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Breaking barriers: An investigation of the communication barriers between the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the residents of Beetham Gardens

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Breaking Barriers:
An Investigation of the Communication Barriers between the members of the Trinidad
and Tobago Police Service and the residents of the Beetham Gardens

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies
of

The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

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Abstract:

The relationship between residents of at -risk Communities and Community Police Officers have often been studied internationally. In such studies both groups are often examined through a sociological lens resulting with barriers such as socio-economic status and race to being identified as reasons behind the “Faulty” relationship.

In light of that, this thesis investigated the communication barriers which exist between the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police service (TTPS) and the residents of the Beetham Gardens Community. As a result of the recent upstage in protest and violence between the two groups, researchers saw it necessary to build upon the ideologies of past international research. Researchers used communication as the focus to define the causes and suggest possible solutions to eradicate the communication barriers occurring between these two groups.

Building on the ideology of Professor Lawrence Frey to “Never reinvent the Wheel” this thesis builds upon the findings of international research done by profound researchers such as M. Ansoosheh , L. Frey and R. Weitzer. This study also employed theoretical assumptions in the definition, casual determination and the process of solution implementation. Theories used include the Uncertainty Reduction Theory by Charles Berger 1975, Conflict theory developed by Karl Marx and The Social Identity theory by John Turner and Henry Tajfel.

Survey interviews and Survey questionnaires were employed to obtain a detailed insight of each parties’ attitude, perception and behaviour toward the other. These methods allowed for a high level of validity in the research findings.

This paper goes beyond just identifying the problems. Using a thematic approach it includes solutions to overcome each discovered barrier, thereby reducing possibilities of police-civilian clashes that frequently occur in this at-risk community. The findings of the research paper has been extended to the business community of Trinidad and Tobago as well as the police service in an attempt to eradicate

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

“Fiery protest as police kill resident”, (Guardian, 2013), “Residents stage protest over police raid”, (Gonzales, 2011), “Violent protests anger CoP” (Doughty, 2013). These are some of the headlines from local newspapers outlining the on-going protest and conflict between residents of the Beetham Gardens and the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS).

The Beetham community is a neighbourhood located in eastern Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. It is known both locally and internationally to be a ‘high crime area’, and has been termed a “hotspot” by Prime Minister Kamla Persad- Bissessar (Trinidad Express, 2011). Moreover, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) is both a civil and quasi-military body which functions in accordance with the Police Service Act Chapter 15:01 (2006). Over 6,500 Police Officers in varying ranks and Special Reserved Police support the mandate of the Service throughout seventy-five (75) Police stations (Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, 2000). Within the police services, there also exists the Inter Agency Task Force which has special protective responsibility to deal with hostile situations. This task force has more direct and regular contact with the residents of the Beetham community than the Police Station assigned to carry out duties in the area.

On June 29th 2011, the Trinidad Express Newspaper issued an article outlining a staged protest in which the Priority Bus Route and the eastbound lane of the highway in the Port of Spain region were blocked by the Beetham residents. The residents claimed that it was done in an attempt to highlight alleged police oppression and brutality that was incurred. The following year, in December 2012, Police Officers stated that residents of the community, in anger, were seen dragging tyres into the centre of the highway lanes claiming that they needed jobs for the upcoming Christmas season. The officers as reported in the Express article claimed that such acts were malicious and selfish. Assertions were proclaimed that the residents were dependent upon the assistance of government rather than

seeking employment. On September 2nd 2013, Police Officers were forced to keep visibility at the community following the shooting to death of a resident. This incident was brought to the forefront and analyzed through a variety of views by all local media houses and citizens. The protest action demonstrated by the residents was compared to that of the attempted coup in 1990 according to the Minister of National Security (Express, 2013). This incident played a significant role in the foundation of this research topic.

Innocent civilians were injured during that week of protest action as stones and debris were thrown into moving vehicles along the highway. As a result, Police Officers along with members of the Inter Agency Task Force were forced to intervene. This intervention however, acted as a catalyst for further conflict between the two parties as residents claimed that officers used extensive amounts of unnecessary force. Contrary to this, the officers claimed that the residents were uncooperative and at times insubordinate.

It can be safely said that conflict is still in existence and the fear of another incident to take place in the near future is evident in the minds of citizens and police officers alike. This conflict between these two groups has left the police officers almost unable to execute their tasks in the vicinity due to the negative relationship they have with the residents. As a result, this community is now a well-known “hotspot” or high crime area as previously stated. It is important to note however that this district is locally and internationally referred to as a red zone area. A United Kingdom tourist website stated that there had been one hundred thousand (100,000) reported cases investigated at the community during the period of September 2012 to September 2013 (United Kingdom Trousim, 2013). Also, spiraling out of the poor communication between the residents and the police, the residents are now stigmatized and feared by many Trinidadians (personal communication, 2013). Thus, they may be deprived of job opportunities as well as charitable opportunities and other social programs geared

towards their social uplifting. This negative perception of the residents is assumed to worsen their chances of improving their social environment.

This research studied the communication barriers between Police Officers and the residents of the Beetham community, in an attempt to understand the causes of these barriers and suggest solutions. Communication barriers are hypothesized to be the main cause for the ongoing disputes between the two entities. This research exposes and eliminates stereotypical views held by both Police Officers and residents, whilst simultaneously attempting to encourage effective communication between the two groups.

Carole Spiers, internationally recognized speaker and successful entrepreneur, outlined in an article that effective communication reduces the incidence of misunderstanding and consequent error. She asserted that it also aids at reducing the opportunity for disharmony, discontent or dissatisfaction, thus, supporting a healthy working culture (Spiers, 1996). Noting the compelling nature of this new evidence, our suggestions were specifically tailored in an attempt to aid in the extinction of the communication barriers between these two entities. In support of this view, this research attempts to help produce a healthier atmosphere for the police officers to carry out their duties and the residents to be accepted as respectable members of society.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective communication between the police and civilians is crucial to maintaining order and peace within a country. Only through communication can civilians voice their concerns and police officers carry out their duties in creating solutions to problems. In light of the conflicts experienced between these two groups, it is essential to expand on a Caribbean perspective of communication barriers between police officers and civilians, specifically the Inter Agency Task Force and residents of an at risk community such as the Beetham Gardens. Previous research done on police-civilian conflict have outlined socio-economic status, language, authoritative power, attitude, race and gender dynamics as common communication barriers. In analyzing these research studies, theoretical concepts such as Uncertainty Reduction, Conflict Theory and Crowd Psychology were used to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied.

Socio-Economic Status

The Beetham Gardens community is known to be a “hotspot” community in Trinidad. In the 2011 State of Emergency, the Honorable Kamla Persad-Bissessar outlined several hotspots throughout the country which she claimed experienced high levels of crime (Trinidad Express, 2011). This community is considered to be one of a low socio-economic class or a socially disadvantaged area. Findings from a study revealed that the higher the socio-economic status of a person, the higher the positive response that person will direct toward Police Officers (Avdija, 2010). Thus, this may explain possible negative perceptions that may be held by residents of the officers. Furthermore, an ethnographic research on police-civilian relationships concluded differences between such relationships in communities of high socio-economic status and of low socio-economic status. Residents of low socio-economic status, according to this report, reflected in their verbal and nonverbal communication, hints of an “us versus them” relationship. In early September 2013, residents staged a protest in which

they burnt debris in an attempt to voice their concerns over the killing of a resident. They expressed their anger, claiming that police officers targeted the resident with intentions of killing him with no reason. The results of the mentioned study manifested in such occurrences in the community where they claim to be targets of the Police Officers, forming an “us and them” relationship. This sort of relationship only further facilitates barriers in the communication between the two entities, which may lead to heightened anger, resistance and even violence.

Language

A research study on nurse-patient communication barriers in Iranian nursing focused on relationships between the public and certain authorities (Anoosheh et al, 2009), similarly to that of this study which focuses on the communication barriers between the public and the police services. The Beetham community as mentioned before is seen as a community of low socio-economic status due to the crime statistics, poverty and poor living conditions. The Police Officers may therefore be seen as belonging to a higher social class. Individuals who belong to a low social class are more susceptible to language incompetence's since they are not exposed to educational opportunities. Even though these two groups spoke the same language, the “unfamiliarity of nurses with dialect” posed problems for effective communication.

On the other hand, the jargon used by the nurses resulted in ambiguities in communication (Anoosheh et al, 2009). The patients and the family may not grasp what was said thus resulting in a hindrance in communication. The conflicting encounters between the police officers and the residents could be as a result of language differences. The dialect used by the civilians to voice their concerns in times of protest can be misunderstood and overlooked by the Police Officers. The dialect used by the residents toward the police may come across as being aggressive since it is something foreign to their culture and they may act through use of force. Each occupation brings along with it, its own jargon. Inversely, the Police Officers may use their specified language expecting the citizens to understand and

abide by what is explained. The residents may interpret it in their cultural code and act by what they know it to be. This meaning they ascribe to what the Police have communicated, both verbally and non-verbally, may contradict what the Police meant.

