Policing your Brother as the Other:
An analysis of policing in Trinidad and Tobago
“measuring paramilitarism”

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Paramilitarism as a policing tactic is a common feature in post-colonial societies. The literature on post-colonial policing unequivocally argues that this is so because of the imperialist motives of the, then colonial ‘massa’, Great Britain. Authors studying this phenomenon usually adopt a historical analysis expounding on the influential role the Royal Irish Constabulary played and continues to play in framing the model of policing in post-colonial societies. However very few authors have offered a critical look at the paramilitarism that exists in the police stations and on the police beats in Caribbean States today. This paper therefore presents details of a study in progress that examines the extent of paramilitarism that exists in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS). It is the first of its kind as it operationalizes Harriot’s (2000) definition of paramilitarism and measures the same via a questionnaire constructed by the author. It is believed that a study of this nature would provide a scientific measurement of paramilitarism that could be applied to other Caribbean states. Although the sample in the present paper was too small for any statistical significance to be measured the discussion that emerged from the findings would augur well for further development of the instrument. If the Caribbean intends to successfully navigate its risks and build its resilience then more scientific measurement of the phenomenon that plagues the region must be developed.
Introduction

The sad reality exists that policing in post colonial societies adopts a paramilitaristic style (Danns, 1982, Jonhson, 1991, Ahire, 1991, Killingray and Anderson, 1991, Harriot, 2000, Mars, 2002). This approach to dealing with crime is most counterproductive as it weakens all police-community relations and neglects the wisdom that “crime is a wound justice should be healing” (Pepinsky, 1991). The nation of Trinidad and Tobago has been no different to this trend and has witnessed this adversarial approach since the colonial era (Johnson, 1991, Mastrofski, 2008) and has never reverted since. The inner city residents of this nation have all been victims of Specialist Squads and crime fighting strategies such as “Operation Anaconda” where 500 residents were arrested during the months of February and June 2003 (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2003). This high arrest rate is no indication of high crime commission but of a direct case of net widening. This was seen in the law suit brought against the then Attorney General by Andy Anderson Ashby a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago who, during “Operation Anaconda” was arrested and detained for 36 hours without being charged. “Operation Anaconda” and all the other policing tactics that were and continue to be dressed in paramilitaristic fatigue play no significant role in reducing crime but aggravate the crime problem by their use of violence to quell violence. This approach that has become common place in post colonial societies is a relational problem that weakens the trust between the police and the community. It is also a criminological theoretical problem that needs be addressed.
Mainstream criminology further exasperated this problem via its imperialistic theorizing. Criminologists have shied away from addressing the crimes of colonialism and slavery (Agozino, 2003) and instead have used the discipline of Criminology to further divide peoples. Pepinsky (1986) rightfully analyses the discipline when he argues that Criminologists simply “explain and address distinctions between citizens who are law abiding and those who are criminals...” This approach just as the adversarial policing of post colonial societies is counter productive and one could even argue criminal. Therefore mainstream criminology is very inefficient in explaining crime and violence, specifically in a post-colonial context; Hence the reason for Agozino’s call for a Counter-Colonial Criminology (Agozino, 2003).

Therefore this paper in its attempt to address this need analyzed policing in the post colonial state of Trinidad and Tobago by examining one of its police stations. The paper sought to test a self-authored instrument to measure paramilitarism amongst police officers. Thereby producing a scientific measure of paramilitarism based on Harriot’s (2000) definition of the phenomena. The instrument also measured the interest in a new concept based on Peacemaking Criminology termed ‘peacemaking policing’ however those findings will not be reported in this paper but at a later stage in the overall study. In the end these two measures would serve to address and reduce the mistrust that exists between police and community.
The Police: 
Force or Service?

The Police as an institution is probably here to stay. It was not always with us and its origin and purpose is often hotly debated (McLaughlin and Munice, 2001). Nevertheless the relationship between the society and the police seems to be one of love and hate. The society as a whole needs them for protection and as a result they are revered by many members of society. Children often aspire to become police officers and many television shows valorize their heroic activities. On the other side of the coin many citizens often cry foul when referring to the police and as a result they have been the object of a wide range of criticism (Mastrofski, 2004). But what is one to think of the Police in a small state, Caribbean, post colonial context, what is actually their function in crime, violence, law and order?

