



UWI
CAVE HILL CAMPUS
BARBADOS, WEST INDIES



**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT, SOCIOLOGY, SOCIAL
WORK
AND PSYCHOLOGY**

POLICY BRIEF

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES CAVE HILL CAMPUS**

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The policy brief is a publication of the Department of Government, Sociology, Social Work and Psychology of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. The views expressed in the publication, however, are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Department or the University on any of the issues dealt with by the contributing authors.

About us

Established in 1976, the then Department of Government and Sociology delivered teaching in Political Science, Sociology and Psychology. Today the Department offers programmes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in International Relations, Labour and Employment Relations, Political Science, Public Policy, Sociology, Social Work and Psychology.

Research Aim

The aim of the Department of Government, Sociology, Social Work and Psychology is to produce innovative research that addresses the topical issues facing the Caribbean and world today. The Department carries out research in the areas of democracy and electoral politics, survey design and analysis, social policy, gender, and youth development, inter alia.

The Department's academic staff possess an extensive list of publications in the form of books, peer-reviewed book chapters and journal articles, newspaper articles and other non-fiction texts. In addition to its theoretical output, the researchers collaborate with organisations and agencies at the global, regional and international levels.

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Introduction

It is my pleasure as the Head of Department of Government, Sociology, Social Work and Psychology, to introduce this sixth volume of our Policy Brief.

This edition comprises a critical reflection on the unveiling of the Windrush National Monument in Britain, an analysis of digital transformation for the local and regional context, a focus on the elderly and a piece on knife crime. The authors to this sixth edition include activists and staff of the Department whose contributions address timely policy areas that reflect the Department's multi-disciplinary structure and emphasis.

The Department welcomes your feedback on any of the pieces contained in this brief.

Kristina Hinds, PhD
Senior Lecturer and Head



Why I won't be attending the unveiling ceremony for the National Windrush Monument

by Professor Gus John
Equality & Human Rights Campaigner

Thank you for your invitation to the unveiling ceremony on Windrush Day, 22 June, for the National Windrush Monument inside London Waterloo Station, 'created by Basil Watson, the internationally renowned Jamaican artist'.

The invitation states that 'the ceremony will celebrate the lives, contribution and legacy of those who came to the UK from the Caribbean from 1948 to 1971 and their descendants, culminating in the unveiling of this fitting monument, which can be embraced by future generations and the Nation for decades to come'.

I am still puzzled as to why I was sent that invitation, as I am on public record as condemning the entire Windrush construct as a sham and as a gross distortion of the

relationship between the African diaspora, from the Caribbean and the African continent, and Britain.

The invitation noted that 'the event will be attended by guests that embody the spirit of diversity that our country has to offer (whatever that might mean). These will include notable British Caribbean individuals who have made a lasting contribution to the UK'.

Significantly, this monument is being unveiled in the same month that Her Imperial Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, celebrates 70 years as British monarch. During those 70 years, the British state has perpetuated a culture of racism that has violated the human rights of Black Commonwealth and of British born and naturalized citizens, marring their lives and killing thousands of them, directly through brutalization while in the custody of the state and indirectly through the impact of racism on their life chances and their health and wellbeing.

Just one week after I received your invitation, the Guardian ran a story of a report on the Windrush Scandal which the Home Office is said to be refusing to release and which argued, among other damning findings, that the scandal was the culmination of '30 years of racist immigration laws'.

Throughout those 30 years and more, Her Imperial Majesty presided at the opening of

Parliament and ushered into immigration legislation that was more racist in every iteration, including the legislation in 2014 and 2016 that framed 'the hostile environment'.

In 1945, the Fifth Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester. That congress, attended by Pan-Africanists, anti-colonial campaigners and leaders of workers' movements across the Caribbean, made a number of demands of the British state, including that Britain should take action against the racism Black people were suffering, especially those who had risked life and limb and given loyal service to the British Crown in the Second World War. The principal message to Britain from that congress was that those subjects of the British Crown who risked their lives in defeating Nazism should not have to face racism and Nazism in the very country they had fought to defend.

That was two years before the Steam Ship *Almanzora* arrived in Southampton from the Caribbean on 21 December 1947, carrying 200 ex-service personnel. Six months later, the *SS Windrush* docked at Tilbury. Among its 500 passengers were many whom, like those on the *Almanzora*, Britain had abandoned to their fate once they were returned to the Caribbean after demob, thus necessitating their return to this country in search of bread and opportunity to rebuild their lives. It is those very citizens who, even

though they were being killed often in greater numbers than their white counterparts in theatres of war, were denied the same rights, rewards and awards as them. Because they were Black, they were not allowed to rise to the rank of 'officer', despite phenomenal acts of bravery in some cases. On demob, they had been returned to the colonies to a life of penury, many having had to place themselves at the mercy of their communities, especially if they were still overcoming physical injuries and mental trauma.

Many of the so-called Windrush Generation will have lived cheek by jowl with them as they joined that extensive reserve pool of labour Britain had created and left impoverished across the Caribbean.

Yet, in a leaflet publicising the Windrush Anniversary Service in Westminster Abbey in June 2018, the organizers claimed that those who arrived on the *Windrush* 'came seeking adventure', as if they suddenly decided to club together and come on safari to Britain. As if they did not have enough adventure on the killing fields of Europe.



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The Windrush Commemoration Committee projects the monument as 'an ambitious public artwork that stands as a testament to the contribution of Caribbean pioneers in communities across the United Kingdom'. They claim that 'it will create a permanent place of reflection and inspiration and be a visible statement of our shared history and heritage'.

But the Windrush narrative itself erases that shared history and heritage and refers lazily to 'the Windrush generation' as if they had no past and no experience with Britain before arriving in Britain. It also presents those who came in 1948 and after as pioneers who clocked up notable accomplishments in a free and open society in which they enjoyed equal opportunities for their considerable talents to flourish.

There is over-emphasis on the contribution and legacy of those who came from the Caribbean and on the extent to which we have helped to build modern Britain, but no mention of the fact that ours has been a

perennial struggle against systemic racism, neo-fascism and English nationalism. As such, those who came in 1947 and 1948 have been in a continuity of struggle with the Caribbean and African Diaspora that had lived and struggled against colonialism and racism since the end of the 19th century, at least.

So, whatever grandiose notions those who constructed the Windrush here and sent it coursing might have had, the SS Windrush was not the Mayflower and those whom it brought to Britain were not pilgrim fathers and mothers. They were from the Caribbean but not of the Caribbean. They had had a life experience with Britain before boarding that ship; an experience defined by imperialism, colonialism and racism.

The Windrush made one single voyage from the Caribbean to London in June 1948 carrying 500 people. Between then and 1962 when the British government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act to restrict open entry to its colonial citizens who were suddenly 'coloured immigrants', some 300,000 more had arrived on other ships or by air. In 1961 alone, in order to beat the impending ban that the 1962 legislation would impose, 125,000 arrived from the Caribbean. Their arrival sent shockwaves through the nation and huge swathes of the population demanded that their government should 'keep Britain white'. How, then, does the Windrush come to define the Caribbean

population and its descendants in Britain for all time?

