extrapolation). A theoretical framework defines the objects of a discourse, the permissible ways of thinking about those objects, and so determines the kinds of knowledge about the objects that can be produced legitimately within the framework" (Cubitt, S, personal communication, October 6, 2005 in Waller, 2006, 25).

The science of research is therefore not only expressed in natural (or pure) sciences like chemistry, physics, medicine, mathematics and metaphysics; but it is in the theoretical framework and the methodology that are applied to the investigation. For centuries Positivism which is a theoretical framework has been used to guide methodologies that were primarily quantitative (Kuhn, 1996; Balashov and Rosenberg, 2002) and accounts for discoveries like Newton's Law "F=ma" (Force is equal to the product of mass and acceleration). Scientific attitude was guided by this theoretical framework as science was embodied in proof, verification, validation, and objectification. This explains the preponderance of inquiries that utilize the positivism and post-positivism theoretical framework and methodologies that were primarily objective-quantitative analyses (or survey research, experimentation, statistical analyses, measurement and scaling, sampling and questionnaire).

Crotty (2005) remarked that:

we describe the philosophical stance that lies behind our chosen methodology. We attempt to explain how it provides a context for the process and grounds its logic and criteria... (and) this is precisely what we do when we elaborate our theoretical perspective (Crotty, 2005, 7)

Such an elaboration is a statement of the assumptions brought to the research task and reflected in the methodology as it is understood and employed (Crotty, 2005, 7). The fundamental theoretical framework that guides this study is Gary Becker's work on the correlates of crime. He found that people become engaged in criminal activities because of economic reasons, the probability of being caught, and the price of punishment. Becker's 'utility maximization crime' framework expresses crime as a function of many variables. This is encapsulated in Equation [1], below:

$$y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6, x_7) \quad [1]$$

where y = hours spent in criminal activities,

- x_1 = wage for an hour spent in criminal activity,
- x_2 = hourly wage in legal employment,
- x_3 = income other than from crime or employment
- x_4 = probability of getting caught,
- x_5 = probability of being convicted if caught,
- x_6 = expected sentence if convicted, and
- x_7 = age

It can be extrapolated from Becker's seminal work that criminals becoming engaged in particular activities are based on the identified factors and this provides a framework that fashions an interpretation of the present research. Based on this framework a mixed methodology should have been applied using survey (a quantitative approach) and narrative analysis methodology (a qualitative approach). The researchers were only able to utilize narrative analysis, comparing journals, works and various other publications in order to provide a comprehensive account for three gangs, their development, similarities and devise strategies to establish normalcy across the nations. Becker's work indicates that a low economic base will be attractive to an individual to engage in crime, which can aid an understanding of how the historical past has drawn people into a life of crime and violence. This work also holds true for why money laundering, drug and gun trading are a part of gangs as this provides them with a greater economic base. Again this is simply the economics of crime, its engagement and development. Hence, this theoretical framework is aptly fitting for an examination of crime and gang development, which is the justification of the application of such a framework. The research has the following objectives: 1) To trace the development of the Tivoli Gardens gang in Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico and the Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil, and 2) Compare

and contrast gangs in Tivoli Gardens, Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico and the Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil. As such the following research questions are: 1) What are the historical developments of Tivoli Gardens gang in Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico and the Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil? 2) Can a narrative analysis of literature provide an understanding of the Tivoli Gardens gang in Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico and the Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil? and 3) Are there similarities among Tivoli Gardens gang in Jamaica, Los Zetas in Mexico and the Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil?