Weiner (1976) writing on the role of the police argues that their role includes the following: law enforcement, order maintenance, performance of services, support of dominant group, symbol of authority, buffer between the people and the power structure, and they serve as a measure of social tolerance. Weiner misleads his reader into thinking that these roles mutually exclusive when in fact they are not. The law that the police enforces and the order that they maintain are inextricably linked to their support of the dominant group. This was observed in Dann’s (1982) work on Guyana where he argued that the police was used to maintain Guyana’s social structure. Danms relied heavily on Wolfgang who argued that the police “are the executors of middle class values reflected in the criminal law and community norms of right and wrong conduct. They are the front line reconnaissance troops of these values; their functional role is to discover, detect and
defer deviance from those values, while protecting vulnerable victims from the offensiveness of others.” (Wolfgang, 1968 in Danns, 1982) Wolfgang’s description is supported by Lobman when he adds that “the police function is to support and enforce the interests of the dominant political, social and economic interests of the town and only incidentally to support the law” (Lobman in Danns, 1982).

Richard Mayne the first Commissioner of Police in Britain differed from Wolfgang when he said that “the primary object of an efficient police is the prevention of crime; the next that of detection and punishment of offenders if crime is committed” (Pike, 1985). Professor Terrence Morris (1987) however commenting on Britain’s police service a hundred and fifty eight years after Mayne argued that “…the public image of the policeman has changed from that of the citizen in uniform to the *paramilitary* riot controller behind whom lurks the shadow of the soldier” (IRR*, 1987; emphasis mine).

Regardless of the definition of policing that one accepts the undeniable reality is that the Police are here to stay and their influence on society, whether positive or negative, must be examined. The paramilitary riot controller that Professor Morris (1987) observed however has been the norm in the Caribbean ever since the inception of the institution; probably because the police as an institution was imposed on the Caribbean to maintain order and to enforce the law to the benefit of the ruling class (Danns, 1982; Harriot, 2000; Mars, 2002).

George Danns in his study of Guyana’s Police argued that the police tend to be viewed as an inevitable if not natural part of modern society (Danns, 1982). This is true as modern

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* Institute of Race Relations
society has grown accustomed to the idea of a police force or police service (not certain if they are a force or a service it depends how one views their role or rather which socio-economic class one belongs. Mars certainly viewed Guyana’s police as a force so did Harriot see Jamaica’s police). The idea of police’s inevitability could be a depiction of the apparently omnipresent nature of crime and violence or because the influence of Classical Criminology has been so invasive of the society, not only in the Caribbean but also internationally. Classical Criminology has advanced that man is hedonistic and therefore a society that comprises men of this nature would inevitably need an institution such as the police to tame, patrol and survey their hedonistic desires. Whether this is true or not, logical or illogical is not what is being argued in this paper. What is noteworthy is that this line of thinking has and continues to influence our institutions including the agents of the Criminal Justice System and the paradigm of the society as it pertains to crime and violence. Therefore the apparent ease at which the police as an intuition is accepted may have more to do with the conditioning of the Classical Criminology or more specifically the imperialist reason of Western Criminology and the State more than with the rising crime rate.

Danns tells us that the conservative/functionalisit views on policing argue that because of the breakdown of the traditional values of family and the failures and/or inadequacies of institutions such as, schools and religious bodies to instill the societal norms and values into the members of the society the presence of the police is paramount. The police are therefore needed to hold back the forces of evil and destruction that lurk just beneath the
surface of civilization (Danns 1982). However these forces of evil are usually presented to be poor, young, non–white males (Hall et al, 1978; Agozino, 1997).

Those holding a liberal perspective on policing argue that its not the nature of man nor the decline in society’s institutions that makes the institution of a police inevitable but they advocate that the socio-economic conditions - especially poverty and unemployment - are underlying factors of crime and disorder that subsequently makes police necessary” (CRCJ1975:9 in Danns, 1982). However Sutherland’s 1949 work on white-collar crime which predates the CRCJ report informs that crime is not unique to the lower classes. It is now known as it was during W.E.B Dubois’s (Durkheim’s contemporary) writing that there are crimes of poor and crimes of the powerful. Therefore the claim that the police are necessary because socio-economic conditions apparently drive the lower classes to commit crime – as if they were mules - and as a result need to be controlled is questionable.

Joan Mars conducted a research on Guyana’s Police and one of the most fundamental arguments she raised was that the colonial heritage of Guyana shaped the police’s culture and behaviour (Mars, 2002). This is an important argument because it adds to the discourse a Caribbean–Counter Colonial perspective of policing. It is crucial not to blindly adopt western theorizing as to the necessity of the police and further to that, western explanations as to why do the police police. Maureen Cain reminds us that during her eight years at the University of the West Indies she observed that the “most

1 The Centre for the Research of Criminal Justice, USA.
salient” issues in the Caribbean context were “not covered at all in western criminology” (Cain, 2000). This observation could no doubt be extended to the theorizing on policing.