Authoritative Power

In addition, the social class barrier may also have another perspective on the difficulty of communication between the Police and residents. Social class determines the power that one possesses in society. Findings in the nursing-patient study revealed that the nurses acted with aggression and were unfriendly. Thus it “was attributed to power aspects of nurse-patient interaction” (Park and Song, 2005). The higher the individual’s status, the more power they will act with and in some cases they may abuse this power. In a similar manner the Police have a status of authority over society and may overemphasize their force and status; as such, they appear aggressive and unapproachable. The Inter Agency Task Force more specifically has privileged power in dealing with hostile situations and exercise excessive force in hostile situations among the residents. This power they have, feeds their authoritative ego which may cause residents to feel intimidated. Once residents perceive the officers to have power that may be abused, they will not feel comfortable in interacting with the Police Officers, which results in lack of effective communication and cooperation.

Attitude

The perception that the residents of the Beetham Gardens have of the Police Officers in their police-civilian relationship, affects how they respond to the Officers and how they communicate with them. From positive perceptions of the Police, residents will be able to establish trust and confidence which would lead to effective communication and cooperation between the two. Likewise, the perception that Officers have of the residents will also play a role in the kind of relationship they have and also the extent to which they can effectively communicate with the residents. In order for authorities to gain compliance from community members they have to treat them in ways that

encourage judgments in which procedures are fair, and show that the authorities' motives are benevolent. One main way in which residents would be able to form perceptions of the Police Officers is through direct communication.

As mentioned, the Beetham community is specified as a high crime "hotspot", which more than likely will encounter many Police interactions. The Trinidad Express along with the Guardian and Newsday has multiple articles that mentions frequent police visits to the Beetham community. Based on these interactions, the residents will form their perception which shapes how they will communicate with officers in future interactions. According to Barker et al (2000), one of the most common complaints about the Police's dealings with the public has been that they are guilty of rudeness, arrogance, unfriendliness, and over casual treatment. This notion only widens the gap between the Police and residents and strengthens the "us versus them" preconception. Police have the largest power in changing the attitudes of citizens towards them and as such are to an extent responsible for how the public perceives them (Avdija, 2010). Avdija's study suggest that in order to maintain a positive perception of the police, they have to give respect, use less force against citizens and be polite rather than rude.

Race

Another possible cause of communication barriers is that of race. In noting that the community predominantly consists of residents of African descent, a study entitled Race and Perceptions of Police misconduct reveals that African Americans have significantly negative attitudes and perceptions towards police officers. The study reveals that African Americans have a higher chance of accepting the view that Police Officers use abusive and excessive forces frequently, thus subscribing to the belief that police misconduct is common in their neighbourhood. The overall attitudes and willingness to cooperate with officers are heavily impacted when the majority of a neighbourhood, such as in the Beetham community, holds the view that police officers repeatedly engage in misconduct. This stance

is heightened when the residents themselves are repeatedly victims of mistreatment or have repeatedly heard of instances of such from other residents within their neighbourhood.

Within the three year period of observation in this study (2011 - 2013), residents claimed that Police Officers do in fact mistreat them, more so than other members of the public and other communities. This agrees with the findings of the study which reveal that African Americans are three to five times more likely to believe that misconduct occurs frequently in their community which only strengthens their unwillingness and negativity toward the Police department. If residents of the Beetham community also hold this belief, they will view misconduct in the Police Service as an “institutionalized phenomenon.” This may explain to an extent, why the residents, predominantly consisting of Blacks, may hold negative views of the Police Services and as such inhibit efficient and flowing communication with the officers.

Apart from having experienced or heard of experiences of mistreatment by police officers, this study suggests that media exposure to instances of Police misconduct also has a strong influence in the shaping of each racial group perception of Police Officers. The study states that blacks more so than whites are more interactive with the media, thus they are influenced more by these reports than other races. This exposure to media coverage resonates with their perceptions of neighbourhood crime. This means that in a high crime area such as the Beetham community, residents are more likely to believe that the reality portrayed by the media is similar to the reality in their community. Thus, they are more likely to have a negative attitude to police officers than other racial groups because they believe that police misconduct, as covered by the media, is perpetuated frequently in their neighbourhood.

Gender Dynamics

Another barrier to effective communication is gender. In Iranian culture, touch and gaze with the opposite sex is controlled by cultural and religious beliefs. Therefore a violation of these

beliefs is seen as deterrence to effective communication. In a resident-police officer clash in 2012, the women were seen fighting against male Police Officers rather than female counterparts. They went against the norm of Trinidadian society which may have resulted in a barrier to communication. On the part of the male Police Officers, they too dealt with the women aggressively. The culture of male-female interaction is undermined in this local context. If a female resident had interacted with a female Police Officer the situation might have had a different result. It is evident that the communication barrier such as sex, once disregarded can inhibit clarity in communication.

Theoretical Framework

All relationships or more so interpersonal relationships begin with some level of uncertainty. At the start of every encounter we could never truly predict how our counterpart will react because we are fraught with uncertainties. As such we try to reduce our doubt or increase our predictability of interactions with others. This illustrates the Uncertainty Reduction Theory, Berger 1975, which we used to explain the relationship between the Police Officers and the residents of the Beetham community.

Anticipation of future interaction drives us to reduce uncertainty if we know that we have to interact with a person in the future. For example the residents perceive the Officers as aggressive and hostile due to the first interaction they had. Prior to this first interaction they might have been bombarded with uncertainties. Since they frequently interact with the police officers, uncertainties would be reduced and the residents would be able to predict future interactions with the officers. They may predict that the police officers will behave in the same manner as their first experience and they would behave accordingly.

Some residents claimed that the older police officers treated them with respect but the younger officers do not do so. The residents complained that the younger Police Officers would watch down, talk down and scorn them so when they are in the area the residents predict that they will use excessive

force and will be treated aggressively. Thus they act in accordance to the situation. Some residents said that they tried to stay away from the officers presence so as to avoid any confrontation. Most times they would stay in their homes until the Police left.

Likewise the officers would predict the residents' behaviour and act accordingly. In a Nurse-patient article in Iran the patients made perceptions of the nurses, placing them into the high social class based on their language selection. The nurses did the same, assuming patients to be of a low socio-economic class. As such, they would have already predicted the next encounter. They will anticipate and as such they can make perceptions of each other. Similarly the Beetham residents and the Police Officers make predictions based on language, social class, race or sex which will lead to stereotyping, influencing their behaviour and causing ambiguities in their interaction. This theory aids in understanding the perceptions between these two entities. Thereby giving support to the research question how do the perceptions influence the verbal communication between the certain arm of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Officers and the Beetham Community.

Conflict theory developed by Karl Marx also aids in understanding the reason for the on-going tension and conflict between the police officers and the residents. The basis of Conflict theory is that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to the competition for limited resources. Limited resources create social divisions, classes and hierarchies within society in which resources are unequally distributed (Walsh, 2012). Inequalities can be based on areas such as power, authority, wealth, working and living conditions, life-styles, life-span, education, religion, and culture (Quinney, 1972). It is believed that these inequalities are what trigger conflict. In the Beetham Gardens, it is evident that there is a lack of resources as they lie within the third poorest Regional Corporation in Trinidad (Kairi Consultants Limited, 2005) The inequalities produced in this community, according to Conflict theory Furthermore, can trigger conflict with police officers and in some cases criminal activity. In previous studies it was also seen that low socioeconomic status communities tend to have

deteriorated relationships with police officers who may also be accounted for by their unequal social standing.

According to Richard Quinney crime is an inevitable response to the material conditions of capitalism (Quinney, 1972). Similarly, Karl Marx believes that crime was a product of unjust and alienating social conditions- “the struggle of the isolated individual against the prevailing conditions.”(Walsh, 2012) Based on this belief, Marx developed the notion of alienation which he believes leads to crime and aggressive behaviour by those who are victims of the capitalist system. He explains that non-humans are given an environment in which they are forced to adapt and survive unlike humans who are given the “gift” of creating their own environment rather than submitting to it. However, wage labour has taken this privilege from humans, reducing them to the level of animals; they now have to submit to the environment that they can afford with the wage labour they are given. This “dehumanization” process is claimed to lead to alienation. The working class feels alienated; they feel distanced from something. When they feel alienated from themselves, they become alienated from others in society. Alienated persons may then victimize others and treat them as objects as they themselves feel victimized by the capitalist system (Walsh, 2012). Given the living conditions and lack of resources within the Beetham Gardens, the frequency of criminal activities may be accounted for by the alienation process.

According to Quinney (1972), crime can be divided into two categories; crimes of accommodation or crimes of resistance (Walsh, 2012). On one hand, crimes of the accommodation are predatory crimes, such as burglary, robbery and violent crimes such as murder, assault, and rape committed by those are “brutalized” by capitalism. Crimes of resistance however include both non-revolutionary, unconscious reactions against exploitation and crimes deliberately committed by proletariat as acts of rebellion against capitalism such as alcoholism, destroying property and fighting (Jacobs, 1979). Sociologists believe that social order and conflict is maintained by domination and

power, rather than consensus and conformity. For them, the law is not a neutral system designed to protect everyone, but rather a tool used by the bourgeoisies to criminalize acts that are contrary to their interests (Walsh, 2012). As such, members of the ruling class will be able to violate the laws with impunity while members of the subject classes will be punished (Walsh, 2012). This unequal distribution of punishment can further motivate members of at risk communities to resist the forces of authority as seen in on-going protests and Police-civilian clashes, promoting an “us versus them” relationship.