LITERATURE REVIEW

JAMAICA: TIVOLI GARDENS GANG

According to Simmonds (2004), the marginalization of poor peasants and lowly freed slaves gave rise to the formation of Kingston. She postulated poor African descendants in ingenuously started a slave economy in Kingston to make a living for themselves because they could not rely on the plantation owners to do so. Nineteenth century Kingston spelt impoverishment, unemployment, squalor, hustling, socio-economic deprivation and marginalization, and suffering. Simmonds summarized the travails of urban Kingston living as:

At best it can be concluded that the pressures and stresses of living in an urban slave society were occasionally turned inwards, and were not aimed only at whites in the form of actions which may be defined strictly as slave resistance (Simmonds, 2004, 10)

It was documented that whenever the slaves protest against the harsh economic conditions or demonstrated against the propertied class (plantation class), they would be taken to court as this was considered to be an urban crime (Simmonds, 2004, 18). She noted that among the criminal offences that were brought against

slaves were 1) burglaries, 2) assaults, 3) morranage, and 4) illegal possession of goods. It was recorded that theft or burglary was the most frequent offences brought against slaves in Kingston. Wanting to survive, without the socio-economic base to do so, slaves would plan the murder of their owners (Simmonds, 2004, 21). While it was not construed at the time to be gang that were formed by the slaves to murder their owners, the practice of planning such activities among themselves was a part of urban Kingston living. Instead of addressing the socio-economic inequalities and marginalization of urban Kingston slaves, harsher punishments were instituted as a means of socializing the slaves into submission and acceptance of their realities.

Western Kingston was fashioned by poor marginalized slaves. Out of the general society, Western Kingston marks squalor, unemployment, deprivation and socio-political inequalities. Some slaves and free men from Western Kingston, in attempting to survive and meet the challenging economic realities, engaged in criminal activities. As the population of Western Kingston grew larger, so also did the economic challenges. The people lived outside of the care of the planters class and defiance was a hallmark of the urban poor (Gray, 2003). Sir Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley, instead of instituting measures that would alleviate the impoverishment, squalor, and degradation in Western Kingston, formed or allowed gangs to be formed with people from Western Kingston and St. Andrew (Sives, 2003). She postulated that "The evidence highlights the existence of loyal supporters ready to engage in violence against their rivals during this early phase of party politics in Kingston" (p. 50).

People from Western Kingston were used as political enforcers by the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) (Sives, 2003). The gang from Western Kingston was to carry out political assignments during the 1940s-1960s election campaigning periods. The People's National Party (PNP)

responded to this thuggery by forming its own gang at 69 Matthews Lane (also from Kingston; Sives, 2003). Western Kingston gangs grew from one (located in Back-O-Wall, now Tivoli Gardens, belonging to the JLP) to two, which now include the one from Matthews Lane on the opposite side of the political spectrum which belonged to the PNP.

In the 1970's, there was a proliferation of gangs (or thuggery in Jamaica) as this had extended to St. Andrew (Gray, 2003). The first political gang was formed by the JLP to carry out 'strong arm' politics; the people were from Tivoli Gardens, Western Kingston, Jamaica. The gang grew over the decades and during the 1980s, the gang had a leader (Claude Massop) who was responsible for executing the will of his party against the opposing people of the PNP. Clearly there was a nexus of crime and politics in Jamaica (Harriott, 2008), and this accounts for the rise of organized gang in Tivoli Gardens. Initially, the political system had to give the gangs and their members authority and power to carrying out their mandate. The gang leader, during the early 1980s, began instituting measures and becoming engaged in activities outside of politics to include guns and drugs (marijuana) (Blake, 2002).

The gangs developed with years, and, as new members were added, some left for the United States, and hustling was the primary way of survival for many of its members (Blake, 2002). Vivian Blake, a bright young man and a resident of Tivoli Garden, migrated to the United States in the 1970s. He began hustling (trading in marijuana) and got involved in the use and trading of illegal guns (Blake, 2002). Vivian Blake later teamed with Lesler 'Jim Brown' Lloyd Coke to form the Shower Posse. This time they used political coverage while branching out into 1) money laundering, 2) drug and guns, and 3) widespread criminalities. 'Jim Brown' was the Tivoli Gardens, Jamaica, strong leader and lead this arm of the Shower Posse while Vivian was its anchor in the United States (Blake, 2002). This

Tivoli Gardens gang had become international, notorious, and dangerous. The gang had spread with members in St. Kitts (Blake, 2002, 385) and became involved in organized transnational crime.