Mars therefore, in her book “Deadly Force, Colonization and the Rule of Law – Police Violence in Guyana”, offered an explanation as to why the police has become necessary in Guyana and more importantly how Guyana’s police culture was shaped. This post colonial explanation of policing makes good foundation for exploring this phenomenon in a Caribbean context. It refutes the conservative and the liberal view of the necessity of the police and it offers an alternative explanation for the culture and necessity of policing in the Caribbean. It even turns the criminological lens away from the crimes of the poor to the crimes of colonization and forces Western Criminologists to admit that, not only was colonization a crime but it was also criminogenic, not only was paramilitarism transplanted from Britain but that it destroyed police-community relations in post-colonial societies (Harriot, 2000).

Mars (2002) conducted a study that examined the problem of police violence in Guyana’s police more specifically their use of deadly force. Her study “expanded the explanatory framework of police violence to include the historical, social, political, and legal context in which it is embedded.”

Mars via the historical approach to policing argued that the “model of organized policing that was eventually implemented in colonial Guyana differed greatly from that of the home country of the European colonists who established permanent settlement in the colonies.” She argued that these distinctions between British policing style and policing
in colonial Guyana, however, predate the establishment of organized police forces and can be traced to the earliest attempts at maintaining social control under the slave system”

This line of reasoning led Mars to divide her account of the evolution of colonial policing in Guyana into the period of Slavery and the post –slavery / colonial era. She informed her readers that “slave patrols arose out of the need to, firstly, protect the continuity of the labor supply that was constantly being threatened by the practice of slaves regularly escaping into the interior, where they would set up their bush settlements.” And secondly according to Mars the policing of slaves was needed to quell any occurrences of rebellion and insurrection as these were common throughout the slavery period. The greatest benefit, however, from Mars’s division of the evolution of policing was to illustrate how this dual purpose of policing during the era of slavery, i.e. to protect the planters and to ensure an uninterrupted labor of supply, influenced the violent and brutal style of policing that became evident in the colony.

However Mars’s decision to divide the evolution of policing into slavery and post slavery was a fundamental and philosophical mistake although understandable. To argue that the slaves were policed, apprehended and convicted of crime, as Mars tried to prove, would be to assume that the slaves were persons guilty of a crime or could be interpreted as such. In reality the slaves of Guyana and any state for that matter were not criminals but victims; therefore a victim cannot in the true sense of the word be policed. Mars wrongly suggested this when she defined the slavery period of policing as “policing the powerless.”
A people who are enslaved cannot be policed for slave revolts, uprising or rebellion because they are simply responding to the crimes of the Slave Masters. It is somewhat absurd to think that victims who resist domination are described as being policed. It’s like if a rape victim rebels against her rapist and her rapist tracks her down and recaptures her, scholars won’t interpret that incident as the rape victim being policed by her rapist. Therefore we should reject and substitute Mars’s conceptualization that during the era of slavery the Slave Masters policed the powerless in favor of (VAMP) Victimization as Mere Punishment) a concept advanced by Agozino (1997). Agozino in his book “Black Women and the Criminal Justice System: Towards the Decolonization of Victimization” argued that black women in Britain were being victimized by the Criminal Justice System because of their association with black men (their sons, father, husbands, relatives and friends) who were presumed to be criminals by the British Police. Although the black women’s treatment were interpreted by most as punishment Agozino rightly argued that she was not being punished because she was in fact innocent, therefore he argued that she was being victimized under the guise of punishment.

Agozino’s - VAMP – ought to be used to interpret slavery as the punishment the slaves received was not legitimate as the slaves were not offenders. It is wrongly assumed that only offenders are punished and only criminals are policed. This is not only an incorrect assumption but one that could lead to many negative consequences. The Punishment of Offenders theory advanced by David Garland, the POO theory (Agozino, 1997) also must be questioned as not all offenders are punished as is apparent in the case of slavery. Therefore one could say to Mars that during slavery the slaves weren’t punished but they
were victimized, they weren’t policed they were hunted. As a result a request could be put to Agozino in his conceptualization of VAMP for a possible inclusion of HAMP (Hunting as Mere Policing).

Another concern of Mars’s terminology – policing the powerless –, Agozino’s VAMP and even in the author’s HAMP is that these terms seem to paint the victim as passive. Whilst one must never deny the victimization that is / was present in Agozino’s study and also in Mars’s account of the slaves in Guyana. Scholars must be sure to remind readers that the slaves who were hunted by the Slaver Masters for fighting back, the black women who are victimized by the Criminal Justice System and the lower-class young men who are often the object of paramilitary policing often survive. They are certainly not powerless nor are they “just” victims but they are survivors. Mars informed that “with the termination of the apprenticeship system on August 1st 1938, there were more that 100,000 slaves in the colony” compared to only 3,937 Europeans. This paints a very graphic fact that the slaves survived and that they were powerful and not powerless as Mars conceptualized.

