

Young People in Crisis: The need for Secure Relationships in the Family and in the Society

By Rev. Dr. Jason Gordon

Introduction

There is a media perception that black on black youth crime in Britain is exploding in alarming proportions. This perception has caused great anxiety amongst many black leaders, their communities and the country as a whole. This paper seeks to explore the underlying issues at hand, exploring the reality, unearthing the unconscious, unexplored aspects of the perception, thus reconfiguring the issue within a broader and hopefully more grounded social context.

I lived in Britain twice in my life, once as a child while my father was studying and the second time 1996-2000 while I read for my PhD at the University of London, Heythrop College. My perspective on the issue is shaped from this limited immersion in the British context and informed by my own intervention in the troubled Trinidadian East Port of Spain village of Gonzales where I had the privilege of being the Parish Priest 2003-2006.

I was appointed to Gonzales in January 2003 and by May that year there were five murders in six weeks. All black on black. All gang related. The response of the Church was to call the leaders of the community and begin a process of citizen participation that is now known as Pride in Gonzales.

Trauma, fear and unstated, unconscious, perceptions dominated and thus paralyzed the leaders and the community. Participation of the citizens in revisioning the community, together with tangible collective action, changed the landscape of the 300-acre village and the 5,650 people who lived there.

As we explore the facts, the unstated assumptions and the unconscious projections we will find new eyes to see the reality and hopefully the possibilities that it throws up for the leaders and the communities involved.

Violence in Britain

Figures from the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) to December 2006 indicate that gun crime has actually decreased by 15.1% overall. In the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark which have high black populations gun crime is down by 15.4% and 6.2% respectively.

It has also decreased nationwide among young people, down by 23.8% in the 2-17 age group and by 14.7% in the 18-29 age group. But as MPA deputy chair Cindy Butts said, there continues to be: "...an over-representation of gun crime in black communities ... it does cause much alarm and distress..." (Black Britain 19/02/2007)

Deborah Gabriel of *Black Britain* highlighted a Youth Justice Board Survey that revealed "51% of pupils carry a knife and 38% of them carry knives to school. But are young black kids becoming more violent or is this just a perception and if they are becoming more violent then who is to blame?" (*Black Britain*, 30/05/2006 "Crime")

Who is to blame? This is the usual parental response to family crisis and loss of perceived order. From my reading and conversations with people in the British context it would seem that: Racism, Exclusion and Family Structure are the *bogie men* that are to blame for this crisis.

Racism

"When I talk about them it makes me want to be sick. I think they are vermin. They are not a

civilized people. They are black ... they are like dirt. We have to clean up the dirt". Racism in Britain is a well researched and documented. (see Paul Gilroy, 1991; *Ain't no black in the Union Jack*). In Post World War II Britain there were signs on flats for rent in Notting Hill and other communities that said - 'No niggers, no Irish, no dogs, no children!' This open racism of the 1950's has given way to political correctness in the 1990's and 2000's. Statements like the one above, when made publicly now, are frowned upon and treated with moral disdain. With the strides towards political correctness and integration in Britain, can we still blame youth violence on Racism? I think it is a significant factor!

The statement above was made public on the 9th of August, 2004. On the Channel 4 programme, "Who You Calling A Nigger", Jobie, a 16-year-old West Indian living in South London, was describing a Somalian immigrant. This is not white racism of blacks; it is black on black racism. It is entrenched socialized suspicion of the recent immigrants.

Exclusion

In spite of a recent improvement in exclusion statistics for African-Caribbean children, they are still more likely to be excluded than white pupils. African-Caribbean girls are up to four times more likely to be permanently excluded than white girls and boys with African-Caribbean heritage are up to 15 times more likely to be excluded than white boys, depending on locality. With only 15% of permanently excluded young people being reintegrated into mainstream school, successful transition into adulthood, employment and independence for most of these young people is unlikely... It has long been noted that there is a link between those who have been excluded from school and social exclusion in later life. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation September 2005 - Ref 0435)

It is interesting to note that the author begins by stating that there is "a recent improvement in exclusion statistics for African-Caribbean children". In other words the social trend in the medium term is heading in the right direction. Maybe not fast enough, but significantly so. The question that is boggling my mind is: if gun crime is down and social exclusion is down, what is the media hype about? Why is the hype happening now? What else is at stake?

It is true that there have been youth murders that have shocked the nation. It is also true that one murder of any kind is unacceptable and requires attention. But the media hype makes the general population feel that every black youth is a potential risk to society and this escalates the insecurity and thus the problem.

There are untruths, lies and then statistics. Part of the problem here is reading the statistical data. The continued statistic that there is "an over-representation of gun crime in black communities" and of all crime for that matter is a comparison of apples with oranges.