The members of the gang had not only become transnational criminals; they began taking fewer orders from the political directorates in the JLP. In Jamaica, the death of Jim Brown and the incarceration of Vivian Blake in the United States (Blake, 2002), meant a change in the leadership structure of the gang but not its dismantlement. The gang had evolved from being a political watchdog to a powerful social structure which took less order from the political system.

MEXICO: LOS ZETAS

Criminality begins in different ways in particular geo-political jurisdictions. In Mexico, during the 1990s, Osiel Cardenas Guillen arose as the leader of the Gulf (DTO), and he would intentional murder members of rivalling gangs. The intention of Guillen was to control and recruit a special group of the Mexican Army Special Forces selected from the Grupo Aeromovil de Fuerzas Especiales (GAFES) soldiers. This special unit was used to form a group of bodyguards. As a result of Guillen's bodyguard killing his daughter's godfather, a special group of men with various training in security practices including military training were employed to bodyguard the head of the cartel, Guillen. According to Amicis (2010):

These elitists had special killing tools that Cardenas was in the market for his criminal organization. This special force was originally trained in a military School of Americas located in Fort Benning, Georgia and trained for special operations by specialists from the United States, Israel, and France. Their training modus operandi was counter-insurgency and the apprehension and locating drug trafficking members (Grayson 2008 in Amicis, 2010, p. 1)

Another scholar opined that:

The primary objective of the political insurgents, drug cartels and private armies such as the Zetas is to attain the level of freedom of movement and action that allows the achievement of the desired enrichment. After reviewing the brutal methods the Zetas use to insinuate their power over people, one can see that these seemingly random and senseless criminal acts have specific political-psychological objectives. After getting even closer to the situation, one can see that these objectives are not being lost on the intended audience (Manwaring, 2009, p-25 and 32).

The Zetas consists of a small command structure. The operation level is handed down by the senior hierarchy which supports its associations with small cell networking. The horizontal structure is opted versus the slower vertical hierarchical chain of command. There exists a second, third, and level tier. The second level leadership exists

in a layer or circle. Those bosses manage by overseeing the areas of intelligence, operational planning, financial support, and recruitment. This is all under the tutelage of the top echelon. Another functionality of these managers is to geographically distribute special project teams (Manwaring, 2009 in Amicis, 2010, 9).

Beittel (2011) postulated that the drug trafficking business has operated for more than a century, which has a longstanding history of functionality. However, in the last decade, it has expanded its operations to include human trafficking and other criminalities resulting in an exponential rise in various crimes, including murders. A part of the criminality involves the killing of individuals who the member deemed as prospective gang members, agents, and rivals (Gomez, 2008; Logan, 2011; Grayson, and Logan, 2012; Schiller, 2011; Ramsey, 2012). The linkages between the Los Zetas and other gangs in Central American are depicted in Figure 1, below.