However Mars’s choice to examine how the Slaves were hunted (not policed) is understandable as Marxian and Engelian writings advocate that all of our existence can be understood from history. Her examination of this period offered the study a good transition into the Colonial policing of Guyana where she gave an account of the establishing of Guyana’s first police force and the violent police behaviour that ensued. She argued that it was clear that “order and maintenance was uppermost in the mind of
the colonial authorities” when they established the Police Force. According to Mars the

duties of the Police Force in 1839 were as follows:

To aid, assist and obey the magistrates and to bring to justice all persons charged
with or suspected of murders, robberies, thefts of all description and
misdemeanors, as well as all rogues, vagabonds, idle and disorderly persons and
to suppress and prevent all tumults, riots, brawls, outrages and disorders and all
other offenses of any kind whatsoever against public peace and laws of this

colony.

From her historical analysis of colonial policing in Guyana she concluded that three
“distinctive characteristics” emerged (1) the emphases on control and coercion rather
than service as the primary function; (2) the legitimization of police behaviour, however
reprehensive, by the executive and judiciary; and (3) the indiscriminate resort to violence,
that is the use of deadly force as a means of social control and especially crowd control.

These distinctives are clearly illustrated in the proclamation by His Excellency the
Governor Sir Frederick Hodgson during the 1905 riots in Guyana:

Whereas certain persons who feel aggrieved as to the rate of pay granted to them
for work as porters in the loading and unloading of vessels have disturbed the
peace and order of the town by tumultuously assembling on the streets and
interfering with peaceable citizens:
I hereby proclaim that it is my intention to put an end to all riotous proceedings by
force. Orders have been issued for all riotous assemblies to be dispersed. If
necessary the Riot Act will be read and the powers conferred by Law will then be
used.
I earnestly call upon all peaceable citizens to avoid joining assemblies and crowds
as by so doing they will run the risk of being injured or even losing their lives.

Mars argued that the police behavior and violence during riots clearly illustrated the
importance they placed on population control; a priority that was established during the
era of slavery. Walter Rodney assisted our understanding of this when he explained that law and order practically meant – ‘the maintenance of conditions most favourable to the expansion of capitalism and the plunder of Africa” (Rodney, 1972 in Agozino, 1997: 34). This is in line with the European need to control and survey, a need that continues to be expressed today in the form of the academic discipline of Criminology. Another tool used to repress the Other by policing them via its theorizing and in the form of neo-colonial policing.

Mars’s work on Guyana’s Police Force enriches our understanding of neo-colonial policing. As she proves via her historical analysis that the police culture that developed during the colonial period or rather according to Danns (1982) that was transplanted by Britain during this period transitioned itself in post-independence Guyana. Mars almost laments the fact that an independent Guyana “lost” the opportunity to “redefine the role and function of the Guyana’s police force” with the achievement of Independence in 1966 as she observed the same paramilitary style of policing being adopted in an independent Guyana when “the local state authority drafted security forces including the police into a master plan to for maintenance of political power” and for the reordering to the society along socialist lines. According to Mars the return of democratic rule under the People’s Progressive Party in 1992 proved no different as semi-military policing remained a distinguishing feature of policing. Therefore what Mars’s observation actually implies is that whether under Socialist Guyana or Democratic Guyana semi-military policing characterized by police violence remained a constant variable in Guyana’s policing culture. This is however no surprise as Nkrumah informed of this – in part at least - when he argued that “the methods and types of victimization characteristic of the
colonial state were partially and selectively carried over by the neo-colonial state in order to uphold and consolidate the inherited political and economic hegemonic ideology of capitalist underdevelopment” (Nkrumah, 1968 in Agozino, 1997: 43). And Mars’s work illustrated that this was apparent in Guyana’s policing.

Whilst Mars focused on police violence and as was rightly stated, her findings add to the police literature. This line of inquiry of policing culture however is weakened when scholars neglect the responses, coping strategies and lifestyles that emerge in response to this style of policing. It is appreciated that Mars was not examining that aspect of policing but it is a feature that must be explored if Criminologists are to understand policing and its effects from the other side of the coin. Criminology must no longer deny the voice of the Other as their experiences are paramount to fulfill the police reform that Mars and others are clamoring for.