Is the black community in Britain spread across the whole country in a demographic pattern like the white community? Of course not! There are pockets of high concentration of blacks in specific communities in Britain. These communities also happen to be the poorest communities in the country with the least social capital and infrastructure appropriate to its citizens.

If we looked at school exclusion by specific community rather than national averages, would the figures of black and white children be very different? Are truancy and violence of blacks issues of race or under-development and poverty? Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt ground breaking work *Freakonomics* (2006) demonstrate that poverty and not race is the real factor of social exclusion in the US. Is the UK any different?

If the statistical data on exclusion in the UK are similar to that of the US, then the perception of oversubscription of blacks in crime is not a matter of race but of poverty and thus development. Ascertaining the facts on this issue will be a significant contribution in helping the whole nation come closer to the truth.

The closest that we have is a UNICEF report on Child Wellbeing in the Developed World

placing British children at the bottom ranking for five of the six dimensions reviewed. The report is an indictment on childrearing in Britain as a whole, not just the marginalized or the immigrants, it reviews the whole society rating it next to the other developed nations (UNICEF, Child Poverty in Perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 7, 2007)

This report rates child well-being in the industrial nations based upon material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, behaviours and risks, and young people's own subjective sense of wellbeing. In the different measures Britain and America are rated similarly at the bottom of the nations. There is a problem with childhood and teenagers in Britain. The problem goes wider than the immigrants or the poor communities. Based upon Dubner and Levitt's research connecting American gangs and poverty and the poor performance of Britain and America in child well-being, it is reasonable to suggest that race and exclusion are not adequate explanations for adolescent truancy and gangs in Britain.

The Family Structure

The absence of a male role model is seen as a key factor in the "over-subscription" of young black men in the criminal justice system.

A report from the Commons Home Affairs Committee says they are far more likely to be stopped by police, arrested and convicted than their white counterparts. The Committee took evidence from black community leaders who regarded the lack of "traditional" family influences as a serious problem. Figures cited by the Committee indicate that 59% of black Caribbean children and 54% of mixed-race youngsters are looked after by a lone parent. In the white British population, the figure is 22%. (Telegraph.co.uk 15/06/2007)

It is interesting that family structure and not criminalizing by the social structures is given prominence in the quotation above. If the statistics looked at communities, rather than the nation as a whole, would the same gap between black and white family structures exist? Is this a problem of race, class or history? Here again we must unpack the data.

Plantation and Parenting

In Trinidad, the Africans found themselves almost completely cut off from their lineages. A few mothers lived with their African-born children and a slightly larger number had siblings belonging to the same master. But beyond this the slaves were all isolated individuals, with no common familial norms or even language, to call on...Obviously, full-scaled recreation of any particular African family system was an impossibility (Higman 1980, 45).

Plantation and Family Structure of the family type "man, wife and children":

- 40% of African-born slaves lived in this family grouping
- 20.3% of Creole (Caribbean-born) slaves lived in this type (Higman 1980, 54).

The data strongly suggest that the rupture with Africa broke down traditional values and structures including the family. What is more, the impact of the Plantation system and chattel slavery, pushed Caribbean families further from the traditional African family structures. Economic production and social structure converged to systematically undermine the humanity of the slave and the humanizing structures that they sought to preserve.

Plantation and Family Structure, "woman and her children":

- 22.8% of African-born slaves lived in units as opposed to
- 42.7% of the Creoles (Higman 1980, 54).

This family structure did not exist in Africa and is thus, obviously a New World creation (Besson & Chavannes 1996). Culture building and accommodation to the harsh conditions of the plantation are at work here. The transformation of the material culture surrounding marriage is symptomatic of the transformation of the cosmology - the meaning system of the African and Creole-born slaves. This transformation, I believe is at the deepest level of pain in the Caribbean psyche.

Here we are dealing with separation and loss at the most fundamental levels of humanity. This separation and loss, because it is intangible may seem irrelevant to most. I would contend that it is entwined with the most vital aspects of human existence--cosmology, social patterns, language, customs, freedom and identity. Because it is intangible, and dare I say traumatic, it has been relegated, for the most part to the unconscious realm where it continues to haunt.

Black Manhood

Black manhood, deliberately stripped of honour was relegated to the debase, the diabolic, the shadow of the society. I use shadow here in a Jungian sense, in doing so I am asking about the role that the black male has been asked to play in western society.

Just as different children in the family system have been given different jobs (roles), I am suggesting that different ethnicities in the national family in Britain have been given different jobs (Alice Miller). Each of these plays out his/her prescribed role unconsciously until consciousness, (read intervention) reassesses and reconfigures reality exposing the deep unconscious trends and thus the new possibilities.