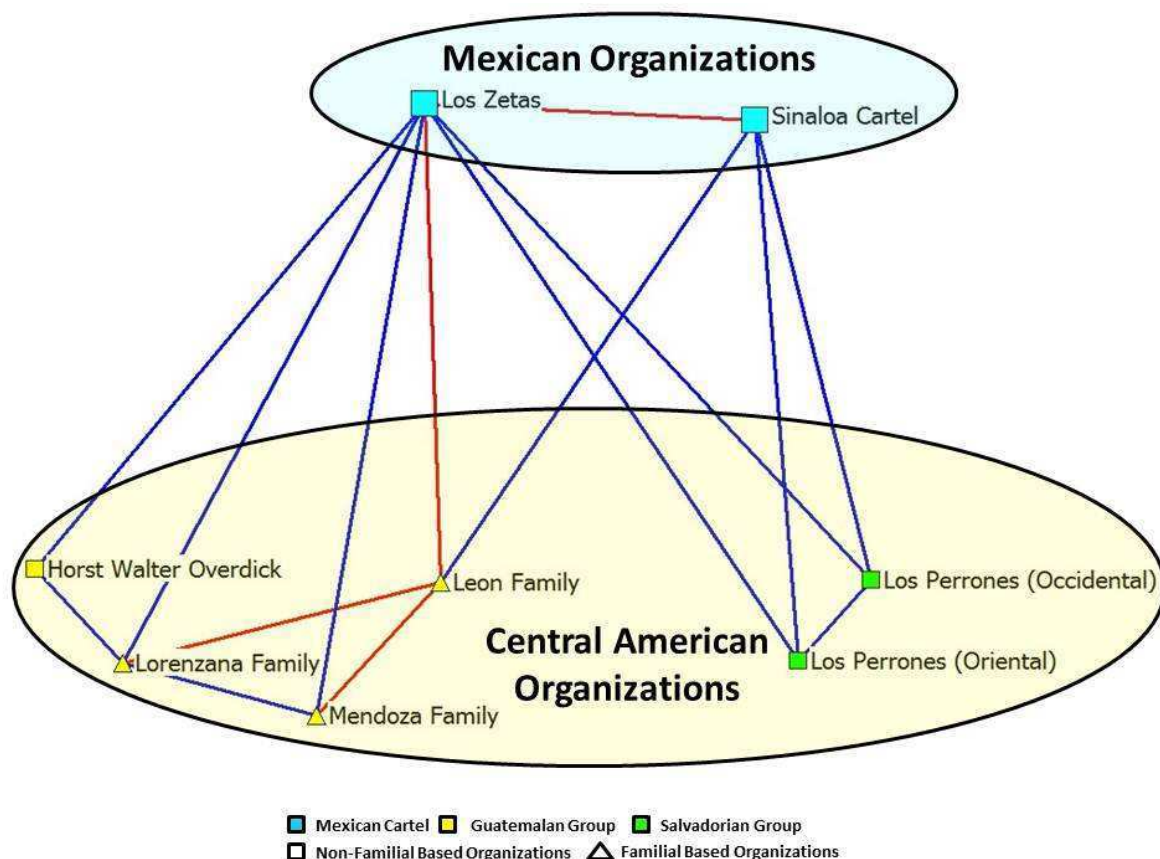


Figure 1. Los Zetas and other gangs in Central American

BRAZIL: PRIMERIO COMANDO DA CAPITAL

Like Jamaica, Brazil has experienced a long history of urban violence (Hanson, 2006). In fact, it has the highest rates of urban crimes in Latin America. Using a zero-tolerance approach to the issue of crime management, the government has imprisoned many Brazilians. The imprisonment of many offenders catapulted a prison revolt in May of 2006 by the Sao-Paulo-based Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC-a Sao-Paulo-based prison gang) or First Capital Command. The violence which erupted and lasted for four days saw approximately 200 Brazilians killed.. According to Hanson:

The PCC is a Sao-Paulo-based prison gang that seeks to improve prison conditions and prisoners' rights. Started in 1993 at a soccer game at Taubate Penitentiary in Sao Paulo, the PCC sought to avenge the victims of the 1992 Carandiru Massacre, in which the Sao Paulo state military police killed over a hundred prisoners. In 2001, the group coordinated simultaneous rebellions in twenty-nine Sao Paulo state prisons, but did not enter the public eye until the May 2006 prison attacks. Two subsequent waves of violence in July and August have increased concerns among prison wardens, the government, and the public about the power and reach of the organization(Hanson, 2006)

The avenging of the victims of 1992 Carandiru Massacre, suggested that PCC had taken a social position, which meant a stance against injustices, crime and oppression in the prison system. Unlike the other gangs, the PCC had drafted a document which outlined sixteen issues by which it operates. The stance the organization took did