Danns book entitled “Domination and Power in Guyana – A Study of the Police in the Third World Context” predated Mars but makes a similar argument to Mars and was one of the seminal studies in Policing from a third world context. Danns work however focused more on illustrating the police as an agent of the state as opposed to Mars who examined the police use of deadly force. Nevertheless it is apparent that Danns attributed the nature of policing in Guyana to its colonial heritage. He argued that it was the police’s “annexation with the colonial state that facilitated an understanding of its essential nature and role.” And according to Danns their nature and role was to “subjugate the colonized and repress any actions they took to reduce the conditions of
suffering and exploitation” (Danns, 1979 in Danns 1982). Danns goes on to explain that “police was not an urban industrial phenomenon but a coercive bureaucratic imposition.” He contended that “they functioned not so much to repress crime but to repress the colonize masses” (Danns, 1982). Because Danns saw the establishment of the police in the colonial era of Guyana as an “instrument” of the state designed to control the “large ex-slave population and the newly arrived racially-varied indentured labour groups” and in the post independence period as “a coercive arm of the state designed to assist in the imposition and maintenance of social order” he attributed the present role and style of policing to its legacy of colonialism.

This fact was reiterated throughout Danns’ monograph however like Mars he too neglected to examine the lifestyle or coping strategies that may have developed as a result of this nature of militarized policing. Although, he did mention that the masses “often would erupt in violent protests and riotous behavior over their conditions of domination and exploitation.” He mentioned this vaguely to illustrate the militarization of the police as it intervened to “repress the disgruntled workers.” It would be misleading for scholars and the field of Criminology to assume that the citizens of Guyana and/or any other developing nations with a legacy of colonialism are simply pawns to paramilitary policing. Research on policing in a colonial context must be widened to include this forgotten perspective.

Harriot (2000) examined the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) and in his work he theorized Paramilitarism for the first time in the Caribbean literature although he does not
say so explicitly. He also went a step further and attempted to explore defensive strategies that the citizens developed to adapt to the victimization they received via the paramilitary policing of the JCF.

Harriot commenting on the JCF argued that it is “both an adaptation to and source of its legitimacy deficit and is cultivated by structures of power, originating in the colonial period, that treat the policed like subjects rather than citizens. According to Harriot (2000) the JCF employed paramilitarism as a tactic, a tactic that fails to ensure effectiveness and internal control. He defined paramilitarism in the following terms:

- A heavy reliance on indiscriminate “net fishing” tactical forms such as roadblocks and raids
- Indifference to means
- The use of guns as the main tactical weapon
- Excessive use of violence – para-militarism feeds and facilitates the pursuit of action, excitement and glory via violence as valued ends in themselves
- Use of huge personal resources
- The group as the basic operational unit – often a coordinated network of groupings
- Military approaches to problem solving – this forces on the physical neutralization of the enemy not the social aspects of the problem (in this approach the main factors to be manipulated are space and time, not social variables
- The people are treated as passive onlookers rather than active participants with some responsibility for their own security.

However it was the four principles of paramilitarism that Harriot identified that deserves further theorizing. Harriot argued that paramilitarism includes Degradation, Unjustified Police Violence, Selectivity and Harassment – a Dush (Douche) Bag
approach to policing. He went on to explain that ‘Degrading Treatment’ involves the use of verbal and physical abuse to humiliate and to dramatize the low status of the subjects in the universe of the police and their subjection to the will and power of the police. These practices argues Harriot are intended to induce greater conforming behaviour among those sections of the population presumed to be less law abiding and generally lacking in commitment to the norms of the society. However Harriot contents that in reality, it generally results in the opposite, as such treatment is seen as being reserved for the poor. ‘Unjustified Police Violence’ according to Harriot is used for “asserting police power in a quest for greater authority and compliance, punishing its subjects and as an interrogative-investigative tool.” He informs that this style of policing “brutality is not simply aberrant and deviant behaviour but a work norm. It is an acceptable means on attaining police goals and a valued part of their tactical repertoire.” He argues that unjustifiable homicide is the most acute expression of brutality and describes it as an act of social cleansing targeted at violent criminals. This style of policing is fueled by the perspective of the criminal being the “enemy”. The third principle ‘Selectivity’ consists of the police force making “arbitrary arrests and the disruption of life in whole communities by its adoption of stop and search tactics, raids on public places, in which patrons are subject to detention and processing, curfews, cordons and search and the use of similar “net fishing” techniques in search of guns and criminals.” And lastly ‘Harassment’ involves intensive surveillance. He argues that it usually takes the form of repeated dispersal of seemingly threatening groups or individuals usually occupying public spaces in their communities, and repeated detention of targeted individuals on unjustified charges.
Harriot went onto argue that two coping strategies were developed by community residents as a result of this style of policing. He categorizes these strategies into two broad concepts “Warlordism” and “Survivalism.” These concepts or as he termed them doctrines explain the behaviour of the citizens in two inner-city communities in Jamaica.