The Social Identity theory by John Turner and Henry Tajfel further elaborates on this us versus them phenomenon between the Police Officers and the residents. This theory asserts that the more anchored or attached an individual is to a group, the more prejudicial he or she would react to threats from other groups or out-groups. Due to the fact that members derive a sense of social-identity or belonging from the groups to which they are a part of, they become representatives of their group, and through their actions perpetuate group ideals or norms. Who we are, or our sense of self becomes relative to the groups to which we belong. Therefore the in-group becomes part of the self (Cardinu and Rothbart, 1996). This attachment to group emphasises the mentioned “us versus them” relationship between the members of the Police Service and the Beetham residents. Social identity often dictates the perceptions in which groups as well as their members have of each other. Thus social identity serves to distinguish or differentiate in-groups, the groups we belong to, from out-groups, the ones we do not belong to. It can therefore be postulated that clashes between the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Beetham residents are a result of this salient bias they have to their own groups.

Given the above name themes as discovered in the literature review, themes and ideas were generated which researchers used as templates when conducting field research. These themes were later compromised to fit the realities of the studied entities as real data was received however.

Research Questions

In conducting this research three major research questions were sought to be answered, they were:

RQ1- What are the communication barriers between the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Beetham residents?

RQ2- What are the causes of these barriers?

RQ3- How do perceptions influence the verbal communication between these two entities?

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

In order to collect sufficient data that allowed for the formulation of valid and thorough answers to the posed research questions, triangulation was be employed. Methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple quantitative and/ or qualitative methods to study a program (Smith 1975). For example results from surveys, focus groups and interviews could be compared to see if similar results are being found. If the conclusions from each of the stated methods are the same, then validity is established (Morse, 1991). This research study employed semi structured interviews and survey questionnaires.

Interviews involve a set of assumptions and understandings about a situation which are not normally associated with a casual conversation (Denscombe 1998). It is a qualitative method used to obtain detailed information about a topic giving the researcher more insight into the meanings and significance behind the topic being studied. An interview can be structured, semi structured, or unstructured. For this study semi structured interviews were used to obtain a significant amount of data. In a semi structured interview, questions may be recorded and the interviewer may have significant amount of flexibility in conducting the interview. For example, even though one may have the questions pre-recorded, one can still adjust, reword or ask follow up questions as seen fit.

On the 8th of February 2014, these semi structured interviews were conducted with the residents of the Beetham community, specifically in Phase four. Through this method, quality descriptive information was obtained from the residents concerning their perception of the causes of communication barriers between them and the Police Officers. Interviews also ensured that the interviewees fully comprehended what was asked of them. This further added to the high quality information received. Suggested solutions to the assumed problem were also derived from the research participants during this process. Meanwhile, a brief interview with Sargeant Wayne Myster (Public

relations Officer of the TTPS) was conducted on Monday 11th November 2013 (See Appendix for interview transcript).

Questionnaire distribution, a tool under the survey method was employed to derive information from the members of the police service. This tool allowed the analysis of their perception of the residents as well as their communicative behaviours towards them and their suggested responses to improve the level of communication. According to the Police Service Act (1935), under no circumstance can a Police Officer be interviewed by an external body. Thus, qualitative, openly responsive questions were created, which were distributed to Sargeant Mystar who then distributed the questionnaires to the Police Officers.

Data Collection

The target sample population was fifty Beetham Gardens' residents and twenty five Police Officers. However, fifty two Beetham residents were interviewed. The participants comprised of both men and women of age eighteen and over. Attempts were made to have an even distribution among the following age groups; 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56 and over. Purposive sampling was employed for both groups of participants. This type of sampling method is a form of non-probability sampling in which participants of a study are chosen by the researcher "based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research" (Oliver, 2006).

The Beetham Gardens residents of Phase four were chosen due to their close rapport with the Deliverance Temple International religious organization. One research member acted as the gatekeeper since he was a member of this religious organization. Only with the assistance of this religious affiliation, would it have been possible to safely enter this community. Meanwhile, concerning the Police Officers, the questionnaires were initially intended to be distributed to the Besson Street Police Officers as they are responsible for the Port-Of-Spain south region of which the Beetham community is

a part. However, upon investigation it was discovered that the members of the Inter Agency Task Force -a tactical group within the police services- have the responsibility of dealing with hostile groups of which the community is classed. Thus they were chosen as the police service sample population. It was predicted that they would have the most interaction with the residents. In addition, this tactical group is composed of trained officers from various regions within Trinidad and Tobago which further increases the external validity.

As previously stated, questionnaires were distributed to the police service sample through Sargeant Wayne Mystar. However, the interviews conducted with the Beetham Gardens residents were carried out within the time frame of 10 a.m to 3 p.m on the 8th of February, 2014 in Phase four. A member of the Deliverance Temple led the way into the community. Upon arrival, he spoke with who seemed to be a trusted, well respected shopkeeper and member of the Phase four community. This member of the community then rallied nearby residents to participate in the interview process. Researchers then began the process of data collection (See Appendix 2 for a sample of the interview questions). Upon completion of data collection, small tokens were distributed to the children of the community such as notebooks, pens and pencils, and refreshments. The adults who participated in the data collection were also rewarded with ceramic tea cups for having taken their time to assist in research.

Ethical considerations

Research ethics involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to a variety of topics involving research (Mc Graw-Hill, 2010). According to Frey et al (2010) the fundamental principle to ethics in research involves putting the concerns of your research participants before research expectation.

Thus, the interviewees and the survey recipients; both the residents of the Beetham community and the police officers, were provided with the free choice of partaking or declining to

participate in the study. Voluntary informed consent was given to the interview recipients to ensure that they did not feel coerced into participation. The research subjects were educated about the intention of the research and of the researchers and they were made aware of their option to withdraw from the interview at any moment as well as their right to decline to answer any question they considered to be inappropriate. In relation to the survey recipients, according to Frey et al (2010), when questionnaires are distributed in large sums, it is implied that the recipient has given consent to participate once he or she has agreed, received and returned the questionnaire. However, Sargeant Wayne Mystar was informed by the research group to ensure that research participants were aware of the intentions of the survey and the allocation of their information upon completion.

In addition to these considerations, the name of the community remained anonymous at the initial phases of this research project until consent was given by residents of the Beetham community on the 8th February, 2014 during which the semi structured interviews were conducted. The names of the interviewed residents were replaced with fake names to protect their identity.

Data Analysis

Due to the fact that the questionnaire is predominantly qualitative; having more open ended questions, themes were created of which the responses were classified and general deductions were made on the police officers' perception and emotions towards the residents of the Beetham community. In addition, the interview with Sargeant Mystar was also taken into consideration when assumptions were being formed about these two parties. In relation to the interviews conducted with the residents, a similar thematic approach was utilized where similar responses were placed into themes and analyzed as such.

Limitations

As is the case with any research, researchers need to consider the presented results within the context of limitations. Also, the process of posing and answering particular research questions typically generates more questions that need to be explored through further research.

As it relates to the stated topic, one must be cognizant of the fact that although the topic may be perceived as somewhat general, it entailed a specific geographical location (Beetham Gardens) which acted as the sample. Thus, with reference to other areas, or at risk communities, different findings may be noted. Therefore the extent to which these research findings can be generalized (external validity) certainly requires further investigation.

On the 11th day November, 2013 a semi- structured interview was conducted with Sergeant Wayne Mystar where he collected twenty-five (25) questionnaires to distribute to the members of the Inter Agency Task Force (I.A.T.F). This posed another limitation as his presence may compromise responses of the studied sample –members of the IATF. This can be described under the paradigm of the “personal attribution effect” where characteristics of the researcher -in this case Sergeant Mystar- can influence the subject’s responses.

According to the police Service Act it is unlawful for an external entity to interview a member of the TTPS thus questionnaires were chosen. This posed another limitation to the investigation since it may have triggered the “unintentional expectancy effect” where research subjects may respond based on the perceived desired outcomes by the researcher. If it was permitted to conduct the interview with the officers, such a threat may have been eliminated.

As it related to the locating of literature geared toward the answering of the research questions and developing of suggestions, another limitation arose. All literature collected was originally applied to international research. This further reduced the level of external validity and local applicability.

This research topic automatically opened the opportunity of visiting one of the country's deemed "hotspots" to record the responses of the residents as it relates to their communication with the members of the TTPS. This created another limitation as the safety of researchers had been compromised. On the 1st February, 2014 there had been another conflict between the police officers and the residents due to a shooting to death of a resident in the community. This fueled the residents to act out by burning debris in the Port of Spain Landfill. This act had caused the capital city and environs to be clouded with toxic smoke. Police Officers joined with the military services to ensure that peace was kept in the community. These series of events evoked fear among some of the researchers thus acting as another limitation as fearful respondents had to be influenced to participate and reminded of the necessity of this phase of the research process.