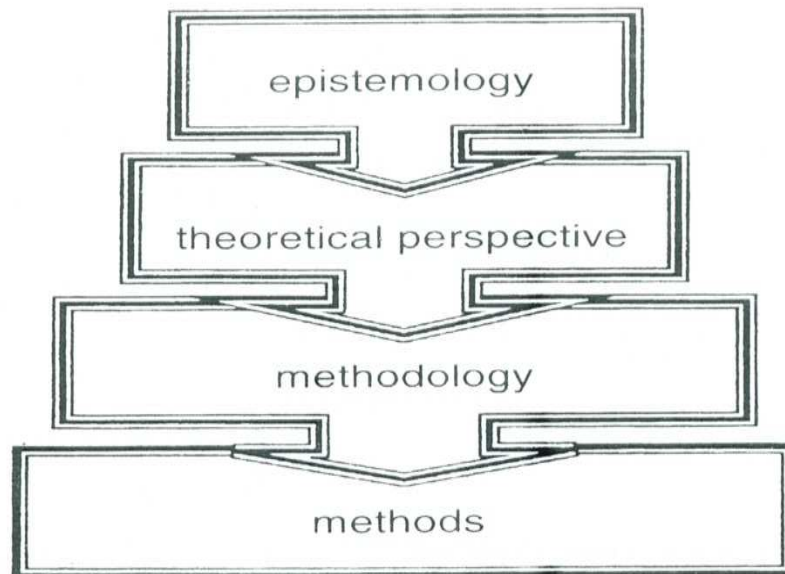
not mitigate against its involvement in drug trafficking and other criminal activities. PCC could be likened to a formal entity with a clear hierarchical structure with its members having clear responsibilities. The organization had monthly fee payable as dues; and it cooperated with other criminal networks like Shower Posse.

METHODS

RESEARCH PROCESS

Many scholars, for example, (Crotty 2005; Neuman 2006; Boxill, Chambers and Wint 1997; Babbie 2007; Bryman and Cramer 2005) have written on social research methodologies but the researchers have found Michael Crotty's monograph aptly fitting for this project as it summarized the research process in a diagrammatic and systematic manner while providing elaborate details of each component. In the text titled '*The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*', Crotty (2005) aggregated the research process in four schema (i.e. four questions which must be answered in examining this social phenomena), namely (1) methods, (2) methodology, (3) theoretical perspective, and (4) epistemology.

The four schema of the research process according to Crotty (2005, 2-4) are encapsulated into a flow chart (See Figure 2). Michael Crotty, a lecturer in education and research study at the Flinders University of South Australia, contended that a research is guided by the choice of a methodology and method. The chosen methodology and method should clearly depict the set of assumptions the researcher has about reality (Crotty 2005, 2) (i.e. what [he/she] brings to the work?).



Source: Michael Crotty (2005). Four elements of the research process, p. 4

Figure 2. Linking epistemologies, theories, methodologies and methods

The schema of the research process is simply not a unidirectional model (Crotty 2005, 2-4). Crotty (2005) pointed out that the research process begins with an epistemology followed by a theoretical perspective, methodology and method. Embedded in this schema is the process of carrying out a research and there is stringency to the direction that must be followed. Whether a research is quantitative (empirical/objective) or qualitative (subjective), the general schema is the same and the entire apparatus must be followed in order to execute an effective research.

QUANTITATIVE VERSUS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Empiricism is responsible for a plethora of germane and critical discoveries that have aided humans' existence and these have all been under the area of quantitative research. According to Davies (2003)

Empiricism is the belief that true knowledge comes only from sensory experience. ...It means that knowledge is not the same as belief or opinion. It is not the same thing as certainty, no matter how passionately felt. The emphasis upon experience as the source of knowledge means

that other possible sources are slighted or rejected (p. 5).

Hence, knowledge is derived from empirical fact or experience which speaks to the issue of hypothesis testing that is a feature of quantitative research. Even so, it fails to explore potent things about people which emerged using qualitative research. People are social beings which means that their behaviours are unpredictable, fluid, and while some generalizability exist therein, the 'whys' (meanings) are still unasked with the use of empirical inquiry (or objectivity and measurability). Qualitative inquiry lessens some of the inadequacies of objectivity, provides rich data on humans' experiences, and aids in a comprehensive understanding of people, their actions and meanings system (Balashov and Rosenberg; Silverman, 2005; Neuman, 2003; Kuhn, 1996; Berg 2001; Burnham, et al., 2004; Goel, 1988). Thus, qualitative inquiry should not therefore be seen as an alternate paradigm to quantitative inquiry, but as a member of the understanding apparatus. This supports Schlick (1979) argument that researchers cannot know the truth without knowing the meaning (p.15), suggesting a mixed methods approach is best for

human inquiry. For this study, therefore, a mixed methods approach was applied as it would provide a more comprehensive understanding of any single social phenomenon. In keeping with the scientific research methodologies, this work utilized documentary analysis and narrative analysis.