No doubt, the Windrush Commemoration Committee focuses on those who came from the Caribbean between the arrival of the S.S. Windrush in 1948 and 1971, rather than 1987 let's say, because the Immigration Act 1971 effectively completed the process racializing immigration, which the government had started in 1962 and built upon in 1968. After 1971, there was no automatic 'right of abode' and those seeking permanent residence had to demonstrate patrial links to Britain, or that they had been legally resident here for 5 years or more.

We complain about the falsification and erasure of our history by Eurocentric historians with a colonial mindset. But that entire Windrush narrative distorts the history of Caribbean engagement with Britain and of Britain's relentless efforts to keep us out and prove to the 'keep Britain white' electorate that we were not wanted.

If that monument celebrates the lives, contribution and legacy of those who came to the UK from the Caribbean (1948-1971), it is surely also a monument to the brutality of the British state in deporting undocumented Windrush folk who have lived all their lives in this country but were negligent in hanging on to their iconic blue British colonial passport and not regularising their British nationality; to Caribbean people who have so

enriched life in Britain and contributed to its development into a modern multi-ethnic state. But that state is one which has an industrial prison complex where descendants of the Windrush generation are more populous than any other section of the population; where we are over-represented in most manifestations of social malaise and grossly under-represented in positions of influence, decision making and the exercise of social and economic power, in government as in pretty much every societal institution. Needless to say, it would be utterly perverse and mindless for anyone to point to Badenoch, Kwarteng, Javid, and heaven forbid, Patel to challenge this characterisation of the British state.

Despite all of that, however, shamelessly and totally without compunction, the British government declared that it had no intention of engaging with the UN Declaration on the Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and putting in place a programme of policies and actions consonant with the theme of Recognition, Justice and Development.

In proclaiming the Decade, the UN cited: the need to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society'.

Instead, the Johnson government engaged Dr

Tony Sewell to examine evidence of racial disparities and come up with a report which effectively said that irrespective of research evidence, government's own statistics and communities' perennial struggles for equal rights and justice, all was well in 'ole Blighty' and the government should hold firm and ignore the naysayers.

In my book and while acknowledging Basil Watson's remarkable work, this is a monument to unforgivable political illiteracy and an entrenched colonial mindset. What's more, it is a monument to state racism, hypocrisy and hubris.

The danger is that it will have future generations of Britons, Black & White, and visitors from across the globe believing in the Windrush hype, with no awareness that the monument represents a complete falsification of the historical and contemporaneous relationship between the Caribbean community and Britain.

This Windrush narrative is fixed in aspic and creates no bridge between the struggles against racism and for equal rights and justice we have had to wage in this society over the last century and the efforts of those for whom we have made Britain home to build a future where combating systemic racism does not remain their day- to-day reality.

Her Imperial Majesty and no doubt Charles and William on her behalf will continue

adorning the so-called Windrush generation and their descendants with British Empire gongs, while systemic racism becomes more and more embedded in Britain, as if it has nothing whatsoever to do with them.

For the avoidance of doubt, I will not be joining you at Waterloo on 22 June.

Yours in Hope!

Professor Gus John

Equality & Human Rights Campaigner

Why I won't be attending the unveiling ceremony for the National Windrush Monument

Augustine John (born 11 March 1945) is a Grenadian-born writer, education campaigner, consultant, lecturer and researcher, who moved to the UK in 1964. He has worked in the fields of education policy, management and international development. As a social analyst he specialises in social audits, change management, policy formulation and review, and programme evaluation and development. Since the 1960s he has been active in issues of education and schooling in Britain's inner cities such as Manchester, Birmingham and London, and was the first black Director of Education and Leisure Services in Britain.

He has also worked in a number of university settings, including as visiting Faculty

Professor of Education at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, as an associate professor of education and honorary fellow of the London Centre for Leadership in Learning at the UCL Institute of Education, University of London, and visiting professor at Coventry University. A respected public speaker and media commentator, he works internationally as an executive coach and a management and social investment consultant.

He wrote this letter to The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP and Baroness Floelia Benjamin DBE DL outlining why he was not attending the unveiling of the Windrush monument.

Reflections and Considerations on Digital Transformation

by Pearson A. Broome, PhD
Lecturer in Political Science



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The recent implementation of digital transformation projects in the Caribbean has gone from 0-60 mph and several major regional daily newspapers have conversations expressing awe and equally ambivalent consternation at the efficacy and effectiveness of these e-initiatives. The recent discussions here in Barbados as to whether to accept the National ID cards, the new tags for drivers' licenses, EZpay and a range of other e-government services have been called into question and rightfully so. It is both treasonous and treacherous these days to wade into policy debates for the principal reason that once critical sensible analysis of any post-2018 policy is proffered, the digital influencers, political strategists, pollsters, surrogates, or bots emerge to destroy both the introspective nature of the analysis and worst yet the professional credibility of the messenger. The cancel culture is alive and

well in Barbados. The recent warnings by cyber-professionals who are wary of these initiatives are not without profound merit. The commentary posited here is not meant to be a dystopian or luddite affront to any government's attempt to be progressive in digital transformation but rather a signal to policy planners to be mindful of the insidious and beguiling vicissitudes of technology and development.

It is a truism that in "real" countries digital government presents untapped opportunities for improving public service delivery and governance. It reduces transaction costs and saves governments and individuals time and money and it limits potential for government corruption. e-Government can range from communicating government decisions, laws, and policies rules and regulations, to interactive online services through which citizens can obtain licenses and visas, pay taxes, and report service defects. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the urgent need to facilitate better access to government services through digitizing government transactions with the citizen experience in mind. However, risks to the right to privacy and other human rights must be anticipated and managed to ensure that digitization does not result in breaches of individual rights particularly in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Mr. Niel Harper has been instrumental in pointing out the technological challenges faced by cyber security and the larger

technological issues but there is a pall of encrypted and overt vilification of his analysis of the need for a more reflective approach to rapid digitization. This article supports him on the need for this reflective analysis of digital transformation and for the need to secure our information safely. There's no need to debate that the current laminated national ID card is in dire need of change. Nor should we doubt the need for digital platforms to process basic government e-commerce transactions to avoid the sometimes callous and/or reticent attitudes of some civil servants. But neither should the call to harness a steadied approach in these matters be seen by policy planners as infradig to their very being.

My intention here is to present a pithy normative value analysis (NVA) to policy planners driving the process of digitizing government. NVA is the set of value-related features of structural governance including transparency, accountability, integrity, honesty, impartiality, efficiency and so on that governance should enable, possess and/or deliver. Structural governance is designed to support or achieve normative aims, but it is about how things are done, and not about if things are done in an efficient (or honest or fair) way. The concept of NVA reflects the principles of the underlying political system and its public values and these may change from polity to polity. Almost invariably, structures will be decided with norms in mind, but the critical point is

that they do not have to meet a normative concept of 'good' governance.