The research group agreed to visit the at risk community along with a charity group (Deliverance Temple Organization) which conducts monthly visits to the said community. However on the 21st November, 2013, the founder of that charity initiative passed away from a massive heart attack. Unfortunate and inevitable limitations left researchers "temporarily paralyzed" as no other charity group dared to venture into the Beetham community. This death put a halt on all planned activities by this organization, including the annual charity initiative in the Beetham community. To overcome this barrier however, researchers had to pool together resources and man power to make it possible, further postponing the research to be carried out in the Beetham Gardens.

Chapter Four

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The methods of data collection were successful in answering the three posed research questions. Through data analysis, several communication barriers were discovered which continue to hinder the communication process between the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the Beetham Gardens residents. However, due to the multitude of discovered barriers, themes were established; attitude and perception, authoritative power, education and language. The causes of the discovered barriers were also revealed through data analysis and were confirmed by previous research studies and theorists. It is believed that perceptions played the most important role in shaping how the subjects communicated with each other. As such, the extent to which perceptions affected verbal communication is explained through the theme of attitude and perception.

Attitude and Perception Barriers

Attitude and perception is the overarching theme of this research highlighted during data analysis. It was found during the interviews conducted with the residents that the majority of police officers treated them aggressively and with hostility. Roughly 75% of the residents said that the police officers failed to greet them when in the area from the interviews conducted. Also most if not all of the interactions were hostile with 45% (See Figure 1) saying that they used excessive force and 23.5% (See Figure 1) reported that they were ignored by the police and this left the residents feeling disrespected. Some of the adjectives that the residents used to describe the police officers were “evil, aggressive and disrespectful.” Most of the words and stories used by the residents to describe the Police Officers attitudes’ and behaviors were of a negative connotation. As a result 88% (See Figure 2) of the residents said that their personal interaction was negative.

A female resident, by the name of Alisha reported,

I remember the last time the police came here, I was in my bed, all I heard was someone kick open my front door, when I went to see what going on, officers with dogs sniffing through my kitchen. Imagine they had the dogs smelling through my clean clothes and when they ain't find nothing, they walk back out.

As a result of that situation she was convinced that the Police Officers do not care about the residents of the Beetham Community. During the interview process, it was observed that a common story among the residents was that Police Officers would “roll in” the area and sometimes fire random shoots, driving with excessive speed throughout the community while children are playing in the streets. There were mentioned instances where the children were injured and even shot. Not only are the children affected but some residents stated that the male officers would treat female residents violently with one interviewed resident even claiming to be a victim of such treatment. This according to her resulted in her right index finger being bent back by a male officer until it was broken. This resulted in 78% (See Figure 3) of the residents testifying that they were not satisfied with the Police interaction and 61% (See Figure 4) said that the methods Police used to resolve conflict were very poor. In all these stories, it was seen that the negative interactions are what shaped the resident's perceptions of the Police Officers. Given that they have experienced such negative treatment they act towards the Police Officers negatively.

In a similar manner the police officers complained of aggressive, hostile and disrespectful attitudes from the residents. They described the residents as “misbehaved, criminals and uneducated”. One officer said that upon arrival to calm a riot in the Beetham the residents began throwing stones and bottles at them. The officer said that the media covered the incident, but only showed the officers trying to curb the then escalated situation completely ignoring the fact that the residents were violent at first. These descriptions formed negative perceptions of residents and as such the police officers act negatively towards them. Therefore 67% (See Figure 5) believed that the reason Beetham was deemed

a “hotspot” is because of the high level of crime and as a result 50% (See Figure 6) of the police officers claimed to feel high levels of anxiety when entering the community. The stories given by both the residents and Police Officers give support to one of the major tenants of the Uncertainty reduction theory, (Charles Berger, 1975) which was discussed earlier to analyze the relationship between the residents and the Police Officers. This means that if the first encounter was negative residents will predict that future encounters will also be negative.

Education and Language Barriers

Second to attitudes and perception was the barrier of education and language it was evident that residents were aware of the lack of education among the community members. Participants of the study admitted to lacking reading and writing capabilities, which forced researchers of this study to read aloud the posed questions and to write the spoken responses in the spaces provided on behalf of residents.

Malcolm a male resident stated,

I'd be honest with allyuh, I can't read and write. Half these young people here neither. Them only went to primary school. They growing into adults but they still thinking like lil children. Tell me how they going to reason like adults with the Police?

From observation throughout the data collection process, it was concluded that the majority of the residents in the Beetham community lacks the ability to express their opinions and ideas using Standard English language, rather, they use a form of local English dialect. However, despite the use of the dialect, it was difficult to understand the resident's views in a full capacity. Mostly, it was imperative to repeat questions using different words, and in other cases, raise follow up questions in an attempt to understand the participant's response.

This lack of the command of the English language and by extension education, remains a concern for the younger generation in the community. Community members have stated that the majority of young persons in the Beetham have only completed Primary School education and very few

have gone to secondary school. This they believe is a major contributor to the aggression being witnessed between the Police Officers and the residents. The residents believe that the lack of education causes the young person's to resort to violence since they cannot resolve conflict through communication. Thus, when approached by police officers who may have a different language culture, the young Beetham residents would not be able to express their opinions and ideas efficiently, resulting in miscommunication and in some cases aggression. (This Barrier was seen as an answer to research questions 1 and 2.)

From the responses given in the interviews conducted with the Beetham residents, it was evident that there was frequent neighbourhood tension which developed into physical and verbal altercations (See Figure 7). This, according to some participants, stemmed from the lack of "maturity" among the residents in the community. Some participants believe that with education, one will develop a level of maturity that one cannot gain simply by attending primary school. Residents are of the opinion that adults are portraying the behaviour of children since they have been stuck in a "child-like" era in their early years of growth and development. This behaviour portrayed by the adults in the community when conflicts arise, will then be learnt by the younger generation. The younger generation is a witness to the poor conflict resolution strategies engaged in by their parents, older siblings, uncles, aunts, and even neighbours. Lacking education not only limits one's academic knowledge but also limits one's personal development since school teaches children, adolescents and young adults valuable life lessons, promoting an all rounded individual. As such, some residents have stated that younger persons within the community, given that they are not exposed to schooling other than at Primary level, will mimic behaviours seen at home.

With respect to the Police Officers, a similar trend was discovered. Based on the written responses retrieved from the Police Officers, it was evident that their command of the English language was also very poor. On many occasions, the researchers were unable to clearly understand the

responses. Most of the responses had many spelling and grammatical errors, lacked coherency and lacked relevance to the posed questions. These errors can be assumed to reflect a lack of education among the Police force, which can hinder effective communication. While language is not the sole determining factor to achieving effective communication, it still remains important. It is evident that language is recognized as a communication barrier between the police officers and the Beetham residents mainly due to the lack of education. (See appendices Figures 8 and 9).

Within the in-depth interview carried out with Inspector Wayne Mystar, it was indicated that the first step taught to police officers is that of communication in dealing with any hostile situation. Officers are required to “ask a question” to gain an understanding of the situation before taking any other action (See Appendix for interview transcript). In the questionnaires filled by the Officers, thirty-three percent (33%) claimed that communication is used to deal with hostile situations while six percent (6%) claimed they used force. However, forty-five percent (45%) of the residents interviewed said that officers resolve conflict by opening gunfire or physical abuse (See Figure 10). Roughly twenty-seven point five percent (27.5%) of the residents said that officers resolve conflict by communicating and four percent while roughly twenty-four percent (23.5%) of the persons said officers ignored them if conflict had arisen. Meanwhile, four percent (4%) claimed that officers resolve conflict by arrest (See Figure 1). Residents have stated that officers approach them and without gaining knowledge about the situation, physically restrain residents, or violate them. Residents have complained of unwarranted house searches where officers forcefully enter their homes without any communication of their intentions. Others have also complained of being arrested without any insight of the situation and then being released when the officers lacked evidence to lawfully charge them. These instances further encourage this study to conclude that education and language barriers do in fact hinder the Police Officers in carrying out their duties.

These findings do agree partially with those of previous studies. In an Iranian nurse-patient study, it was found that language was a communication barrier due to the fact that the nurses may use jargon associated with their profession that may be unfamiliar to the patients (Anoosheh et al, 2009). This situation was hypothesized to take place between the police officers and the residents. It was assumed that the police officers would use jargon learnt from their profession that may not be understood by the residents, while the residents may also have established a particular language culture that may not be understood by the police officers. However, it was discovered that while language was indeed a barrier between these two, it was not based on the language culture of the groups, but rather on their lack of education and efficient use of language to communicate.