The research schema outlined by Crotty (2005) is application to both quantitative and qualitative research. A discussion of research methodologies (quantitative or qualitative) provides a wealth of information choices made by researchers and what guides their actions into a particular method. Such a perspective opens a discussion on quantitative versus qualitative research, and what sets the premise for different epistemological stance and the proceeding methodologies and methods chosen by a researcher.

For centuries, scientific inquiry was based on logic, precision, general principles, principles of verification, the standard of rigor, gradual development, “*search for truth*” and proofs. The proofs were critical to the pure sciences before the establishment of laws, principles, theories and apparatuses. The science of research was, therefore, only expressed in natural (or pure) sciences like chemistry, physics, medicine, mathematics and metaphysics. This means that the scientific inquiry had to be carried by quantitative thinking (i.e. positivistic epistemologies). Researchers and methodologists have argued that it is in the theoretical framework and the methodology applied to the investigation that makes it scientific and not whether it is quantitative or qualitative research (Weber, 1949; 1974; 1981; Kuhn, 1996).

For centuries positivism (quantitative research) was construed as the only primary approach in the scientific inquiry (Kuhn, 1996; Balashov and Rosenberg, 2002; Neuman, 2006; Babbie, 2007) and accounts for discoveries like Newton’s Law “ $F=ma$ ” (Force is equal to product of mass and

acceleration). Scientific attitude was guided by this positivistic thinking (or quantitative research) as science was embodied in proof, verification, validation, and objectification. This explains the preponderance of inquiries that utilize the positivism and post-positivistic theoretical framework and methodologies to examine social issues like 1) crime; 2) political culture and voting behaviour; 3) population issues-life expectancy, mortality, migration, and so on; and even 4) organized gangs.

Science therefore, was guided by positivism which holds itself to (i) the collection of quantitative data, (ii) separation of the researcher from the research process, (iii) objectivity, (iv) measurability, (v), generalizability and (vi) repetition (Kuhn, 1996; Peters, Bourne and Mills, 2012). Thus, when the social science was born, the researchers embodied inquiries using the same approaches as the pure sciences and this accounts for the dominance of quantitative research in social inquiry. It follows that what was known about human behaviour had to be discovered through positivism and/or logical positivism. Science was therefore about the study of truth and not meanings (Balashov and Rosenberg, 2006). Why people do things, (i.e., meaning) was not important in research; it was rather about the discovery of quantitative truths.

It was long after that Max Weber introduced ‘Interpretivism’ as an approach to the examination of social phenomenon (Weber, 1949; 1974; 1981). Weber opined that why human behave the way they do is lost in quantitative methodologies (or positivism). He, therefore, forwarded the use of subjectivity (feels, beliefs or meanings) in social inquiry. For years, the inquiry of social phenomenon was based on objectivity until Weber introduced an alternative paradigm. This gave rise to the emergence of (i) ethnography, (ii) phenomenology, (iii) case study, (iv) grounded theory, (v) feminism, (vi) biography, (vii) historical

comparative analysis, and other methodologies (discourse analysis, heuristic inquiry and action research) were in keeping with an alternative paradigm in scientific examination as approaches in understanding human behaviours (Silverman, 2005; Babbie, 2007; Neuman, 2006).