In writing this article I considered a range of critical cyber challenges indeed not exhaustive, nor necessarily unfamiliar to many involved in cybersecurity within this context of NVA. To begin, digital government is not a plug n play process. It is a complex socio-technical endeavour that presents to the undiscerning several cross-cutting issues that are paradoxical and/or intractable in nature. Often policy planners in their haste to present a narrative to the public fail to recognize this and can be acrimonious towards the boy who will remind the emperor/ress s/he is naked.

One reason why caution and critical discussion is essential in digital government is that the main dilemma faced by information and communication for development (ICT4D) is still a lack of conceptual clarity regarding a universal understanding of definitions, processes, structures norms, values, and rules, regulations and laws on the use of internet in general and of how to prosecute criminals when there are breaches. Is there a sequence in which all these concerns should be considered? What is the relative importance of each of these principles? Or should they all be given the same priority during implementation? Beyond these, there are larger philosophical and theoretical questions of how technology is [re]shaping capitalism.

When these are raised in public discourse pointing to the wide-ranging normative deficits, including the need for careful and comprehensive regulation and for rights-based governance in the digital age, it is easily misjudged as doctrinaire or merely grandiloquent by the *dominus factotum*. If human ability to understand and engage does not keep pace with technological sophistication, there can be a range of unintended consequences and vulnerabilities. The most prominent common theme is the existence of trade-offs and even conflicts between reasonable goals, for example between usability and security, or between accessibility and security, and privacy and convenience. Other prominent common themes are the importance of cybersecurity to sustain trust (in institutions formal and informal) and the harm from any loss of control over data. The real basis for this constitutional axiom - referenced here only to mean a body of rules that regulates public power - must reflect a deep respect for the integrity of each individual and a healthy scepticism toward government. This was a constant worry of Alexis de Tocqueville that acknowledge the immoderate passion for equality would lead democratic citizens to surrender their liberties to the soft despotism of a centralized bureaucracy and/or equally, that the passion for liberty can lead democratic citizens to tolerate a degree of inequality that threatens to transform democracy into oligarchy. Both of which are not difficult to imagine in any Caribbean state

and can undermine the collective action on which the security and well-being of the country can depend in times of danger.



The Guardian newspaper picture of Edward Snowden: Top secret files reveal how the US National Security Agency has direct access to Google, Apple and other US internet giants.

Reflecting on recent history, the case with Edward Snowden who publicly disclosed an estimated 1.7 million sensitive documents that revealed the United States' National Security Agency's (NSA), global mass surveillance programs and communication networks is well documented. Over the years a host of global data leaks occurred: Wikileaks, (2006) Offshore leaks (2013) China and Luxembourg leaks (both in 2014) Swiss Leaks (2015) Panama Papers (2016) Paradise Papers, (2017) Mauritius Leaks (2019) Luanda Leaks (2020) Pandora's Papers 1 (2021) Pandora's Papers 2 (2022). We need to be concerned when in an age of well-developed surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019) where firms and governments (Morosoz, 2011) alike are capturing and rendering data and a reservoir of information (data and information are different) that digital services can readily provide through

technological instrumentation for internal analytics. This analysis can be used for political and commercial ends, for digital dispossession (David Harvey, 2017) for suppressing our individual sovereignty, where we all abide by the will of others, with indifferent citizens being unknowingly used as accessories. We surely must be concerned about the ethical dimensions of digital governance!

There is a naivete though, that such activities are far removed from Caribbean shores even after the exposé of the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed illegal data and communication mining activities occurred in Trinidad and Tobago in 2013. AIQ an affiliate company of Cambridge Analytica, allegedly worked with the United National Congress party to defeat the incumbent People’s National Movement in the 2013 local government elections. Specifically, the company used ‘micro targeting’ to create the ‘Do So’ campaign aimed at building apathy amongst Afro-Trinbagonian youth voters. This targeted messaging relied on the collection of individuals’ internet browsing data without their consent in order to profile their attributes. Whistle-blower Christopher Wylie, Cambridge Analytica’s former Director of Research, told the House of Commons that the data acquisition in Trinidad and Tobago was illegal and that there was “total disregard for the law”. The absence of data protections in Trinidad and Tobago made it easier for Cambridge Analytica to

harvest data and manipulate voter behavior in secret. Ironically, there was a Data Protection Act 2011 that governed the use of personal information by public and private bodies but the only parts of the Act in operation were the general privacy principles and the sections establishing the Office of the Information Commissioner. Regrettably, the investigative powers of the Information Commissioner were not yet in force. Barbados like several other Caribbean SIDS has still not seen the necessity to create and design meaningful Freedom of Information Acts, Data Protection Acts or integrity legislation even though there have been politically expedient debates.



Photograph courtesy of Unknown Author

Here in Barbados the voters list indiscreetly went viral. Official indifference to this occurrence was based on a groundless argument that the voters list would have been available in public spaces anyway, so a viral pdf was the same thing. How tort! Commercial enterprises here in their right minds would have seen this list as an information bonanza. Rather than having to pay large sums to a data mining company to

have access to such data it was provided like an *a la carte* menu choice list. Like Twitter and Facebook, they can use such lists to refine their targeted social advertising campaigns, in a practice known as Real-Time Bidding (RTB). This clandestine approach has caught the attention of privacy regulators in the OECD as it involves collecting highly sensitive personal data and sharing it with third parties, usually without an adequate assessment of security risks. We can say more about how simplistic a view it was to see the viral pdf of this file as merely a technical glitch. Contained in the universal voters list were the names of professionals who work in highly dangerous jobs such as the investigation of narco-trafficking crimes and must contain utmost discretion. That their personal information was put at risk with no one to support them in case of transgressions against them is sub-optimal. Recently, according to the major local dailies in Barbados, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) suffered a cybersecurity incident on its Internet network. Reports from the dailies more than likely prepared by the strategists, communicated an ambiguous message to the public: “a number of areas appear to have been affected, and as a result, there will be disruptions and delays in services”. Barbadian society was left with the glib message that the hospital was “taking all necessary precautions to protect the integrity of our *systems and patient privacy*”. In essence we were to believe “we got this!”

Likewise, a recently “self-administered survey” (this is all it can be called since to this date the veracity of claims surrounding the administration of this survey and the reasons why, are all testable hypotheses only Jessica Fletcher of *Murder she Wrote* fame can verify) by students at secondary schools breached every ethical value one can imagine. Vociferous and opinionated student advocates as well as officials remained silent and/or ambivalent and for sure the society will never know exactly how the information collected will be used and for what purposes.



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These instances need repeating for those with selective memories and for those who refuse to see network interoperability and what it portends for not only cybersecurity as a facet of digital government, but the more involved and complicated architecture of digital governance. There are viable reasons to highlight these challenges that call for an urgent change in approach. And so, the public’s concern regarding cybersecurity is a top risk-agenda item because of its significant *uncertain* effects to national economies.