He argued that the criminogenic social conditions that are characteristic of inner city areas often result in the inner city citizens resorting to illegal means of survival. According to Harriot these means of survival are justified by the perpetrators as their sole means of survival. This says Harriot leads to the paramilitary style of policing that is often meted out to the inner-city. Therefore according to Harriot’s ecological (see Shaw & McKay, 1947) argument, inner-city citizens are victims to firstly their social conditions which push them to crime and their criminal activities are followed by paramilitary policing.

This was a puzzling position for Harriot to take after initially arguing that the paramilitary style of policing, that is characteristic of the JCF policing of the inner city, was adopted from the colonial era. One would have thought that it would have been more logical to assume that the colonial police’s preoccupation with law, order, maintenance, surveillance, intelligence gathering and control (Killingray and Anderson, 1982) created a criminogenic environment that plausibly produced resistance amongst the inner-city citizens that led them to chose (not resort to as Harriot argued ) illegal means of survival. As was the case with the Aba women in Nigeria who resisted the colonial State’s attempt
of direct taxation after offering low prices for their palm oil and kernel (Ahire, 1991). Therefore Harriot’s ordering of events is questionable.

Harriot’s term Warlordism; he argues is an alternative system of justice in inner-city Jamaica. He argues that the poor police-community relations that have developed in the inner-city as a result of the paramilitary policing paved the way for the establishment of this alternative system of justice. According to Harriot in this system the dons of the inner city “take control” of the community, they serve as police, judge and prosecutor. He argues that they are responsible for many reprisal killings and in the specific case of Jamaica, Warlordism is a construct framed in a political context. Hence Warlordism appears to be a fruit of the breakdown of police-community relations which resulted as argued earlier from paramilitary policing.

Harriot does not delve in detail to this construct and perhaps leaves intellectual space for this to be developed further. Nevertheless his work is a needed extension of Danns’ work on policing and Mars would have enriched her discourse had she relied on Harriot’s work which predated hers. Harriot’s extension, for the first time in the Caribbean literature on policing, included an analysis of the inner-city citizens’ response. His argument that Warlordism developed as a result of the breakdown of police-community relations is one that advances the work on police reform. As it subtly makes the point that paramilitarism is in its own right criminogenic. This is what one would have thought Harriot would have argued with regards to his doctrine of Survivalism.
In examining the strategies developed to cope or deal with this breakdown in police-community relations. Harriot contends that the citizens began to nullify the work of the police by murdering informants and in the milder case restricting the JCF’s access to the prospective informants as well as constructing “look-outs.” These strategies are not arbitrary measures but are targeted to the style of policing they have received since the pre-independence era. For example one of the purposes of the “look-outs” that were constructed was to survey the policing of the JCF. Therefore the police-community relations were not simply broken but it now evolved into an adversarial one.

Although total acceptance of the doctrines developed by Harriot specifically his conceptualization of survivalism is debatable. Harriot’s work on police in Jamaica advanced the literature to include the victims of paramilitary policing. It also argued, although subtly, that paramilitary policing is criminogenic and problematic and not a valid style of policing that simply transitioned into post-colonial period. This work along with Mars and Danns should give Caribbean Criminologists the theoretical footing to develop and argue for a Caribbean criminological perspective of policing. A perspective that does not neglect the crimes of colonialism and the voices of the victims or as argued earlier the survivors.

Therefore it is the purpose of this paper to put to test a self-authored instrument to measure paramilitarism as conceptualized by Harriot.
Methodology

Data Collection

In November of 2008 a survey of one police station in Trinidad and Tobago was conducted. This station was selected purposively and not randomly from the seventy-eight stations which may have been the most common option. This approach augured well for the study as this research is attempting to scientifically measure paramilitarism and a new concept termed peacemaking policing. This approach offered the study the opportunity to pilot the questionnaire in the first instance.

Sample:

All the police officers on duty (those absent were left out) were then selected to complete the questionnaire. From this sample of officers the study was able to accomplish two aims. Firstly this served as a pilot for the questionnaire and secondly it allowed for the construction of a profile of the officers that adopt the different styles of policing. The characteristics of the sample can be found in Table 1.

Measures:

The questionnaire that was distributed to the officers was divided into two broad sections (1) Demographical Factors and (2) Paramilitarism

The section on Demographical Factors was further divided into seven sub-sections that collected data on the respondents’ age, sex, marital status, ethnicity, religion, education and professionalism.
The second section of the questionnaire measured the extent of paramilitarism in the police service. This measure was further divided into four sections that relied on Harriot’s (2000) definition of paramilitarism, “degrading treatment”, “unjustifiable police violence”, “selectivity” and “harassment”. All of these scales measured the extent to which respondent’s believe in the respective tenet of paramilitarism as a viable option in achieving law abiding behavior from community residents.