Some scholars believe that quantitative research—which is embedded in objectivism, measurement, falsification and proof—is the only avenue whereby science can be investigated and established and that subjectivity has no place in scientific examinations. Such a discourse is long laid to rest as Kuhn (1996) opined that that science is established on the particular platform, and if an investigation is carried out thereby, it automatically becomes a science. Like Weber postulates, social inquiry must include an aspect of the meanings behind actions and that understanding peoples' behaviour cannot be only based on their end product; action. Despite Weber's work and others, there is a dominance of quantitative research in the study of social phenomena. This goes back to the issues of objectivism, generalizability, measurement and falsification which is a part of the old and dominant paradigm in scientific inquiries. This research, however, recognizes the value in both qualitative and quantitative research, and will employ both approaches. Nevertheless, the study is still fundamentally driven by positivism and post-positivism philosophies: (i) verification, (ii) pro-observation, (iii) anti-cause, (iv) downplaying explanation, (v) antitheoretical entities, (vi) anti-metaphysics, and (vii) logical analysis.

DISCUSSION

The examination of organized gangs in Jamaica, Mexico and Brazil follows a somewhat different path, with clear cases of similarities and differences. While the Tivoli Garden gang, Western Kingston, Jamaica can be traced back to pre-emancipation (Simmonds, 2003), and gangs in Mexico (Beittel, 2011). The Tivoli Garden gang has it beginning out the socio-economic

deprivation of the Jamaica society during the Nineteenth century. The earliest gang in Jamaica (Tivoli Gardens) was framed and fashioned by the political directorates (Sives, 2003) in order to attain and maintain power. Even though politics did not commence gang violence in Jamaica (Sives, 2003) it fuelled political garrisons, political and ideological divides, and violence. The Tivoli Gardens gang mushroomed from political donmanship (or badness honour-Gray, 2003) to a transnational organized entity which could not have been controlled by a single political personality. The gang outgrew its initial purpose of political enforcement and patronage to include drug and gun trafficking, money laundering, murder and victimization as well as the fear of victimization.

The Los Zetas gang in Mexico began out of a need to be a drug kingpin, unlike the one in Jamaica. Like the one in Jamaica, it grew to become a transnational drug, gun, and other criminal activities network. Both Los Zetas and Tivoli Gardens gang had a structure of leadership, responsibilities, and purpose in the structure. They were also based on loyalty to the leader, the willingness to execute the commands of the structure, large members, violence, reprisals, and murders. Like the Tivoli Gardens gang, Los Zetas was feared by many people inside and outside their jurisdictions. Politicians feared the leaders and leadership of these gangs which had powers that extend beyond their countries. It took years of planning by the various governments to topple these gangs.

Although neither Los Zetas nor Tivoli Gardens gangs (Beittel, 2011; Blake, 2002) had a membership fee like that of Premerio Commando da Capital of Brazil (Hansion, 2002), they had the following similarities: 1) large gang members, 2) involved in drug and gun trade, 3) engaged in other criminal activities, 4) clear leadership structure and command, 5) began small, 6) loyalty was important, 7) transnational 8) organized, 9) the population suffered from

fatigue and fear, and 10) had an exorbitant powers base. Like Harriott (2008) opined, organized gangs had networking and engaged in other crimes. Becker's work (Becker, 1968) offers some explanation for the involvement of people in gangs in Tivoli and Los Zetas as economics was a pulling factor as well as the price of punishment. Members of both gangs did not fear being caught. They had a good economic based, lived lavishly, and were able to use their networking to avoid being imprisoned by the state.

One of the findings which emerged from this study is the hierarchal command structure of gangs in the Caribbean and Latin America based on the studied population.

There is a clear leader at the top (or apex), command structure and a wider base where many individuals are. Decisions are made at the top of the pyramid by a few senior people who stipulate the functions, responsibility, duties, and direct of the organization.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to trace the development of three gangs in different socio-geographic locality, and examine similarities. It is evident from the study that crime and violence in the Caribbean and Latin America have a long history. While the development of the studied gangs may be somewhat different, there are many similarities across the region.

The gangs are highly organized, have an elaborate network, have a good economic and power base, and can change the socio-economic dynamics of the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study used secondary data, and was solely qualitative in nature. A research of this kind requires primary data in the form of survey, the meanings behind the decisions taken by individuals to join, state, engage in criminal

activities and execute the commands of the structure.

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