In his now classic work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon says:

The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is ...the absolute evil..At times this Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanises the native or to speak plainly it turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms (Fanon 1976, 32).

In revisiting the roles ascribed to white and black manhood by the western family system (patriarchy), we can see that white manhood was seen as honourable, rational, honest and reasonable - the highest virtues in western civilization. On the other hand black manhood was seen as lazy, ignorant, brute strength, sexually virile and in need of tutelage (hence being referred to as 'boy'). These are all of the characteristics that western civilization relegate to the debase or the shadow!

How does a 16 year old African-Caribbean British boy develop racist stereotype about a Somali youth? Is it that the 16 year old African-Caribbean youth still, unconsciously, accepts to play the role of unconscious, suppressed shadow in a society that now cannot publicly acknowledge the truth of its own racism?

Or is it as Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* would argue - he has internalized the racist (il) logic of the society and now spews it at the next generation of immigrants as his parents were subjected to the blatant racism upon their arrival? Which ever interpretation is used, this is stuff out of the collective shadow of the British psyche.

Industrialization, Modernity and Manhood

Robert Bly, Robert Johnston, Robert L. Moore & Douglas Gillette - connect ritual initiation with masculine maturity. Mature masculinity, they contend, taps into four archetypal energies:

- King - holds unity, blesses those who are growing and honours their talent
- Magician - turns base metal into gold
- Lover - the poet, the musician--empathy
- Warrior - defends the vulnerable and innocent, will raise his sword only for a higher cause

With the plantation system and then industrialization there was a further rupture in the social structure. The young males were separated from the older males ending an enduring social structure that ensured the socialization of the young male. The end of ritual initiation and the fathers leaving the home for the workplace are other levels of loss for the male. Without initiation, Robert Bly, in *Sibling Society* claims that the male is left to prolonged immaturity.

For the Caribbean male, the ruptured slavery and plantation system, the social structure of family together with modernity have exacerbated the problem. If a young male grows up with no positive male role model he is at risk. With men leaving the teaching and caring professions in pursuit of higher paying jobs, a young man can go through life with no positive male role models that he has access to and whom he can trust.

By making the adolescent into a social group in their own right, with no initiation and few role models, western society has created the worst social structure that can be imagined - uninitiated young males deprived of role models, adequate social structures with limited social restraint and limited and I might add often meaningless contact with adults. If teen rebellion was simply a function of the brain we should see the phenomenon across all cultures and all time. This isn't the case. The majority of pre-industrial cultures, where teens spent most of their time with adults, didn't develop a word for adolescent and most of the young males in these cultures didn't display antisocial behaviour. Also, a series of long-term studies began in the 1980's show that delinquency increased when Western-style schooling, television and movies were introduced to non-Western countries. (Robert Epstein, Scientific American Mind April-May 2007)

What we are dealing with here is a systemic problem that has no single approach or solution. At the heart of this is the inadequacy of western civilization to socialise the young male and foster mature and well integrated men. For the Afro-Caribbean male this is amplified by the history and the structure of the plantation system.

Discipline of Children

For hundreds of years, discipline of children was through corporal punishment - the smack or the cane. In ending corporal punishment in state schools in Britain (1987) and frowning on it as a society, has Britain given low income, low education, emotionally stretched parents the alternative skills of parenting and instilling discipline?

In poor African-Caribbean families in Britain this is usually a single parent family - a mother. These families are the ones where children are most at risk. What does it require to parent differently from how you were parented? Can this be done by someone in emotional survival mode? The children of this 'no smack' rule are all below 20 years old. How long ago did violence start rising amongst children in Britain?

I am not questioning the brutality of corporal punishment, I am questioning the emotional cost and levels of consciousness required to change the way you were parented. Has the Children's Act (1989), corporal punishment abolished (1987) and the genuine desire of society to safeguard the child, created the fear of accusations of abuse and an ethos that insulate the truant child from meaningful intervention?

For Caribbean families living in Britain this is a sore point. The change in law was not

reinforced with support to parents through re-education and a more active community social service delivery in the communities that have high poverty and truancy. I know families where both parents are professionals at high levels struggling with this law in the face of truancy of a child. In many families the law, correct as it is, has had the effect of the parent(s) abandoning the needy child in fear of social services. The child becomes the parent setting the agenda.