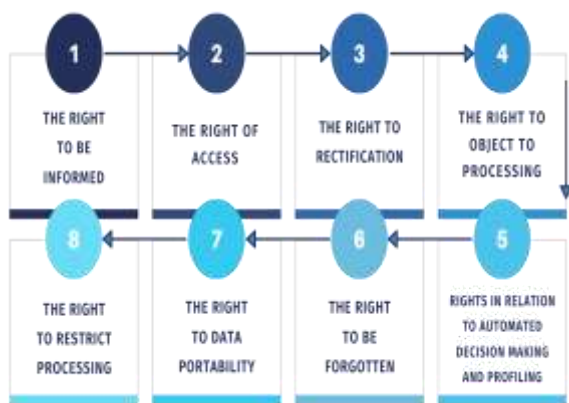
For individuals, the proliferation of passwords, security-patch updates, and interdependency between devices makes hacks of personal data more and more likely. Across the globe various institutions are committing substantial resources towards developing and evolving solutions for enhanced data protection frameworks at the domestic, regional and global levels. Engaging civil society experts and academia is needed more than ever if Barbados and the region truly care about the creation of a CARICOM Single Market and Economy. In this instance, market intelligence determined by access to information forms the bedrock of a well-functioning market. The need for a well-designed and securely encrypted national ID card therefore goes beyond the boundaries of Barbados because they will be used as an identifier across the region. Through data sharing it will provide access to widespread databases amongst public and private sector organizations if this regional objective is fulfilled. This is ultimately true of any other e-initiative.

Safety can be under pressure when people are not very careful or more often when they do not pay attention, when systems are designed in flawed ways, and/or when other people have bad intentions. Of course, one hundred percent safety (and security) usually cannot be guaranteed neither online nor offline, but this does not mean that the government and private actors should not strive for safety and security in the

“abundance of caution”. Decrying aspects of civil society as disruptive antagonists for advancing dialogue towards building sophisticated cybersecurity services is egregious. After all, one of the pervading issues throughout the interface between humans and technology is the human inability to understand and keep pace and engage in all the permutations of technological inventiveness.

Regrettably, rather than the head of the Democratic Labour Party advancing a socio-legal analysis of the prognosis of embedding complex digital artefacts in a dilatory regulatory human rights environment, his plainchant according to one newspaper was “Don’t get the national ID cards”. Why? We wait for a sequel. In essence, the blind spots regarding the legal issues related to the violations of rights resulting from new technologies that raise questions on the extent to which sophisticated data analytics interferes with someone’s privacy were ignored. Nor did he give any commentary on the extent to which risk profiling is potentially discriminatory against particular groups of people. He also said nothing on matters relating to conflicting rights resulting from new technologies and the extent to which someone may be wiretapped (privacy interest) for the purpose of criminal investigation (security interest). No mention was made of the extent to which someone may insult a religion (freedom of religion versus freedom of speech). Moreover, there

was no discussion from him on the legal praxis in the use of new technologies, for which no rights exist yet. For example, the ‘right to be forgotten’, sometimes referred to as the ‘right to oblivion’, incorporated since 2018 in Article 17 of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Then there is a (theoretical, non-existing) ‘right to anonymity’. It is not difficult therefore to imagine why he too shall pass.



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Seen from this perspective, over-emphasizing technical cybersecurity often leads policy makers and state authorities to neglect protection of values, citizens’ trust and confidence, non-maleficence, and privacy in rolling out the digital infrastructure. Thus, it is equally important that cybersecurity supports the protection of values, which often carries complex relationships some of which may be supportive and others conflicting, depending on context. For example, while cybersecurity is in most cases a precondition to protect data and thus the privacy of people, it may also make private information more accessible to cybersecurity experts looking to detect malicious activities. Understanding this and

other value dilemmas is imperative, not only to protect but in a plethora of ethical issues such as ‘ethical hacking’, dilemmas of holding back ‘zero day’ exploits, weighting data access and data privacy in sensitive health data, or value conflicts in law enforcement raised by encryption algorithms. If such issues are discussed it is in isolation and without an integrative view on the ethics of digital governance. A NVA qualifies structural governance and structural governance may be, but does not have to be, designed to deliver, or support norms.

Simultaneously, we must focus very precisely on the paradoxical tensions associated with accountability as governments try to improve digital governance capacity contacts between the state, the private sector and civil society. The issue becomes how those working in digital governance genuinely understand the business of “governance.” Obsession with accountability through imposing standards and rules can reinforce public officials to be extremely risk averse—by creating more rules (of what not to do), and more codes (of minimal standards) (Broome, 2021). If their view of governance is state-centric then there is no future in promoting government accountability to citizens, even though “accountability” is the new rhetoric. If, however, government truly understands digital governance to be a textured, embedded, networked process in which citizens and government officials argue,

bargain, and, sometimes agree then citizens holding governments accountable will be seen as a fundamental part of their agenda. Promoting accountability of governments to their own citizens will then have a secure future with potentially useful development outcomes.



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Remember me Lord

by Wasim Worrell
Research Assistant and PhD Candidate

Introduction

The oldest-old, defined by the United Nations (2015) as aged 80 plus, are the fastest growing group amongst older adults aged 60 plus, with their population estimated to triple to 434 million worldwide in 2050. While disability, predicted by chronic disease, depression, and cognitive impairment, can be a dynamic process in older adults, in the oldest-old deterioration is more common than improvement (van Houwelingen et al., 2014). Healthy aging can enable additional years in good health (Gilbert, Hagerty, & Taggart, 2012). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) calls for more research into the enablement of healthy aging, i.e. ‘the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age’ (p. 228).

Additionally, the quality of life of older adults with physical disabilities is affected

not only by social dimensions, such as relationships and social roles, but also by the control they have over their lives (Tribble, & Desrosiers, 2009). Older adults with physical disabilities that have relationships, social roles, and control over their lives reported having higher quality of life than those older adults with physical disabilities without these things (Friedman 2019).

Mueller et al., (2023) posits that health care professionals, among others, are very concerned about the quality of care provided in nursing homes, yet we know so little about the resident’s perception of their quality of life in those settings. Many vital questions are still unanswered.

- What does it mean for an older person to live in a long-term caring facility?
- Can a person actively shape his or her life in a nursing home despite limitations and dependencies?
- How do old people actually cope in institutions?
- What are the personal attributes or the environmental factors that influence modes of coping and adaptation?

Within social gerontology, research using qualitative methods has provided important insights into a range of topics including retirement (Moffatt & Heaven, 2017), sexual relationships (Hinchliff, Tetley, Lee, & Nazroo, 2018), suffering (Black &

Rubinstein, 2004), dementia (Van Gennip, Pasman, Oosterveld-Vlug, Willems, & Onwuteaka-Philipsen, 2016), active ageing (Phoenix & Bell, 2018; Tulle & Phoenix, 2015), and independence (Hillcoat-Nallétamby, 2014) to name but a few.

Some carers have for too long tended to focus on weaknesses, problems, losses, or unmet needs of the elderly, and therefore have forgotten that old people are old survivors (Golander, 1987, p. 192). The elderly has succeeded in reaching old age because of their strengths and their ability to cope with stressors and changes throughout their long lives.