Authoritative Power Barriers

In this research the presence of authoritative power as a communication barrier within the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service was also critically assessed. Residents attested that police officers usually abused their authoritative power by being overly aggressive and arresting residents without a valid reason. According to interviewed candidates, Police would visit the at risk community, arrest, transport and abandon alleged members of youth gangs in other sectors that currently have qualms with the residents of Beetham Estate. Individuals reported that they felt fearful, frustrated and hopeless after witnessing such incidents. This class of behavior can be best described as a form of psychological abuse since they occur in a context of police brutality.

There is no specific arm of the police service that can sanction or justify such behavior especially when the hostility of these officers is directed towards members of an at risk community. The psychological environment in which such incidents occur lacks the conditions normally perceived as providing some degree of moral justification for violence. In searching for a psychological explanation for this level of police brutality, it is instructive to focus on factors reducing the strength of restraining forces against using violence to combat acts of violence in such communities. Three

interrelated processes are propelled when such behavior becomes a norm: (a) processes of authorization, which can be defined as an individual's decision to be released from making personal moral choices in a situation in which standard moral principles do not apply ; (b) processes of routinization, which leaves no room for raising moral questions or making moral decisions since the action is so organized and (c) processes of dehumanization which has the capacity to deprive both victim and victimizer of their human status/ identity and community (Kelman, 1973). Hence, we believe that more innovative ways for corrective efforts should be developed to avoid such display of lack of social judgment by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. If better corrective methods are to be implemented, it should be counteracted with the attitudinal and perceptions supports for the processes described.

Chapter Five

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

The expression “*Be the change you want to see*” originally coined by Mahatma Gandhi best sums up the essence of this research. Researchers recognized that there was an occurring problem and attempted to truly define such, outlining the causes in a direct attempt to suggesting specific solutions to the problem. As previously mentioned the discovered major themes of communication barriers include; attitude and perception, authoritative power and education and language. As such the following implementations as created through the combine opinions of the studied entities can provide a form of relief to the mentioned barriers.

In order to address the barriers associated with the attitude and perception theme one solution suggested by the residents and endorsed by the researchers was the implementation of police day workshops within the Beetham community. This could be an avenue whereby the police officers can become more acquainted with the residents and in return the residents can get more accustomed to the police officers. Since the residents only claimed to meet the police officers in heated situations and the Police Officers claimed to interact with the residents when situations arose, this can give both parties an opportunity to clear up any ambiguities in attitudes, communications and perceptions. As such, they may able to mutually agree on decisions made.

This could be an activity that should be continuous in order to foster and maintain effective communication between the community and the police. Police Officers can set the atmosphere where the residents can ask questions, propose ideas and solutions. Also the police officers can use this opportunity to outline their future plans and agendas for the community. Furthermore during this time police can advise and motivate the youths in terms of their academic, promoting a better future, thus resulting in a healthy relationship being formed.

To remove barriers associated with authoritative power, a Police Mentorship programme should be implemented, where senior officers mentor new recruits. Due to the innumerable challenges and stresses of working in high crime areas such as the Beetham Gardens, many new police recruits stated that they felt enormous levels of stress when visiting such areas. To deal with high stress levels many officers relied on tactical training, relaxation methods and their faith (*Answer to Research Question 7*). In spite of their claims of dealing with the high stress levels while on the job, residents felt that junior officers were using excessive amount of physical abuse on their visit to the Beetham Gardens. Approximately forty five percent (45%) of the persons interviewed said that these officers resolve conflict by using excessive force or physical abuse (See Figure 1). Carl another resident said, *D young officers does rough us up when dey talking and push dey hand or gun all up in we face*.

Consequently, to prevent the occurrences of this negative display of authoritative power, a viable solution is the mentorship programme for junior officers. As previously mentioned whilst conducting the interviews with the Beetham residents, they claimed to receive better treatment from senior officer. Thus the police service should have these senior or Veteran officers facilitate informal mentoring or develop an all-encompassing Field Officer Training (FOT) program to help new recruits and junior officers learn particular technical aspects of police work, teaching them how to work with members of at-risk communities. Administrators of the program could first encourage veterans and new recruits to become friends. They should create measures where new recruits are matched to veterans based on similar speciality training and interest. This would foster a better opportunity for successful mentorship to take place. This program should place emphasis on themes such as human development, human communication and conflict resolution. This would result in the boosting of the junior officers' confidence as well as teach them other technical aspects of police work in high crime communities. The main purpose of this mentorship programs within the police force would be to promote the continual refinement of the policing practices.

In order to overcome the education and language barrier between the residents and the police officers, three programmes can be implemented. Firstly, a home-work center can be established within the Beetham community. Given that most children within the community do not complete secondary school, having a home-work center may give them the opportunity to improve their academic skills while attending primary school. This may encourage them to further their education. It is known that there are many education programmes that run throughout the year to accommodate children in these situations; however this suggestion takes another approach to teaching others. Rather than hiring tutors or teachers who in some cases are driven to teach for compensatory purposes, this home-work center should be directed by volunteer university or tertiary level students. In this way the student tutors, once they have volunteered to tutor at the center, will establish that they have no other motive other than helping the young children since they are not receiving compensatory packages.

In addition to this, the tutors who may not reside in the Beetham Gardens will be exposed to the reality of the residents. Similarly, to the researchers of this thesis, the volunteer tutors will be able to have interactions with the community members and form their own perception of the Beetham Gardens rather than relying on the local media's portrayal of the community. Furthermore, the Beetham residents would feel incorporated into the rest of society as they would be witnessing other communities sharing concern for their welfare and aiding in their uplifting. This may eliminate the common misconception that the Beetham Gardens has an "us versus them" relationship with other communities in Trinidad and Tobago. In order to produce genuine social change, both residents living in the Beetham community and members who do not reside within the community should adjust their perception of each other. This proposed voluntary program can be a starting point to facilitate such a change.

Secondly, it is evident that the adults of the community also lack an educational background. This further prevents them from obtaining employment which can lead to improving their living

conditions. As such, it is suggested that a similar programme to that of the Home-work centre be implemented for the adults of the community to develop certain skills such as reading and writing. However, this programme will not be able to be directed by university or tertiary level students since it requires more skill and training. Rather such programme should be conducted by accredited adult tutors. Lastly, it is imperative that this programme be carried out within the community itself since the residents may feel discouraged to go elsewhere.

Additionally to aid with the educational barrier, it is believed that more emphasis should be placed on building communicative skills, thus in the Police Academy there should be more courses which deal specifically with communication since their role as police officers is not only to protect but also to serve. This implementation was suggested after the interview with inspector Mystar who confirmed that though communicative skills are somewhat developed whilst at the police academy, there are no specialized courses offered within the academy, which deals specifically with communication.

Throughout this research the term activism was constantly being mentioned by the researchers. Activism consists of efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, or environmental change. Activism is action of the powerless against the powerful. It is a peaceful form of conflict; working out our issues. Communication Activism as defined by communication scholar Lawrence Frey is the merging of cultures mostly that of the disenfranchised groups with their "fortunate" others. At the Inaugural Human Communication Studies International conference held at the University of the West Indies on September 2013, Professor Lawrence Frey spoke on social activism. Professor Frey stated that it is our responsibility to use what we have learnt at our respective educational institutes to suggest various cures to society's ills and this research strives to do such.

Communication barriers although overlooked can be seen as the major causes of negativity and discord within our society. This study outlines some of the barriers which have now resulted in

immense discrimination and crime arising within a community right here in our home country of Trinidad and Tobago. This study provides the point of view and sentiments of the both studied groups along with communicative suggestions.

Researchers should be aware that much work is still needed to bring about complete peace and amnesty between the two studied groups. Thus future researchers are advised to build upon these foundations, decoding the meanings and significance behind communication barriers. Future researchers should study the implication of the media in forming these Communication barriers further examining the media's role in the perception each group has of each other. This research intends to begin the process of breaking the barriers and building the bridges between the Beetham residents and the Trinidad and Tobago Police force through communication.