But this is not just about migrant families or poverty. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) report "Freedom's Orphans" paints a bizarre picture of child rearing in Britain. British children are the third worst binge drinkers. In Europe, when it comes to spending time around a table with a main meal, only Finland and Norway's parents spend less time than the British. This is another indicator of the quality of the family life across the board. We should not be surprised then that when it comes to violence, antisocial behaviour and promiscuous behaviour British adolescence also lead Europe. Justifiably Julia Margo, IPPR's Senior Research Fellow claims that "it isn't their fault":

"British teenagers spend more time 'hanging out' with their mates and less time with adults, while British adults are less likely to intervene to stop teenagers committing vandalism and other anti-social behaviour". (Julia Margo and Mike Dixon with Nick Pearce and Howard Reed 2006)

The lack of parenting is not just a problem with the poor; it is a systemic problem across the full social spectrum. When poverty is mixed with this national problem the results are disaster.

Gang Statistics

Looking at the issue from a global perspective we know that 6% of American youth have been in gangs and this figure is stable for the last 100 years (Spergel, *The Youth Gang Problem*, Oxford, 1995). In Trinidad, of youth 14-17 years old, drug use is low and gang risk is high:

- 7.10% - are associates of gangs (a friend is a gang member)
- 6.00% - are gang members
- 6.70% - are former gang members
- 29.70% - are at risk of being a gang member

In the USA 19-25% of 14-17 year olds are at risk. What is the correlate for the UK? Is it as high as the US or Trinidad?

Gangs Historical Perspective (Klein 1995)

Many times the news makes gang violence out to be a new urban phenomenon. Gangs go back a long way in history. The Tale of the Heike is an epic description of warring groups in twelfth-century Japan, on the brink of battle, these warriors would shout out to their adversaries the glories of their clan and the deficits of their rivals. The term 'gang' itself has been traced back at least to the writings of Chaucer in 1390. It appears in Shakespeare *The Merry Wives of Windsor* "There's a knot, a gang, a pack, a conspiracy against me". There were named gangs in London in the seventeenth century.

In 1925 the infamous "Forty Thieves" gang reigned in lower Manhattan (USA); The Halbstarke in Germany, the Blousons Noirs in France, the "Teddy Boys" in post-World War II England and the Bezprisonnye in post-revolutionary Russia. Oliver Twist (1838) is Charles Dickens' second novel. It speaks of youth gangs operating in London in 1830's.

Looking at this novel for clues to the rise and fall of youth gangs, we see that social dislocation in London was a key aspect of the problem. What we are dealing with here is the transformation of the work place - from agriculture to industrialization. This process involved mass migration from the rural to urban. It also caused great social displacement with the separation of fathers from their sons and the dislocation of families.

This movement coincides with London's becoming the centre of world capitalism and the shift of the economic cycle from regulatory to deregulatory. A regulatory cycle, as in (1645-1810 & 1905-1973) privileges the local over the global, while the deregulatory cycle (1345-1644 & 1810-1904 & 1973-present) privileges the global over the local in the mentalities and organization of the economy. With immigration and difficulty of assimilation into British culture the youths are one more time socially dislocated although in a totally different way from the 1830's. These shifts in the world system have had major impacts upon the nation, the village, the family and thus the youth involved. Remember that over the last 100 years 6% of youths were in gangs in America (Kline 1995).

What is our underlying view of youth culture? Harry Potter - Children are capable of heroism on their own and of accepting all the prejudice of their parents if badly socialized. Or, Lord of the Flies - Children revert to barbarism if left on their own. In Lord of the Flies - is the barbarism the result of nature or poor socialization (read repression)? These are competing mythological images of adolescent culture in the British psyche. This mythology or social construct is at the heart of adults approach to adolescents, parenting and the whole legal system.

Social transformation requires that we see race, class and gender as socially constructed (Like the matrix, an illusion to keep us imprisoned) and thus open to transformation. That we work tirelessly to expose the illusion of the construct knowing that they will not change in the short run. We prepare the soil of social change for the "Kyros" moment (the long term). In 1968 there was a significant transformation as in 1990. Structures that seemed stable and enduring collapsed in a relatively short time. That is Kyros.

"Who is to Blame?"