Each of these tenets of paramilitarism were measured at the ordinal level via a Likert scale and comprises of twelve (12) questions. The scale ranged from (1) very strongly disagree, (4) uncertain to (7) very strongly agree. A high score on any of these scales indicated that the respondent was more likely to believe if not display the said tenet of paramilitarism that is being measured. For example a respondent who scored high on the harassment scale would show a greater tendency to believe in harassment as an effective tactic in policing. All the individual scales were summed to provide an overall score that illustrated the respondent’s belief of paramilitarism as a policing style.

Table 1: Characteristics of Sample

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Years of Experience</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Years of Education</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It should be noted that this research was done in The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) which is both a civil and quasi-military body which functions in accordance with the Police Service Act Chapter 15:01. At present it has over 7000 police officers in varying ranks and Special Reserved Police support the mandate of the Service. The TTPS is organized into 9 Divisions and 18 Branches, Squads and Units. These are Community Police, Police Complaints, Special Branch, Guard and Emergency Branch, Criminal Investigation Division and Criminal Records Office, Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit, Homicide, Fraud Squad, Court and Process, Police Band, Mounted and Canine Branch, Police Training College, E-999, Traffic and Highway Patrol Branch, Transport and Telecom. The Service is charged with the maintenance of law and order, prevention and detection of crime and prosecution of offenders.

However this setting is presently undergoing a reform process (Mastrofksi, 2008). This process would reorganize the governance structure of the TTPS to include better oversight of the police as well as more efficient “watchdogs” of the same. The TTPS reformation would be adapted form the model of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland. Mastrofksi (2008) vouches that this reformed system would:

- consolidate more administrative authority in the office of police commissioner,
- enhance the Government’s capacity to provide policy direction and
- create independent watchdog entities to hold the Police Service accountable.

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2 Adapted from the Ministry of National Security, Government of Trinidad and Tobago website
Whilst these goals are laudable the evaluation of the same has yet to be done on a wide scale.

Trotman’s (1986) description of the setting however seems to have greater accuracy to the nation’s present situation. He informs in his book ‘Crime in Trinidad’ that the Trinidadian police in the 19th century “assumed that strict military discipline would provide at least a veneer of civilization, so that the lower ranks could be used as the storm troopers in the war against creeping criminality’ (Trotman, 1986, p. 94). This, as argued earlier, was carried over to post-colonial policing in Trinidad and Tobago. Mastrofski (2008, p. 486) relying heavily on Trotman (1986, p. 90-101) captures the essence of the TTPS paramilitaristic culture when he writes that:

“The contemporary mechanisms of control and guidance in the TTPS are heavily influenced by the nation’s experience as a British colony in the 19th century. The police were a paramilitary organization, headed by military officers (some of whom had served in other British colonies) who envisioned their organization’s role as repression of a rebellious public that threatened the island’s elite---done under the guise of maintaining law and order.”

**Findings and Analysis**

Tests of significance were not performed as the sample was expectedly too small (n=29). This was expected as this paper is part of a larger study intended to measure paramilitarism in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. This paper however provided the needed test of the instrument. It also served as a baseline measure for future aspects of the study as well as paves the way for further theoretical development. Additionally this paper provides for the first time in the Caribbean region an instrument to measure paramilitarism, a feature of post-colonial societies.
**Paramilitarism**

Overall the respondents illustrated moderate beliefs toward paramilitarism. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the respondents scored moderately on the scale. That is to say when the scores for the scale were summed they fell within the ‘moderate’ range. It is noteworthy that none of the respondents scored in the ‘low’ range of the scale.

**Chart 1: Paramilitarism**

![Chart 1: Paramilitarism](image)

In keeping with the purpose of this paper, the sub-scales within the Paramilitarism scale were then examined.
The six questions that were used to measure the ‘Harassment’ and ‘Degrading Treatment’ components of Paramilitarism illustrated a high percentage of respondents agreeing that harassment and degrading treatment is a useful policing tactic. The questions that comprised the ‘Unjustifiable Police Violence’ sub-scale all illustrated a high percentage of respondents believing in the use of violence as a policing style. The “Selectivity” sub-scale also depicted overwhelming agreement amongst the respondents to using indiscriminate selection techniques in their policing (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Paramilitarism Response Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARAMILITARISM</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Uncertain %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harassment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The area under our jurisdiction needs to be under armed surveillance or all ‘hell’ will break loose</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A police officer should disperse any gathering in the community any chance he or she gets</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers should never harass the residents in the community even if they belong to a threatening group</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degrading Treatment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes it is necessary to ‘cuss’ some residents as this is the only language they understand and it is the only way to get them to obey</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As much as we want to do our jobs, police officers should never humiliate any of the residents of this community</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve found that humiliating the residents sometimes works in making them obey the law</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selectivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the stop and search techniques are necessary to capture criminals</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know why the Police Service does all these ‘raids’ as they never seem to work</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think we should have more Operations such as ‘Operation Anaconda’ and ‘Operation Baghdad’</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unjustifiable Police Violence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the respondents were asked if the area under their jurisdiction needed armed surveillance, nearly eight percent of the sample agreed that it was necessary. Additionally close to seventy percent disagreed with the statement that the killing of a known criminal is never right. And approximately ninety-seven percent of the police officers surveyed believed that stop and search techniques are necessary to capture criminals.