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Appendix (1)

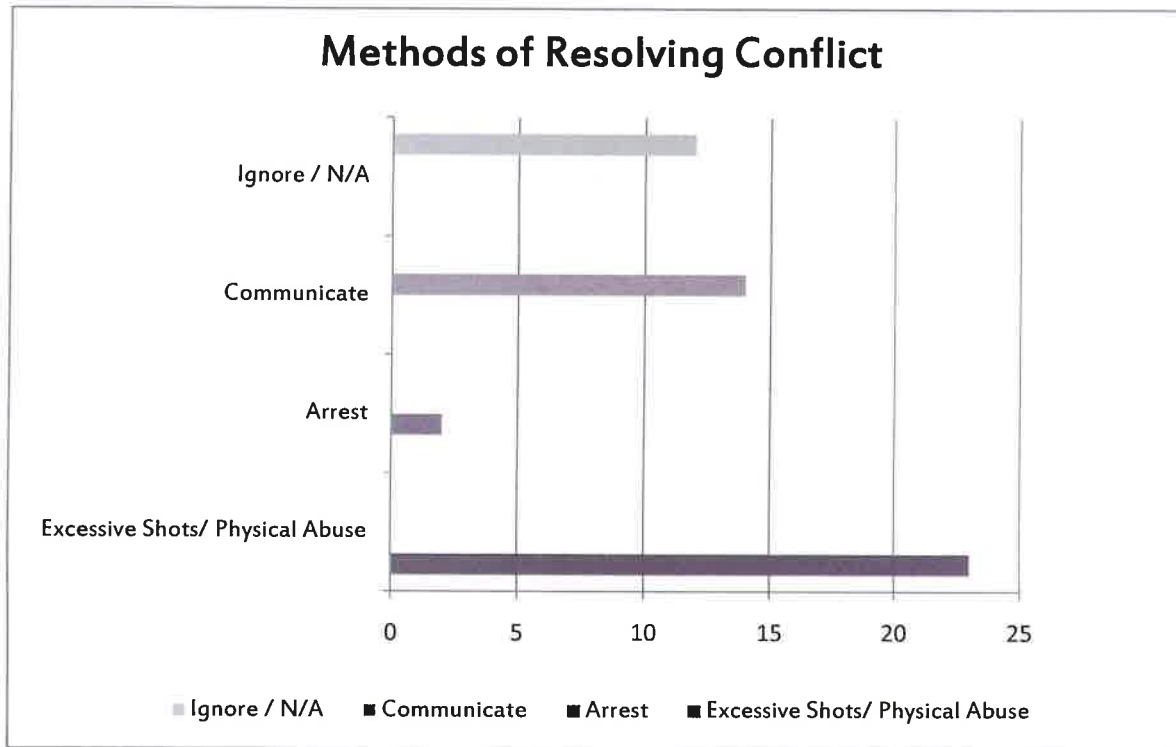


Figure 1- “What method(s) do Police Officers use in resolving conflict?”

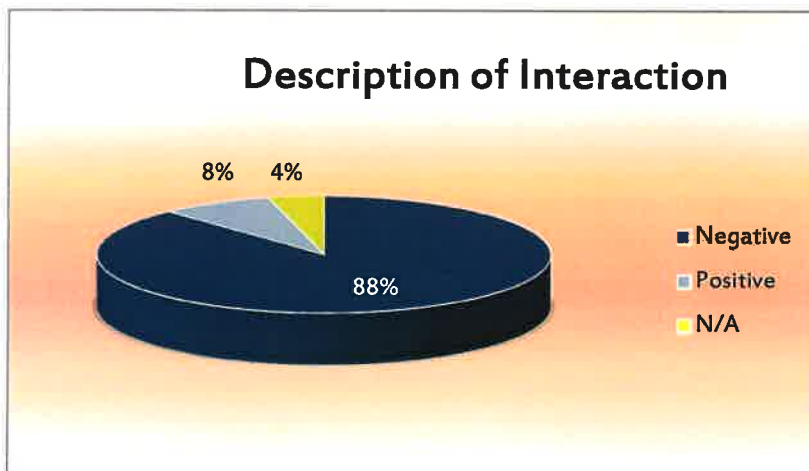


Figure 2- “If yes, describe your interaction with the Police officers.”

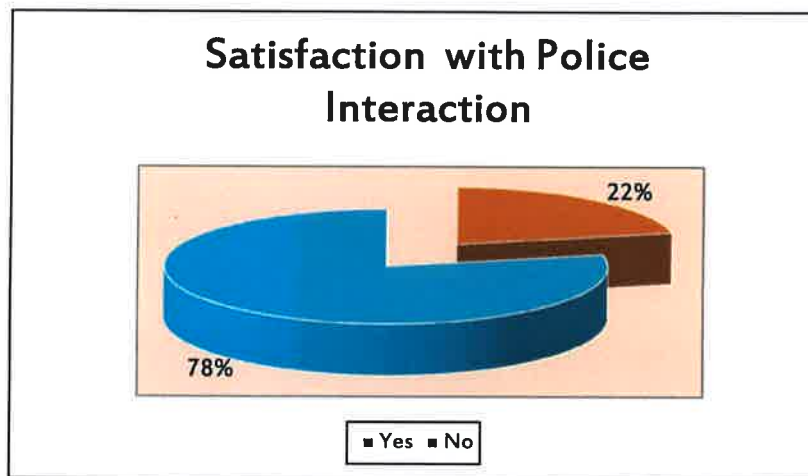


Figure 3- "Are you satisfied with the way in which the Police Officers interact with you?"

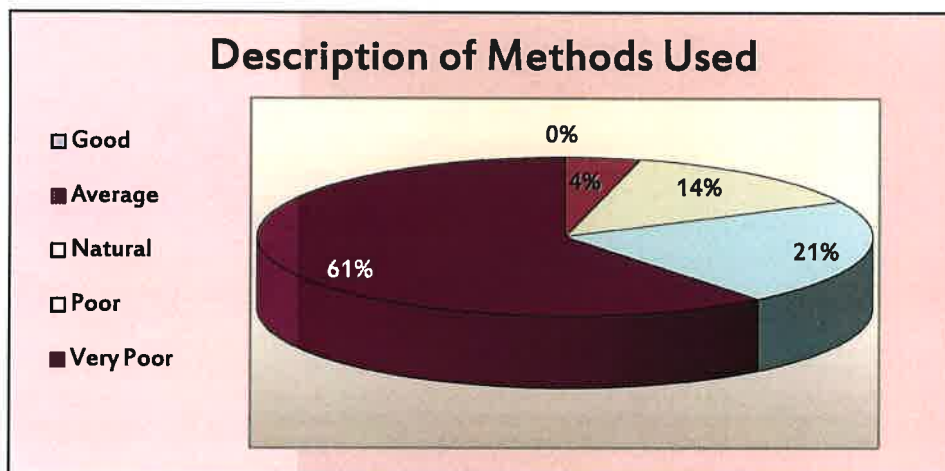


Figure 4- "The method(s) Police Officers use to resolve conflict in your area?"

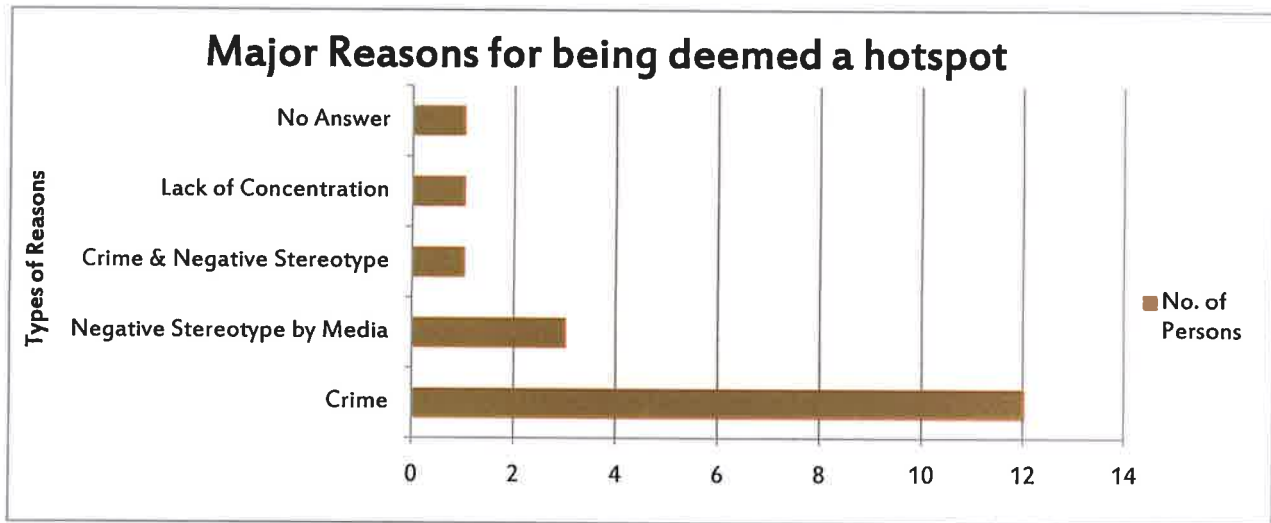


Figure 5-“What are the major reasons why the Beetham is deemed a Hot-spot?”