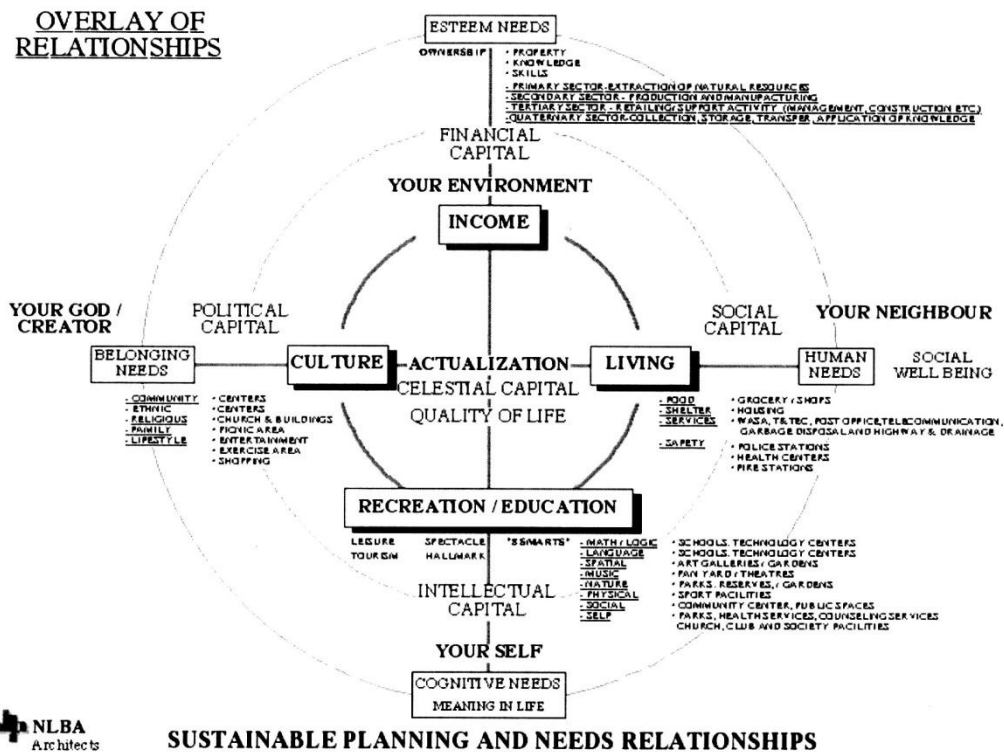
- Racism?
- Exclusion?
- Family Structure?
- Changes in discipline?

We are dealing with a systemic issue that has many levels and causes. **THERE IS NO SINGLE ISSUE, NO MAGIC BULLET.** At the heart of the problem is western civilization, its development, its stagnation, its co-modification of the human (especially the non-western). What we are dealing with here is a world system that assigns different roles to different groups (gender, ethnicity, class). This system exists everywhere that the western ideals are accepted as the inevitable future and highest good. Some have called it Mac World. It is imperialistic, snobbish and militant in the imposition of its culture. Yet as we have already seen the imposition of this culture disrupts traditional relationships between parents and children and ultimately the age old stability of the family and society.

A world-system was defined as a spatio-temporal whole, whose spatial scope is coextensive with a division of labour among its constituent parts and whose temporal scope extends as long as the division of labour continually reproduces the "world" as a social whole (Arrighi 1996).

This reproduction of the (western) world in all parts of the globe, Robert Epstein claims is at the heart of the adolescent culture with all of its dysfunction. Robert Bly calls this the sibling society; a society that lacks verticality and thus authority and role models or mentors who help the young through their rights of passage. All of our social actors, racism, social exclusion, family structure, discipline of children have contributed to the problem. All have a role to play. But these are the parts, the whole is what we call western civilisation. With all of its brilliance, it has not produced better communities or families, it has not eliminated alienation and rather than solving, it has exacerbated the social problem.

What is the level of intervention?
 Individual?
 Family?
 Community?
 Nation?