The purpose of this brief is to reveal the active role that old and physically challenged residents are able to play in shaping their everyday lives while living in a long-term care facility in Barbados. The data that are presented were collected by the author during a one-year period, using the anthropological fieldwork approach.

Review of Literature

Review of the extensive literature on long-term institutionalization of the aged reveals that findings reflect the negative effects that institutionalization has on such residents (Luppa et al., 2010). The relocation process itself is often perceived as a stressor as well as the quality of care provided inside Institutions (Runcan, 2012). Institutionalization is often associated with, if

not accused of, high mortality and morbidity rates of aged residents. Institutionalization is also associated with the residents' increased disorientation, helplessness, disengagement, depression, and depersonalization (de Medeiros 2020).

A different picture has been described by Kayser-Jones (2009) who compared two long-term care institutions for the aged. Using the anthropological fieldwork method, she concluded that institutionalization by itself does not necessarily bring despair, low morale, or depersonalization. In one of the facilities, she found residents who were happy and fulfilled in spite of their disability and institutionalization, she therefore found the exact opposite.

Gubrium (1997), in his enlightening book *Living and Dying at Murray*, unveiled the existence of a social world among residents at a geriatric centre. The author noted that it is a complex world of which the care providers know very little. Tobin and Lieberman (2017) added the dimensions of personality traits and timing to the complexity of adjustment to long term care home environments. Following the latter approach, this research was directed at understanding the complexity of adjusting to long term care home reality by the physically and cognitively disabled residents.

Data Analysis and Findings

Close acquaintance with the resident:

revealed a unique and dynamic world that an outsider paying a short visit could neither notice nor appreciate. This world has its norms, sanctions, and taboos, its own social hierarchy, coalition formations, cliques, rivalries and competition. It has its social order as well as its chaos. There is a great deal of activity, under the guise of passivity. What seems to the outsider as aimless behaviour or daydreaming is merely a cover for a rich, alive world. I would like to shed light on another layer of this hidden world of nursing home residents, a world that consists of their reality and the wide array, of survival and coping strategies.

The core dilemma faced by residents

The ethnographic material revealed that the physically residents had four major concerns they had to overcome. Not only did each concern contain a paradoxical element within itself, but often contradiction arose among the interrelated concerns. The four major concerns identified were:

1. How to achieve fast relief from physical discomfort in a situation of continual discomfort.
2. How to maintain a balanced relationship with staff, fellow residents, and family members in an institutionalized and prescribed living arrangement.
3. How to retain a sense of independence and self-uniqueness in a state of dependence and collectiveness.
4. How to make time pass in a meaningful way, while acknowledging their

own finitude.

Physical discomfort is a common occurrence among the residents during the day and night. Many experienced persistent pain, sensations of numbness or itching, burning, pressure, urinary urgency or shortness of breath. Relief of physical discomfort becomes, therefore, their main concern. The major resources to fulfil these urgent needs are the staff, residents themselves and occasional visitors. A great deal of the residents' time, energy, and effort is invested in searching for way to avoid discomfort or minimize its effect.

During this brief I will illustrate several strategies that residents use to fulfil their basic needs. To achieve this goal without jeopardizing the relationship with the staff or affecting the self-image of residents is a complicated task. As we will see, it demands that the resident be able to problem solve and engage in decision-making, have the ability to negotiate and employ tactics needed to meet their needs. Pseudonyms are used in this study.

Coping Strategy

The first survival strategy residents use is to study their own bodies carefully and serve them patiently and skilfully by acknowledging posture, functions and limitations, body time, and body signals.

For Fitzherbert, a 65-year-old hemiplegic male, the "exact and right" position of his paralyzed leg could make the difference

between unbearable pain combined with trembling of his whole body or rest and comfort. It is only natural for him to spend most of his time planning, calculating, and guarding his legs from fellow table partners or a new nurse's careless movement. An outsider might judge this behaviour as "doing nothing" or "daydreaming"; whereas, in fact, he is very busy doing what is crucial and meaningful to him.

Rebecca, an 87-year-old-woman in a progressive state of rheumatoid arthritis, has the same dilemma every day after lunch. "What will be better for me? Should I take a nap now and rest my back or maybe it will be better to have a good night's sleep for a change?" Building a daily schedule and changing it constantly according to unexpected occurrences is another active survival technique.

Another example is Rose, an 82-year-old hemiplegic woman who recently lost her daughter in a road traffic accident. She is one of the few "fortunate people" in the ward because she is able to use the toilet without help, except for a walker. She has learned that it takes her more time to get to the bathroom in the afternoons when she is tired and on days she gets "water pills," then she really has to rush to stay dry. Rose is well aware of her body functions and adapts her activities accordingly.

Sometimes studying one's body signs and

symptoms can be a difficult and ambiguous task, as it is for Veronica. Veronica is severely restricted by rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, and duodenal ulcers caused by years of steroid treatments. "This pressure I feel" she told me, "I really don't know what it means. If I ask to be taken to the toilet again and again with no results, I will bother the workers, but also hate to think what might happen if I am mistaken and it turn to be not just a pressure."



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Studying their own bodies as opponents as well as friends is necessity for the disabled residents. They become prisoners of their own bodies, which have to be served constantly. They memorize the "right" postures and positions that agree with their bodies. They learn the body's signs and signals, its limitations, and its possibilities. They plan their daily, hourly, or momentary schedule according to their bodies demands. New and imaginative strategies have to be discovered to maintain control of their bodies, disabled as they are.

Planning one's actions carefully is another

widespread and useful survival technique. Careful decision making involves attending to the environmental assessment: weighing help requests, including amount, manner, timing, and person; and regulating resources. The residents use attentive listening and observation techniques. All information might have relevance for them. If a nursing aide calls in sick, they might not get the appropriate attention. Listening and observing also provide some interest and good topics for conversation. Attentive listening is often misinterpreted as passivity or endless waiting, whereas it is in fact, a vital survival skill.

The residents need to ask for help for many of their daily activities. Careful planning is practiced deciding when to ask, for which kind of service to ask and from whom, and what is the right manner of asking for help. Residents must also weigh whether it is not wiser at times to rely on their own limited capabilities or just to give up. This process takes present and future costs and rewards into consideration.

Careful planning is also needed in regulating one's scarce resources concerning material goods. "What are they serving for dinner tonight? Should I open my last pack of biscuits?" Benjamin, who is 82 years old, drinks proteins shake twice a day. He counts his remaining bottles again and again with his shaking parkinsonian hand. He has to be certain that his daily rate of consumption

does not exceed the rate of protein shake supply.

The new supply is expected to arrive only with his son's next visit. Although his son visits every week, the exact day of the visit always remains a puzzle for Benjamin. The uncertain variable poses a great difficulty and often makes the careful rationing of his shake useless.

For the physically challenged residents, these decisions are important and deserve systematic assessment and planning. Careful appraisal is needed to make choices and regulate resources for decision making processes.

Avoiding unnecessary dependence in an important survival strategy for residents. The residents know from their own experience that dependency demands its own dues. Being in an independent role, they to maximize their potential and rely first of all on themselves. Veronica has a specially designed glass that enable her to drink her morning coffee by herself. A friend skilfully added plastic bottle cap to radio's button so that she can listen to music without asking for help.