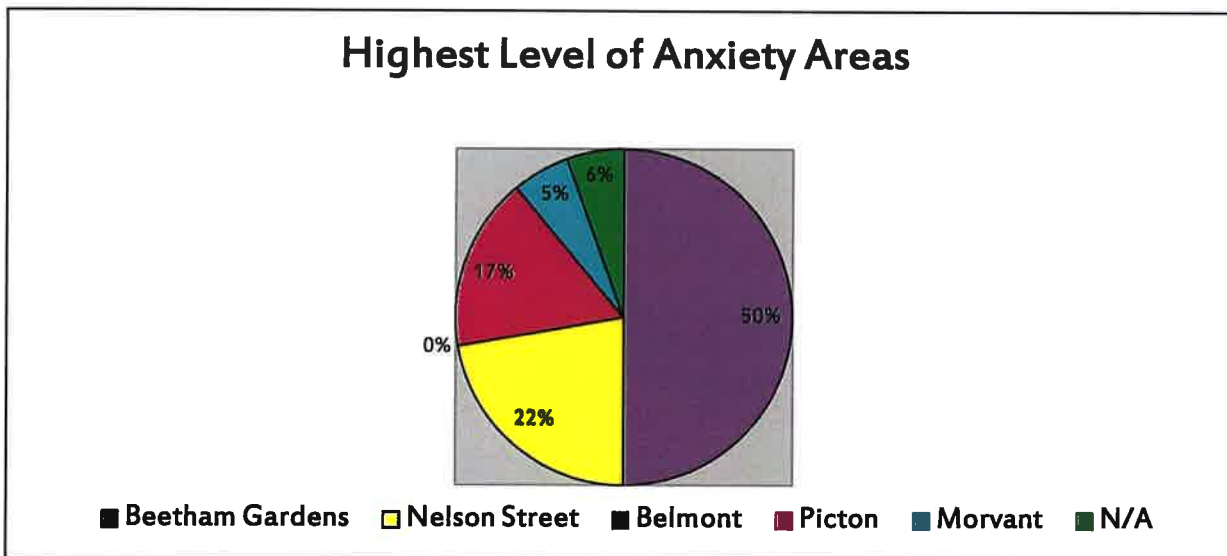


Figure 6-“Out of the following, what areas do you experience the highest level of anxiety if asked to visit?”

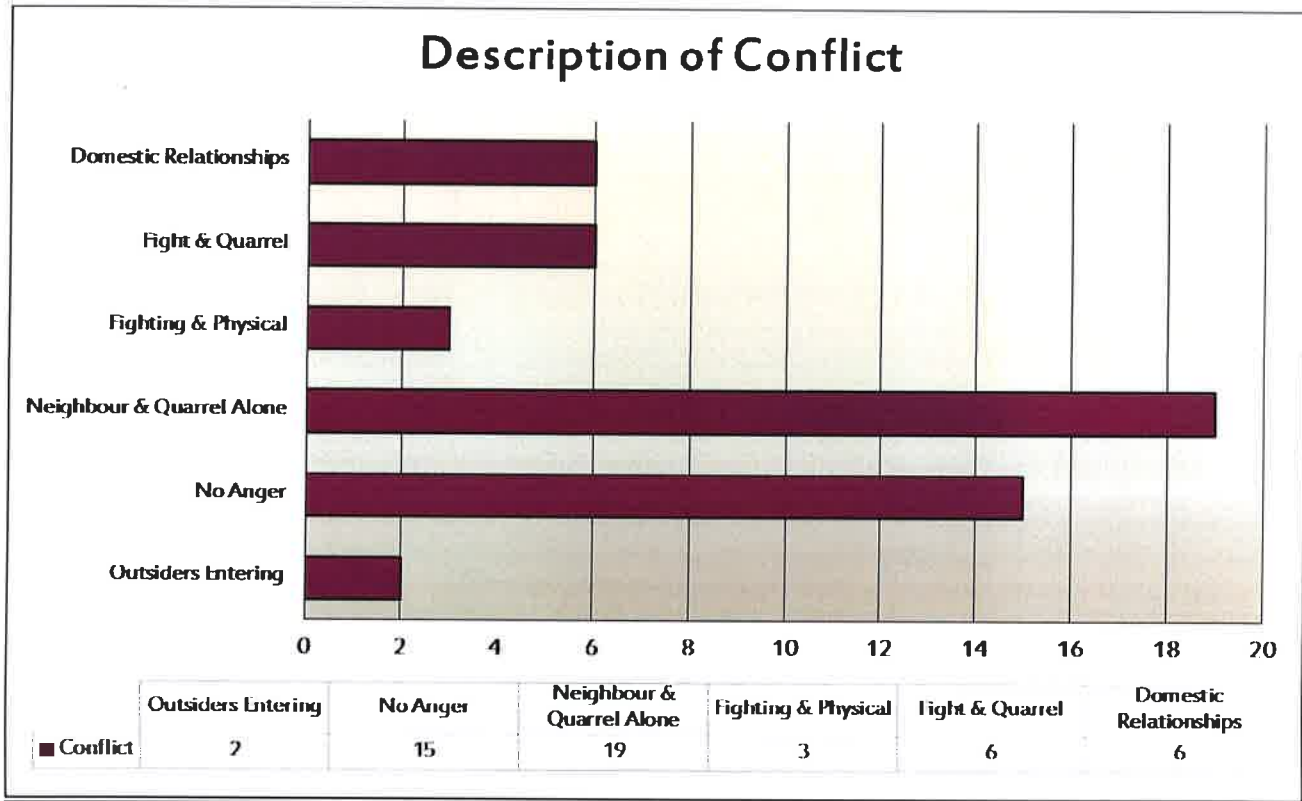


Figure 7-“Describe the conflict seen (as a Beetham resident) among your neighbours”



Figure 8-“Do you (as a Police Officer) believe that there are language barriers between the Police Officers and the Beetham residents?”.

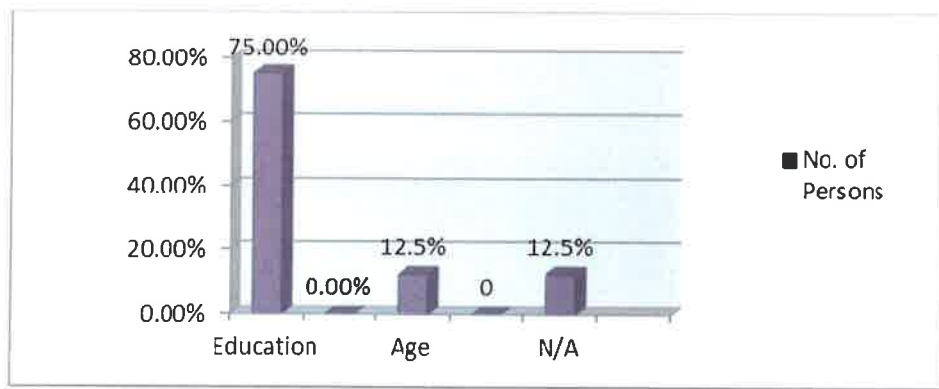


Figure 9-“What do you think (as a Police Officer) is the cause of this language barrier?”.

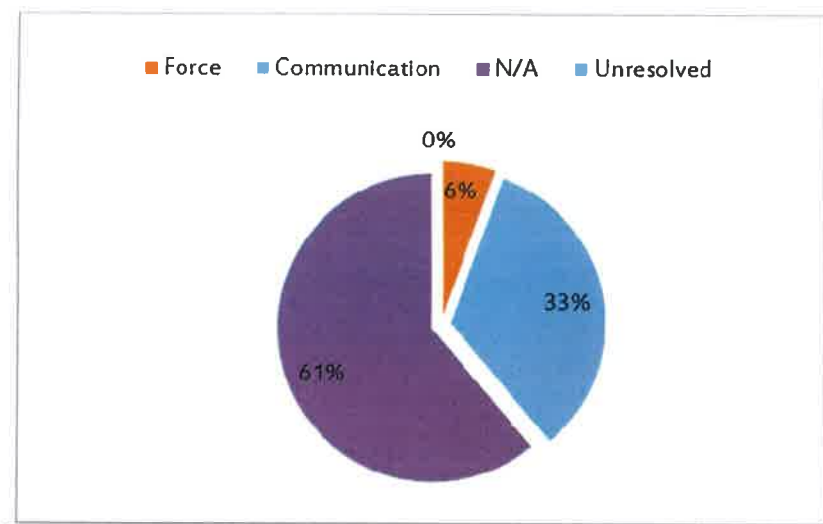


Figure 10- “How did you deal with this specific (hostile) situation (in the Beetham Gardens)?

Appendix (2)

Interview Transcription Inspector Wayne Mystar Monday 11th November 2013

Interviewer 1 - Isaiah Williams

Interviewer 2 - Dana Mc Intyre

Interviewer 3 - Shaunte-Marie Bobb

Interviewer 4 - Lydia Bertrand

Interviewer 5 - Keziah Pereira

Interviewee - Inspector Wayne Mystar

Interview setting- The interview was conducted in the office of Inspector Wayne Mystar, Police Administration Building, Cor. Edward and Sackville Streets, Port of Spain, on Monday 11th November, 2013.

Affiliation to Interviewee- Inspector Mystar had no affiliation with the Interviewers prior to this interview however, this interview was essential to the interviewers who were completing their final year research thesis entitled “Breaking the Barriers, the communication between the police officers and the residents of the Beetham Gardens”.

(The interview started at 10:00a.m)

Interviewer 1 (Isaiah Williams) – “Good evening Inspector we are year three students from the University of The West Indies completing our Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication Studies”.

Interviewee- Inspector Mystar- “Good evening”

All Interviewers- “Good evening”

Interviewer 1 (Isaiah Williams) - “Inspector Myster, in order to complete our degree we have the task of completing a thesis on any decided topic, we chose to study the communication and communicative behaviours between the residents of the Beetham and the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force.”

Interviewee- Inspector Myster- (*shakes his head*) “what a big topic! why this topic?”