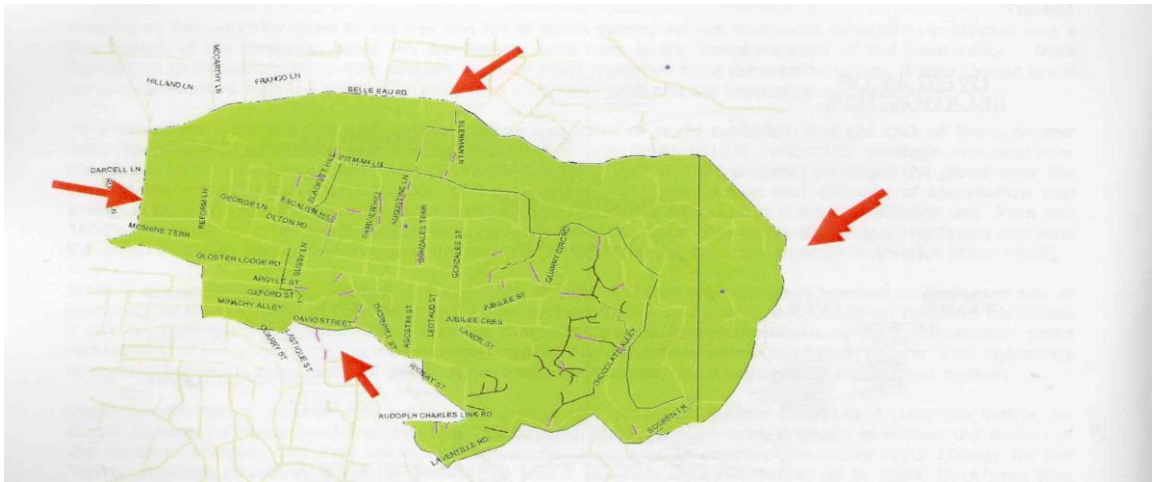


This diagram above was designed by Raul Poon Kong, an Architect friend of mine out of several conversations that we had on the human requirements for sustainable development. It outlines the human need. If you look at the outer ring at the four cardinal points you will see the four human needs - esteem, social, cognitive and belonging needs. Each of these in the next circle in relates to four types of capital - financial, social, intellectual and political capital. The fifth form of capital is celestial which is in the centre. Celestial capital comes from being right with God. Poverty is not only the absence of fiscal capital. It is more so the absence of more than three of these five or very low abilities in them. Some one who has the others, who loses everything in terms of fiscal capital, will rebuild in three to five years. Someone, who wins a lottery, who has little capital in the other areas, will lose the windfall within 3 to 5 years. Poverty is not one dimension. It is multi-dimensional. political, social and intellectual power in a cumulative way. Intervention at the individual level or the level of the sub group - teens who are antisocial will not bring the desired effect

Pride in Gonzales:

East Port of Spain is a very special area. Most of the spiritual home of calypso and carnival. Many of our there. It is the birth place of Pan and Rapso. It is the outstanding artists have come

from East Port of Spain. In this sense it has contributed significantly to the cultural history of Trinidad and Tobago. Crime in Gonzales has escalated beyond acceptable levels over the last few years. In 2003, at one stage there were five murders in five weeks. This was an alarming situation for the community. Between December 31, 2004 and January 13, 2005 (two weeks), there were six murders in five weeks. In the Gonzales community.



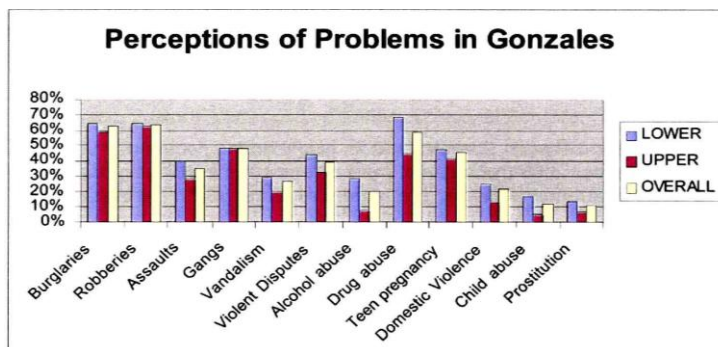
The Situation

Like an old medieval city, the community of Gonzales, has four main points of entry and exit (See map above, the arrows situate the various gangs). There are also pedestrian steps that allow access to Laventille, Belmont and Observatory Street. This geographical layout makes security in the area very difficult as a bandit on foot or bike who knows the area can easily elude the police in a chase. These steps also allow for free interchange between the communities. Five gangs operating in and around a community of less than 300 acres with a population of 5,650 make for a potentially explosive environment. The six murders which occurred in the early part of 2004 were all gang related.

Community Meetings

Gonzales has had several community meetings to discuss the high crime and violence. On June 13, 2003, in response to five murders in five weeks, St. Martin de Porres Parish, Gonzales hosted a community meeting of all the leaders of religious and cultural groups that operate in the area. This meeting allowed the various groups to begin a dialogue about the situation of crime, the needs of the youth and the need to address the apathy in the area. As a result of that initial meeting and many that followed, several social programs were implemented in the community.

Social Survey of the Gonzales Area



In a social survey conducted by the parish in August 2004, security was seen as the number one issue in the community by the 300 persons who were interviewed. The chart above shows the perception of the community. Drug abuse, robberies, burglaries, teenage pregnancy, gangs and violent disputes are among the highest perceived problems within the community. Only teenage pregnancy on this list does not fall under the heading of security.