**Discussion**

The results from this paper should not be utilized to argue that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is Para-militaristic as the sample was not large or diverse enough to make such a claim. Because of this cross-tabulations could not have been performed to analyze the differences amongst the various demographical groupings. However this paper is a needed step forward in the right direction as post-colonial Criminologists and Social Scientists attempt to make sense of policing in their context. This paper if anything provides Caribbean Criminology with an instrument to quantitatively measure paramilitarism. A measure founded on principles of paramilitarism as advocated by Harriot (2000).

It should be noted that the rate of murder in Trinidad has been on the increase for the past several years (see Chart 2) and this may explain the overwhelming agreement to “harass”
the residents within the officers’ jurisdiction as well as their strong belief in the use of police violence as an effective measure to reduce crime. This belief however is also extended to the corporate sector as the Penal/Debe\(^3\) Chamber of Commerce called for joint army and police patrols for the 2008 Christmas season\(^4\).

**Chart 2: Rate of Murder in Trinidad and Tobago 1962-2007**

![Chart showing the rate of murder in Trinidad and Tobago from 1962 to 2007](chart.png)

Additionally the level of distrust between police and community continues to grow as reports of police brutality became the norm. For example according to an article in the Trinidad Express dated 27\(^{th}\) November 2008 the Police were accused of illegally entering Roxanne Simon’s home of Laventille without a warrant. This is a clear example of harassment and selectivity and is a common feature of Laventille. Laventille is a city on

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\(^3\) Penal/Debe is a rural area in the southern part of the country

\(^4\) Trinidad Express – November 27\(^{th}\) 2008
the outskirts of the nation’s capital and has been a troubled area since its inception. Ottley (1964) informs us that Laventille was the city that was identified by State as the most suitable place for the Lepers that were plaguing the nation’s capital. It is the author’s belief that this treatment by the State of the city of Laventille continues event today in the form of Para-militaristic policing. The Police still treat Laventillians and many other communities like Lepers. This could be a possible reason why the respondents in this survey disagreed with the statement that officers should never harass residents in the community.

However to be fair to the Police one must admit that they have been the victims of violent attacks by community residents and hence the reason for their militaristic approach. Harriot (2002) also observed this when he studied the JCF; that the police and the community were at war. This state of war that was evident in Harriot’s work is also a feature in Trinidad. An ambiguous event surrounding the death of Careme Immanuel, another resident of Laventille, illustrates the state of war between the community and the police. A Trinidad Express\(^5\) article gave two opposing views of his death; one which explained that he was innocently murdered by the Police and the other where the police swore that Careme Immanuel fired at them first. (The author is uncertain if follow-up investigations were done on this incident but its occurrence illustrates the war that exists) If the latter were true and it may be in some cases, it then most assuredly explains why 96.6 % of the officers surveyed agreed that stop and search techniques are necessary to capture criminals.

\(^5\) Trinidad Express – 7\(^{th}\) October 2008
However when the officers were probed further into this policing tactic of stop and search raids it was found that the responses weren’t as unified. That is to say when asked if the TTPS should have more Operations such as Anaconda and Baghdad⁶ approximately forty-eight percent disagreed whilst seventeen percent were uncertain. This shows that when respondents are probed into the practical reality of their beliefs a certain degree of dissonance emerges. This was found in a study where University students were probed into their punitive beliefs of prisoners (King, 2008). The respondents held overwhelmingly punitive attitudes towards prisoners however when they were asked if they desired more prisons to be built their unity in punishment wasn’t as evident.

Nevertheless the results of this paper illustrate that the sample held paramilitaristic views toward policing; views that may be traced to the Nation’s colonial past as well as linked to the State’s need to control. However if Caribbean states are to rid themselves of paramilitarism it must first measure its occurrence and identify its associated constructs. This paper has offered the discipline of Criminology an instrument that does just that.

Conclusion

As stated earlier the results of this paper ought not to be used to extrapolate any findings to the TTPS. However the instrument advanced in this paper to measure paramilitarism should be offered on the social-scientific altar for in depth scrutiny. If navigating the risks and building resilience of small states is our aim then scientific measures of this nature are needed.

⁶ These Operations comprise indiscriminate searches, raids and road-blocks of certain communities
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