Institutions are often blamed for their rigid routines. But from the residents' viewpoint, there is some blessing in routine. If supper is served every day at five O'clock, it means that there is something, nice to look forward

to. It also means that there is no need to negotiate “ask for favours if something will be given anyhow”.

Some of the more influential residents succeed in incorporating their special wishes and desires into the nursing aide’s daily routine. Debra, an eighty-six-year-old woman who has been in this ward since its opening, is well known for her achievements in that respect. She receives one glass of milk with one glass of juice at every meal without even asking or reminding. She is also the first one to be taken to the shower every day.

If a newly admitted resident or inquisitive researcher dares question this arrangement, he or she always gets the same answer: “Because this is how it has always been.” The example of Debra illustrates successful management, where a resident’s establishment of a routine makes repeated negotiation unnecessary.

The strategy of strengthening relationships with helpers involves coalition formation and reinforcing staff. Although the former strategy extracts a great deal of influential energy, the coalition formation strategy is the more widespread mode of coping. The relationships between the residents and staff were not found to be unidimensional between “residents” and “care providers” but rather of a multidimensional nature.

Residents reinforce the staff by using

negative or positive reinforcement. They threaten to report a nursing aide to the head nurse, complain or praise individuals during family visits. They ignore or show personal interest in the nursing aides’ family lives. They can withhold or give small presents. In fact, the residents and their families have an active role in shaping their social atmosphere. The webbing of personal relationships between residents and staff gives a better assurance that help will be delivered when needed.

Another coping strategy in avoiding dependency is to be able to lower aspirations to match diminished capabilities. Most of the residents use this strategy to different degrees. The process of lowering aspiration. Could best be illustrated by the following example.



Photograph courtesy of Unknown Author

Lionel a religious old man who has a wife and five children, shared his feelings with me on the spirit of Christmas and attending Church. “I prefer to stay here,” he said, “Certainly, I miss the Church and things like

taking communion. I used to go home for Christmas and go to Church. I loved going to the park at Christmas, but I get tired very easily now. I cannot use the toilet at home. On my last visit at home I was too excited. I got an awful asthma attack. They did not know what to do. I spoiled their holiday, and I was sick myself for two weeks. They all invited me to come, you know, they begged me to come. No, I'd rather stay here. Yes, now it is better for me to be here."

Cecil is 73-year-old male with a catheter in situ. He used his ability to move around unassisted as a position of authority – he portrays himself as "the go-to man". His ability to read without spectacles was also noticeable and Cecil realized that it helped him to relate and interact with other patients and staff in a way that he thought was superior to the others on the ward. He received the Sunday paper from the ward sister and listened to the call-in programmes on the radio. Cecil loves ballroom dancing and does not mind displaying a few moves. An old receipt book is not only a reminder of the jobs he did as a taxi driver. He is quick to point out the \$500-dollar jobs that he did and other perks he gained as a driver but in his receipt book he also records his blood pressure and when his catheter is to be changed. He reflects that everything is all gone now. Everything he had. He still however, takes pride in a role he has been given to be an extra pair of ears and eyes for the other patients. He also acknowledges that

he helps others to be more mobile when they come to the hospital by encouraging them to wheel around the ward in their wheel chairs as part of their exercise routines. He speaks in a low tone now and said, "make sure you speak to that one in the corner. He has a bad mind."

I observed that as I interviewed him, others became upset, to which he replied, "Not many of them have any sense now, they are all like dummies, but I don't blame anyone for being here. I have lived my life. I am just waiting to die now."



Photograph courtesy of Unknown Author

Charles is a 65-year-old double amputee and he is fed up. He says he has had enough of it and commented, "I hate it in here, the food is awful, and the treatment is bad, what I am doing here among these old people? I am a young man; I should not be here. The [government] minister told me that he was going to fix my house with a ramp and a toilet and bath. A lady came with a white paper... it's my fault, I did not read it. I thought she was taking me somewhere different. I can't stay here. I admit my

problem was alcohol, but still this is worse than death. My mother is down below, my father is down below, my sister and brother are down below, what is left for me? Some days I don't feel like doing anything. I hate it here."

He shows me his cell phone slipped a cell phone number to me while saying, "Please help me get out of here. Don't tell the nurses, because they don't help. They don't know anything about me."

Conclusion

It is not easy for a person to be elderly, sick, and disabled or to reside in an institutional setting. Just coping with simple daily activities demands a great deal of strength, persistence, patience, and ingenuity. It also demands being able to deal with the awareness of one's decreased capabilities, regression, and despair.

During the data collection period I went through a unique and enriching experience that made me realize the tremendous strengths embodied in these people. For me, in a paradoxical way, staying with the disabled aged was not a lesson of weakness and pity, but a lesson of courage and admiration for these people and many of their care givers.

The purpose of this brief was to describe the active role disabled aged have in shaping their lives in an institutional environment. This, however, does not deny the existence

of hopelessness or passivity in some of the people, some of the time. The intention of this brief was to emphasise that ignoring the dynamic role of the aged is not only an under estimation of older people, but is also an inaccurate perception of reality.



Photograph courtesy of Unknown Author

On one of my last visits to the ward, Beryl asked me if I had already chosen a name for my research. I asked her if she could recommend a title that would best represent their present lives. Beryl concentrated for a moment and said, "Remember me Lord"

In a reality some patients felt abandoned by family and only having God to cry out to. People learn to rely on themselves. Health professionals are by no means substitutes for God, however, those who care for others should be aware of the tremendous influence that every word, gesture, or action has on our clients, for better or for worse. We can bring relief to their physical discomfort. We can communicate warmth, caring and respect. We can help them pass time in a meaningful way and create small joys. It is on the basis of older people's strengths and not only on their weaknesses that we have to plan

interventions in health and social care.

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Exploring initiatives to reduce knife assaults amongst youth

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Introduction

Youth violence has increased globally recently (Haylock et al., 2020). The use of knives to cause murder or serious bodily harm has also increased steadily over the last 5 years (WHO report 2022).

Interpersonal violence is among the third leading causes of death in adolescents and young people 15-19 years old globally (National Centre for Health Statistics 2019). Its prominence varies substantially by region. However, it causes nearly a third of all adolescent male deaths in low- and middle-income countries in the Americas (WHO Report 2022).

On the 13 January 2023 the Nation Newspaper reported that a male student of the Frederick Smith Secondary School was

stabbed during an altercation near the school. Police said the altercation involved two 15-year-old boys. One of the boys received injuries to his back, face, and shoulder.

In Barbados on the 2nd December 2022 the Nation Newspaper reported a stabbing incident at the Parkinson Secondary School. Prior to that incident on the 11th of October 2022 there was an altercation between two male students which took place just miles away at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology (a tertiary level institution). That incident left one of them with stab wounds to his abdomen and neck.

The previous year there was a stabbing death at the Frederick Smith Secondary School November 8, 2019. Two students, a 15-year-old and a 16-year-old, were involved in a fight. The 16-year-old student died on the spot.

