

ABSTRACT

“From Then to Now, Right or Wrong, We are Treated Guilty!” Exploring the ‘Coloniality of Power’ through the Perspectives of ‘Frame Case’ within a ‘Criminally Labelled Community’ in East Trinidad.

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This study explores the Coloniality of Power theory in the everyday policing practices my participants identified in their use of the term ‘Frame Case’. ‘Frame Case’ describes instances where police officers target, accuse and seek to get residents living in high crime and low income communities arrested and charged by inventing and manipulating criminal evidence. This policing strategy is based on stereotypes grounded in the socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of these areas. As such, this study set out to understand the source of these experiences through historicising the phenomenon. On that basis, ‘Frame Case’ was identified as a metaphor explaining policing practices reminiscent of the ways black masses were treated in the colonial era as identified throughout the literature on colonial and neo-colonial policing. This study collected evidence of these perspectives through conducting fieldwork in a ‘Criminally Labelled Community’ in East Trinidad. Using the single intrinsic case study research design, multiple variation sampling strategy and semi-structured interviews, the researcher established and contextualised a distinctive data field to utilise in the research. Moreover, myth course analysis was used instead of discourse analysis to allow more fully the agency of participants in their use of the term ‘Frame Case.’ Although this study unmasked the inequalities bounded within the community in focus, it was also able to identify and describe numerous coping and resistance strategies used by participants in navigating through that toxic social world. For these reasons, participants called on state institutions to be conscious of the deep-seated issues of poverty, inequality and stigmatisation tormenting the community. Therefore, through the utilisation of a trans historical lens in understanding ‘Frame Case’, this study sheds light into marginalised localities, pinpointing strategies to bring about a discussion on colonially entangled policing practices, decolonising state institutions and fostering better modern-day police-community relations.

Keywords: Nathan Chapman; Frame Case; coloniality of power; Criminally Labelled Community; mythcourse analysis; Trinidad and Tobago