At a community meeting on Saturday January 22, 2004, the community analyzed the problems it was facing and identified eight areas for urgent intervention, placing the list in hierarchy. There was unanimous agreement that security was the number one issue facing Gonzales. The identified issues are:

- Crime
- Unemployment
- Disposal of garbage
- Constructing New Facilities (Reconstruction of Community Centre, Construction of a Pan Theatre, Recreational space for children)
- Inadequate roads and infrastructure
- Street lights
- Inadequate social activities
- Lack of consistent water supply

Intervention Strategy

The community in partnership with the Canadian Institute of Planners, CIDA and the City of Saskatoon developed a nine step intervention methodology using the underlying philosophy of participatory governance:

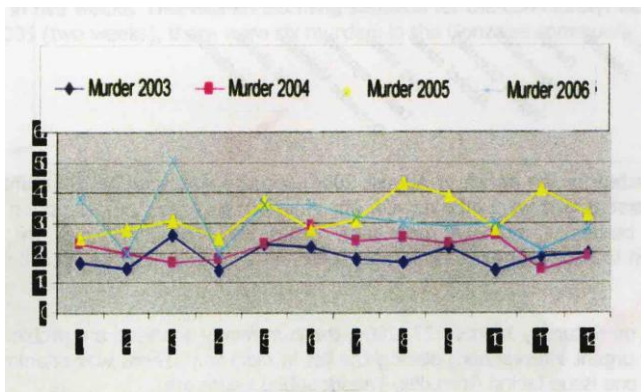
1. Identify the Village Leaders
2. Draft a village Vision/Mission Statement
3. Create an Asset Map
4. Identify the Issues
5. Form Working Groups around the Issues
6. Develop a Village Revitalization Plan
7. Establish a Village Project Management Team
8. Evaluate the Projects
9. Post implementation support for the Village

The intervention strategy targeted the whole village. This had the result of bringing together all of the positive elements and the leaders who were committed to change. Through participation in the analysis of the community and the creation of vision the leaders and the community began shifting the expectation of government authorities, the antisocial elements and the community as a whole. The impact of the ongoing village meeting was to build confidence, model new expectations of behavior thus forming collective agreements around all aspects of the community.

In 2006 there was a serious gang war between upper and lower Gonzales. Because of the social cohesion of the community we were able to bring the gang leaders to the table for conversation. The war was dismantled and the two leaders meet regularly to this day. After the dismantling of the war to March 2008, there have been no murders in Gonzales.

This gang intervention led to a second between Gonzales and its neighbouring community

St. Barbs in July 2006. That war was dismantled. In September 2006 these gangs were instrumental in bringing together all of the gang leaders of Trinidad in St. Barbs in an attempt at peace. The murder rate dropped in the ensuing months.



In his budget speech of 2007 the Prime Minister said: "The Government is lending support to a very interesting project... the Pride in Gonzales project, which involves the collaboration of a number of Government agencies, some NGOs and the private sector, all working to improve the social and physical conditions of the community of Gonzales and thereby producing a safer environment." (Prime Minister Patrick Manning, Budget Speech 2007)

I would like to call this intervention model the Steel Pan Model. The steel pan was derelict; it was a garbage bin that was used to make music. In this model the technocrats and the community work in partnership to bring transformation. This transformation is contrasted with other models that see development through slum clearance and replacing with high-rise glass and steel - negating the past and reconstructing a new morphology. In the Steel Pan Model--Development is achieved by taking the derelict and creating cultural inspiration.

Returning to an earlier theme of Jungian shadow opens other vistas. We think that the Shadow contains only the shameful parts of the human psyche. But it also contains the gold. Our best inspiration. To find it at a community level we need to trust that the community if given a chance and facilitated properly will find solutions for its problems. If given support, it will find new levels of expectation and living and ultimately will build capital in all of the five areas thus facilitating the movement from poverty to interdependence. All of the steps that you go through to transform a steel drum into a musical instrument are the same for the transformation of the community.

<i>Valuing the "discarded"</i>	<i>the community meeting</i>
<i>The fire of transformation</i>	<i>gang mediation</i>
<i>The tuning process</i>	<i>visioning the community</i>
<i>Blending de Pan-</i>	<i>breaking down the divide between different groups</i>
<i>Playing de Pan</i>	<i>the literacy of peace</i>

Facilitating the participation of the community is the key to intervention. Only when citizens have a say in their future at the level of a village or community, will we move from the antisocial behaviors to a community building approach. Within the Catholic tradition the principle of participation has been highlighted as a core element of social transformation:

...it puts an extra burden on Governments and those with influence to implement measures ensuring a higher degree of participation in society and its benefits, especially for the poor and marginalized. If this attempt is not made, there is danger of injustices becoming institutionalized and of the violence spiraling out of control. (Justice and Peace Shall Embrace,

Pastoral Letter of The Antilles Episcopal Conference On Crime & Violence, 2003)

"It is essential for every human being to have a sense of participating, of being a part of the decisions and endeavors that shape the destiny of the world. Violence and injustice have often in the past found their root causes in people's sense of being deprived of the right to shape their own lives. Future violence and injustice cannot be avoided when the basic right to participate in the choices of society is denied." (Pope John Paul II, (1985, *World Day of Peace Message* § 9.)