What is this a problem?

Interpersonal violence among young people occurs in the community, in the streets, in schools, at work, at entertainment venues and in institutions and homes (WHO report 2022). The consequences are devastating, leading to the loss of 15 000 young lives annually. Young people who survive must cope with terrible physical and emotional scars (Mock and Arai, 2011).

The burden of violence is distributed unequally across the Caribbean and Latin

America Region, both between and within countries, with deprived populations having a far greater share. According to the (WHO report 2010), the costs to society are enormous, as millions of young people require the services of health, criminal justice, education and social welfare departments every year and may be unable to work and lead productive lives.

Violence among young people cannot be the responsibility of the youth alone, as it is a product of social, biological, cultural and economic factors. The root causes of violence are frequently impacted by socioeconomic determinants, and several manifest in childhood. However, studies Evidence suggests that organized responses by society can prevent violence among young people (Haylock et al., 2020).

The experience accumulated in several countries in the Region and worldwide show that sustained and systematic approaches that address the underlying causes of violence can make countries safer (WHO Report 2010).

But why are young people are carrying knives?

Weapon-carrying among young people is associated with increased involvement in physical fighting and a greater likelihood of being seriously injured among those who do fight (Lowry et al., 1998). Carrying a weapon may give young people the courage to go to places that they may otherwise avoid or embolden them to fight (WHO Report 2010).

Although not exhaustive, below are some common factors known to influence young people to carry knives:

- Gang affiliation – protection/status
- Fear of crime – being attacked/self-protection
- Victim of bullying – self-protection
- Peer pressure – perception that most young people carry knives.

Buss & Abdu, (1995) notes that the common factor is the ‘vicious circle’ some young people find themselves in, for example – in gang affiliation, it is an expectation to be armed. ‘Fear or be feared’ ‘live or die’ – regarding fear of crime and believing ‘I need to defend myself’ highlights the absence of consequential thinking and disregard for the fact that they are committing a crime to prevent a crime which is not a defence in law. In addition, they run the risk of the knife they carry being used on them in a confrontation or causing injury to themselves (Richardson et al., 2016).

The biggest concern and risk is that if a young person carries a knife they will almost definitely use it in situations where they feel the need to protect themselves, commit a crime, cause fear or reinforce their status/reputation (Pickett et al., 2005).

The need to better understand what is effective in preventing knife assaults is widely recognized by stakeholders working

in this field (Haylock et al.,2020).

This Brief is based on a synthesis of a literature review which was recently conducted to explore some of the initiatives that were put in place globally over the last five years to combat knife assaults among school age students 10-19 years.

Key facts	
+	Young males are at significantly increased risks of involvement in violence among young people and knife-related violence, particularly those who engage with delinquent peers.
+	Children who suffer adverse experiences in childhood are more vulnerable to becoming involved in violence and weapon-carrying in adolescence.
+	Exposure to other forms of violence and fear of violence in schools and the community also increases young people's risk of involvement in violence among young people and knife-related violence.
+	Income and social inequality and deprivation are strong risks for violence.
+	Alcohol and drug use are strongly related to violence and weapon-carrying.

WHO report 2022.

Why is this an issue?

Many explanations have been mooted to explain the upsurge in knife assaults (Phillip et al.,2022). The escalation in knife carrying has also been highlighted in academic and policy journals, as perceived insecurity (Traynor, 2016) and absence of faith in policing or the authorities to protect them (Brennan, 2019).

Although knife assaults are described as a new epidemic in some countries, e.g. UK

(see Independent News Paper 2019), there is a lack of research analysing programmes geared towards the prevention of knife assaults among the youth. This has caused the media to report that there is no coherent or tactical approach to confront this growing problem (Haylock et al., 2020). So,

What can be done to stymie the escalation of knife crime and knife carrying in Barbados?

This brief is based on a systematic review in November 2022 and combines evidence, from published literature, on knife assault prevention. It aims to provide essential evidence on the initiatives that have been used to reduce knife assaults worldwide within the last 5 years.

Findings from the systematic literature review

The results of this analysis are organised into ten themes: Knife surrender initiatives/ amnesties, sport diversion programmes, community educational interventions, police use of stop and search, use of art as an anti-knife crime initiative, simulation to decrease knife crime, teachable/reachable moments, the use of metal detectors, sentencing and public health approach.

Knife amnesties

Firstly, we will look at knife amnesties. Usually, these interventions target weapons that may be used to inflict injury or harm in a violent act but do not address the reasons why such violence occurs. Gaffney et al.,

(2022) explain that an individual may surrender a weapon, but without addressing the reasons for carrying that weapon (e.g., protection, fear, malicious intent), the individual may procure another weapon and proceed to take part in violence. This observation supports the view that removing a percentage of knives (while important) does little to address young person's decision to carry knives and that knife amnesties do not reveal anything about motivation (Eades et., al 2007,p. 27).



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The desired outcome of such initiative is therefore limited. Gaffney et al (2022) argue that knife surrender initiatives are often implemented by police forces in the UK, yet data shows that these are of limited effectiveness, especially in the long term (McNeill & Wheller, 2019; Metropolitan Police, 2019).

The use of Metal Detectors

Part of the draw of metal detectors is their visibility — they are a symbolic barrier that signal the presence of security. Whether these devices are effective in deterring or preventing violence remains questionable.

While anecdotal evidence suggests that metal detectors are effective at screening out weapons at schools (see, for example, Algar, 2016; Corcoran, 2015), there is a lack of accurate statistics to support the claims. However, the human element seems to be the most important factor contributing to how effective metal detectors are (or are not), as with other types of school security (Daniels, Royster, & Vecchi, 2007).

Metal Detectors and Perceptions of Safety at School

Another concern related to the use of metal detectors must be the potential impact that the presence of such devices has on students and the learning environment as a whole. On one hand, metal detectors provide visual evidence that something is being done to address security at school. On the other hand, some have argued that the presence of these devices may unintentionally be sending the wrong message to students and others in the school community (Hankin, Hertz, & Simon, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2016; Winn, 2018). In fact, several researchers have found that students report feeling less safe in schools where metal detectors are present, compared to students in schools without such devices (Cornell, 2015; Gastic, 2011; Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013). Similarly, students are more likely to perceive that the school is an unsafe environment (Mayer & Leone, 1999). Questions have also been raised as to whether it is “legally right” to use metal detectors in schools, with some researchers

suggesting that searches using these devices infringe upon 'students' rights (Berger, 2002; Nance, 2014).

A Public Health Approach

By using a multi-faceted collaborative approach, professionals and law enforcement can help diagnose underlying causes and work towards a solution (Brenner, 2022). This initiative encompasses broad-based social interventions to improve living conditions, improve both actual and perceived social mobility, and modify environmental contributors to anti-social behaviour. Examples and evidence base: The Medellin project (Columbia): Improvements in buildings, transport, street-lighting and police access in communities were delivered in deprived communities. Homicide rates declined by 66% and resident-reported attitudes to the community improved significantly. According to Hagel (2019), public health offers a useful framework for assisting us to understand how we should target our resources if we want to decrease youth knife assaults.