Interviewer 4- (Lydia Bertrand) – “because it is clear that there is a communicative problem between the Police and the residents. We see it clear as day in the news daily, just last week the residents even blocked off the bus route again.”

Interviewee- Inspector Myster- “Yes but”.....(pauses)

Interviewer 4- (Lydia Bertrand) - (respectfully interrupts Inspector Myster) “we have no intention of making the police look bad or the residents, we just want to hear both sides of the story and try to suggest solutions to help both groups.”

Interviewee - (Inspector Myster) - “So how can I help you all in this brave venture”.

Interviewer 1- (Isaiah Williams)- “Well Inspector we were told that it is illegal to interview a Police Officer and this is an integral part of our research so (slight pause), we were hoping that would distribute these 25 questionnaires to the members of the Inter-Agency -Task-Force on our behalf.”

Interviewee - (Inspector Myster)- (Enters brief case pulling out a book entitled Police Service act) “Read this line and see for yourself the law really does prohibit such interviewees and you have to understand why, because we deal with secret, confidential information, and we cannot afford to have it being slipped from any officer’s mouth. Also this will always ensure that there is uniformity in what is said by the Police about the police. We do not want officers giving out conflicting information, so I am the only one who can be interviewed and when I speak, I speak on behalf of the force.”

Interviewer 5- (Keziah Pereira) – “We understand that Inspector, but seeing that our research is one, that can be used by the police service to promote better policing, shouldn’t this rule be adjusted accordingly?”

Interviewee (Inspector Myster)- *Laughs...*”No Madame I do not have that power, but I will

distribute the questionnaires and return them to you. But in the meanwhile is there anything you all may have prepared to ask me.”

Interviewer 1- (Isaiah Williams)- “Yes Inspector I’m actually glad you asked that. What methods do the police officers have in place, when dealing with a hostile group?”

Interviewee (Inspector Mystar)- “The police service has a “Use Of Force Policy”. This dictates What types approach we will use in different situations. In any given Hostile setting we Engage our first step, Presence. The mere police presence sometimes causes the most hostile groups to settle down.”

Interviewer 2- (Dana Mc Intyre)- “Shouldn’t communication be the first step where you all attempt to find out what is actually causing the problem.”

Interviewee (Inspector Mystar)- “No it’s the second step. Once step one doesn’t resolve the conflict the next method used in Verbal Communication. Here the officers try to talk to residents. Once this doesn’t work we tend to use necessary force in the form of control techniques, this is when the threatening to arrest begins. After this the actual arrest if hostility continues to escalate. We call this Resistance. The final stage is using deadly Force and this is usually when the lives of the officers are compromised as a result of the hostility.”

Interviewer 4- (Lydia Bertrand)- “What is there in place to ensure that complains of citizens are heard?”

Interviewee (Inspector Mystar)- “The Police Service has introduced a separate entity or an independent body, that deals with police complaints. This entity is located by the water front near the twin towers in Port of Spain. Its operated by civilians not officers and head by Ms. Gillian Lucky. The civilians through this entity has right to investigate the complaints regarding police officers. In the cases where the officers were wrong, action will be taken.”

Interviewer 2- (Dana Mc Intyre) – “Do you all maintain communication with the citizens after The initial report is made.”

Interviewee (Inspector Mystar) – “Yes after the report is made the investigation begins. Once the investigation comes to an end the citizen is informed of what transpired as a result.”

Interviewer 4- (Lydia Bertrand) – “How accurate is the feedback”

- Interviewee (Inspector Mystar)-** “as accurate as the provided evidence, once efficient evidence is provided the accused officers will be prosecuted.”
- Interviewer 2- (Dana Mc Intyre)-** “Do you all endorse or make it mandatory for officers to be constantly trained in developing communication techniques.”
- Interviewee (Inspector Mystar)-** “Developmental training is given but the focus is directed toward Customer Service more than communication. However future goals are to have more officers trained in the area of communication.”
- Interviewer 1- (Isaiah Williams) –**“what is the minimum educational requirement needed to join the Inter-Agency-Task-Force.”
- Interviewee (Inspector Mystar) –** “Any application put forward to join the Inter- Agency-Task-Force is considered based on core competencies and not educational requirements per-say.
- Interviewer 1- (Isaiah Williams) –** “Why is this so educational should be more valued in the service in my opinion.”
- Interviewee (Inspector Mystar)-** “This is because once they get in , they have to pass a series of courses in fire arm training and conflict handling. I must admit though none specifically deal with communications.”
- Interviewee 1- (Isaiah Williams) –** “Other than tactical training do you all specialize or specifically teach any course that deals with building communicative skills with in the police force.”
- Interviewee (Inspector Mystar) –** “Yes and no. Officers are always exposed to some level of communicative development but nothing specific.”
- Interviewer 2- (Dana Mc Intyre)-** “Is there room for improvement in the level of communication between the members of the Police service and the Trinidad and Tobago public.”
- Interviewee (Inspector Mystar)-** “Of course there is, the public generalizes the entire police Service, they don’t select any single officer so officers need to be more aware of things that they do and say.’
- Interviewer 5- (Keziah Pereira) –** “Have you seen an improvement or a decline in the level of Communication between the Members of the Police service and the Public during your years on the Police Service.”
- Interviewee (Inspector Mystar) –** “Being in the service for over twenty years communication is but the media frames the negative and ignores the positive, most times they twist the stories, so most times what the media portray

does not represent what the officers intended to say. There was one time a squad of officers went down on the calm a riot, you know as the squad entered the residents started throwing stones and bottles. The media covered the event only showing the residents saying that the Police abusing their power, ignoring that we were just innocently stoned. there will always be two sides of a story, and that is why I appreciate what you all are doing. Keep it up”

Interviewer 1- (Isaiah Williams) – “Ok Inspector Thank you for your time and patience with us”

Interviewee (Inspector Myster)- “The pleasure is all mine, not often do I get to meet some brave young people, trying to make a difference.

Interview ended at 11:30am.

Appendix (3)

Police Questionnaire

1. Sex F ☐ M ☐
2. Age group 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56 and over ☐
3. How long have you served as a police officer? _____
4. For what reason(s) did you join the police services?

5. Out of the following, what area do you experience the highest level of anxiety if asked to visit?
Beetham Gardens ☐ Nelson Street ☐ Belmont ☐ Picton ☐ Morvant ☐
6. How do you (or will) you deal with this high level of anxiety?

7. How do you prepare physically and emotionally when called to duty in the Beetham Gardens?

8. Have you ever visited the Beetham Gardens? Yes ☐ No ☐
9. How do the Beetham residents greet you upon arrival in the Beetham residents?

10. How do you respond to the greetings of the Beetham residents?

11. Can you give an example of a good experience or interaction you had as a Police Officer with the residents? Explain.

12. Can you give an example of a negative experience or interaction you had as a Police Officer with the residents as well?

13. How did you deal with this specific situation?

14. How do you deal with negative situations in other areas?

15. Do you believe there are language barriers between Police Officers and the Beetham residents?

If No, continue to question 18.

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Can you give an example of where you have experienced this language barrier?

17. What do you think is the cause of this language barrier?

Gender ☐ Education ☐ Age ☐ Other

18. Is there room for improvement in level of communication between the Beetham residents and the Police Officers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

19. What can the Police service do to improve communication between themselves and the Beetham residents?

20. What are some of the standard procedures in place for resolving residential conflict?

21. What are the major reasons why the Beetham is deemed a hotspot?

22. Can you give three adjectives that first come to mind when you think of the Beetham residents?

Appendix (4)

Questionnaire for Beetham Residents

1. Sex M ☐ F ☐
2. Age Group 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56 and over ☐
3. How long have you been a member of the Beetham Gardens?

4. What phase within the Beetham Gardens do you reside?
- Phase: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Hell Yard ☐
5. How would you describe your daily interactions with your fellow residents?
- Favourable ☐ Acceptable ☐ Not favourable ☐
6. Have you ever witnessed conflict amongst residents?
- Yes ☐ No ☐
7. If yes to question 7, describe this conflict.

8. How was the conflict resolved?

9. Have you ever been involved in conflict with the residents?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. If yes describe the conflict

11. How was the conflict resolved?

12. What method/s do Police Officers use in resolving conflict?

13. The method/s Police Officers use to resolve conflict in your area

Good ☐ Average ☐ Neutral ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor ☐

14. Have you ever had any personal interaction with a Police Officer?

Yes ☐ No ☐

15. If yes describe your interaction

16. If No to the previous question, have you ever witnessed an interactive situation between other Beetham residents and a Police Officer?

Yes ☐ No ☐

17. How often do Police Officers visit this community?

Frequently ☐ Not Frequently ☐ Only in Emergencies ☐ Not at all ☐

18. When Police Officers visit, give an example of how they would communicate with you.

19. How do you respond to Police Officers when they visit?

20. Are you satisfied with the way the way in which the police officers interact with you?

Yes ☐ No ☐

21. State three words that come to mind in describing the Police Officers.

22. What do you recommend to improve communication between your community members and the Police Officers?