There is a connection between participation and violence. When people are shut out of the process or when technocrats make decisions for the people treating them as untutored masses, the paternalism fosters regression and resentment at deep levels.

Pride in Gonzales bears this out. In two surveys done in 2006 and 2007 looking at five different measures of citizen perception about their community, the 2007 measure demonstrates the perception that the community is greatly improved. In all categories of crime the citizens polled said they had less fear in 2007 survey than they had in the 2006 survey. In feelings of safety, there was a dramatic increase.

In 2006, 21.1% felt safe being home alone after dark, in 2007 56.9%.

Looking at the communities perceptions of crime, again the overwhelming trend was that things were getting better. 13.7% felt violent crime was getting better in 2006 and 52.1% in 2007. Looking at four categories of social disorder, in every one, the 2007 figures demonstrated a marked improvement over 2006. Like-wise the perception was that physical disorder had moved in the right direction. All of this led to the perception of effectiveness in dealing with the issues of the community (Johnson 2008)

The success of the program was because of the shifting power relationships within the community. In 2003, with a fragmented community the gangs set the agenda and the community responded with fear leaving the space for the gangs to take more power. With the visioning of the community, the emergence of new leaders and active groups, with civic participation as an ongoing experience, the community redefined the relationship. The gang intervention tipped the scale allowing the community to set the agenda and the gangs to shift to the community's agenda. This shifting power dynamics within a community is what must happen to move the young away from antisocial structures to developmental engagement and vision for their lives.

This cannot happen on the individual level in any sustained way. It is the village that allows the tipping point to be reached. It is the village that changes the power dynamic that allows new trends to emerge.

Remember the Dream

In the heady era of the 1970's the New Caribbean Person was the rallying cry both in the region and the Diaspora. We dreamed of egalitarian societies. We realized that black was beautiful. We demanded equality. We acknowledged the human's fundamental right to participate. We would not be sidelined from the process or society.

Three decades later, have we forgotten the dream? What is at stake is not simply different ideologies of development or security or lifestyles. I believe it is a different understanding of humanity - different anthropologies.

In late Capitalist anthropology:

- The human is a mechanism of production

- A commodity bought and sold on the market
- Objects in service of the perceived good of the nation
- The untutored masses have one contribution - menial work
- Only experts can solve our problems

This understanding of the human acts as a mental model (read paradigm) filtering the way we see the human and thus the way we engage or attempt to solve the social problems that we face. Because we see the human in mechanistic terms we attempt or approach social problems as one-dimensional with imposition from the "experts". In the 1960's the Catholic Church gathering in Council defined the human in different ways (Louis Jansen 1970):

- The person as fundamentally open to transcendence
- The person as self-conscious
- The person is directed outwards and inwards within a body
- The human person as original
- The human person as historical

To see the human person as the criterion for evaluation of society and social programs turns modern social policy on its head. The best social policies for transforming communities are the ones that emerge through a deep conversation between the community and the experts. This is why transformation cannot be done at an individual or sub group level in isolation. It requires a community committed to vision facing its urgent needs working together with the experts to solve the problems to provide an adequate geographical space for human transformation.

What we are facing is a Systemic problem that has many levels and subtleties. Its roots go back at least five hundred years. In the earliest forms of human organization, people used to be the purpose for the system or society or civilization. Are they still? We were:

- Hunter gatherers for hundreds of thousands of years
- Agriculturalists for tens of thousands.
- Industrialists for 300 years
- Knowledge-based workers for the last 20 years

The earliest stages of human civilization kept the human as the criterion for evaluation. It was the plantation system with chattel slavery that first saw the human only as a commodity in the labour market. The plantation system was the first attempt at industrialization. Its anthropology infected the whole social realm. This effect transferred to Europe and then America as the industrial revolution took root. It is only modernity with industrialism that saw the human in these mechanistic terms. Our problem is that we keep thinking of people through the mechanistic industrial paradigm.

If we use systemic thinking and the knowledge-worker paradigm we will find the creative solutions for living in this dispensation. This requires a shift in anthropology. Only this shift will give us the way forward to creating safer communities, stronger families, more grounded young people and ultimately an integrated national community.

Too often the response to youth crime and violence is devising programs targeted at the youth. These are important. But they will produce the desired effect only if they are integrated into a larger program that facilitates the whole community, building on its assets, towards a vision of a better future.

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