Wood (2019) also argue that it is a promising route to reducing gang violence and youth violence by focusing on the individual, root causes. Additionally, with the collaboration of social welfare, violence prevention, and community engagement this produces one of the most positive results.

Key findings from the College of Policing

Knife Crime Evidence Briefings show that motivations and other factors involved in knife crime/ assaults vary by the individual and that a tailored approach to violence reduction may be necessary to see a decrease in knife carrying and assaults among young people (Mc Neil et al 2019).

Police stop and Search

On the other hand, Police stop-and-search can have significant consequences (Vomfell and Stewart 2021). Brenner (2022) observed that while stop-and-search practices may be temporarily beneficial in confiscating a sharp object/weapon, it is ineffective in the long term. Moreover, it has been described as one of the most invasive interactions that the public has with the police (Kaylan and Keeling 2019). This has led to constant debate over the use of the police power and the possible detrimental effect of its use. Stop and search that are discriminate and seek to target only certain individuals are known to impact adversely police-community relations (Ali and Champion 2021). Overall, the utilisation of stop and search appears to have a slightly positive impact on levels of some types of crime (Nickolls and Allen 2022). In fact, stop and search may be more useful in detecting illicit items (e.g. illegal drugs) rather than its use as a deterrent against knife assault, but still, most searches result in officers not discovering any items (National Statistics Police Power and procedures 2021).

Sports programmes

Regarding sports initiatives, Jugl et al., (2021) observe that specific sports programmes geared towards positive youth development and the prevention of crime are being frequently employed. Endresen and Olweus (2005) suggest that some sports programmes like boxing wrestling and rugby actually increased levels of violence in youths. Other studies have revealed the opposite, that boxing for instance, despite being naturally aggressive and combative offers a healthy channel for those who are prone to acts of extreme violence (Woodhead et al., 2019).

Sport has been identified as being a “vehicle for change” (Crabbe, 2009), in reducing knife related crime and interpersonal violence amongst young people. Engagement in sport may help young people keep busy with a positive distraction, and can give them a greater sense of control, direction and respect (Agnew, 2013).

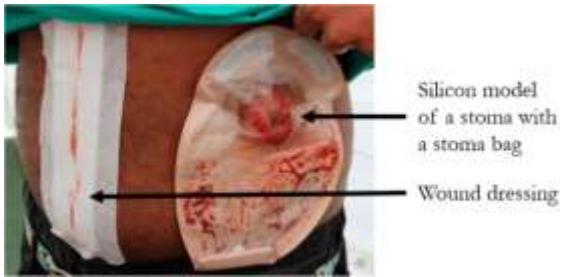
Sports initiatives are usually coupled with educational programmes to support young people to make wiser decisions. One drawback identified by McNeal and Wheller (2019), is that though these initiatives may help divert young people away from knife crime they are seldom evaluated or a prolonged period.

Reachable moment

Other publications reviewed focused on vulnerable/ reachable moments. This is done by concentrating on the moment when individuals may be more reflective and questioning the circumstances, behaviour and decisions that caused them to be hospitalised or detained by the police because of an attack. Specialist youth workers also engage with victims to help them to reflect on their actions and try to help youth involved in knife assaults and knife carrying to make meaningful changes (Red Thread, 2019). Similarly, Wortley and Hagell (2020) believe that collaborations with young people in the emergency department (ED) at the time of injury present a chance for screening and intervention to lessen the risk of repeat attendance.

Simulation of knife assaults

Tribe et al, (2018) used workshops to engage two groups of youngsters who were at risk of being involved in knife crime. Sequential simulation and distributed simulation were the methods used to depict the journey of a youngster who is stabbed in the abdomen and had to be assisted by policemen and paramedics. In the second phase, participants witness a simulated emergency abdominal operation on a silicone model. The session concludes with a chat with the surgeon and the mother of the victim (who due to the knife injury now needs an intestinal stoma).



The next segment of the workshop entailed further conversations which relate to the impact that knife assaults can have on the participant the patient and those in the community.



A photograph taken at the first workshop showing the abdominal operation in progress with the operating theatre team (including participants) dressed in blue, observed by the participants.

The use of creative Arts

A similar approach was utilised by Gilbert & Sinclair (2019) however they incorporated the use of creative Arts as an anti-knife-crime initiative. This initiative aimed to reduce the number of young persons who are likely to carry a knife and to reduce the number who felt carrying a knife was a means of ensuring their safety. Secondly, they aimed to reduce the number of young persons who assumed that using a knife only affected the individual carrying out the violent act. The third goal of this programme was to increase the number of people who

would do something if they were aware of somebody who was carrying a knife. This study also revealed that anti-knife sessions in secondary school can raise the awareness of pupils concerning the dangers of carrying a knife or other weapons and in addition, it can increase the confidence needed to negotiate a safer course of action for themselves and their peers which could lead to a safer family and local communities, (Gilbert and Sinclair 2019).

Sentencing and Correctional Facilities

Lastly, Halliday et al (2021), posit that sentencing continues to be challenging especially in determining ‘what degrees of punishment produce what amounts of overall deterrence’, and longer-term evaluation is needed to analyse the effect of custodial sentences on knife assaults. For juveniles (10–18 years), imprisonment as an intervention has been linked to a considerable rise in reoffending, whereas non-custodial punishments like community supervision with victim reparation, community surveillance and aftercare have been more successful (Marsh et al., 2009). Data also indicate that educational achievement is lower for youngsters who are charged with possession of a knife, (Ministry of justice UK, 2018). Research also reveals that with youngsters who use weapons, there is an increased risk associated with serious violent crimes and further use of weapons as they go into adulthood (McNeil and Wheller, 2019).

Conclusion

Knife assault among the school age population is a complicated social problem which cannot be solved by a single agency, a single intervention or, arguably, a single approach (WHO report 2022). The number of knife assaults among young people is increasing globally according to (Smart-Akande, 2022) and tackling the complexity associated with it is not likely to be easily resolved. However, in the interim, anti-knife initiatives form part of a critical step towards decreasing it.

The range of risk factors and motivations indicate that knife assault and weapon carrying cannot be solved by criminal justice measures alone. Strong conclusions about what works to reduce knife crime are difficult to draw due to the lack of robust evaluations of programmes and interventions (Silvestri, 2009).

As stated earlier, most interventions have not been subject to evaluations, or, where evaluations have taken place, these have been limited in scope. However, the best available evidence suggests the most effective approaches tend to be multi-faceted and involve prevention at the earliest opportunity and multi-agency collaborative working. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the value of public health approaches to addressing violence (Bellis and others, 2012), for example in Scotland.

Public health approaches require collaboration from different fields and multi-agency involvement in ‘diagnosing the problem, analysing underlying causes, examining what works and developing solutions’.

Where stop and search procedures or the use of metal detectors target the individual in confiscating a knife, a public health approach utilises preventative action based on community needs and appears to help young people in rejecting crime involvement (Brenner 2022).

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