A case-study in the racialization of crime: Conceptualizations of Indo-Canadian Gangs

by

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Abstract

In the lower-mainland, British Columbia, Indo-Canadian gangs are a major topic of popular interest and crime policy. Generally, it is viewed that "defects" in Indo-Canadian culture cause gang activity. This conceptualization is laden with racial overtones as Indo-Canadians are labeled deviant and subjected to surveillance in the name of public safety. This thesis is a case-study of this racialization process; examining the views of professionals who serve as the gang-response structure of one British Columbian city. This study employs a "studying-up" methodology using one-to-one interviews as a primary method. The interviews were assessed through a critical race lens to situate participants' views within their wider social and ideological contexts. The study resulted in four main findings: (1) Indo-Canadian gangs are seen as unsophisticated; (2) They are caused by "bad cultural values" and bad parenting; (3) Solutions focus on retraining parents to impart "good cultural values"; (4) Indo-Canadians often "confess" their "cultural flaws" to be effectively corrected.

Keywords: racialization; crime; race/crime nexus; Indo-Canadian gangs; critical race theory; studying-up

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Indo-Canadian gangs have been described as "the biggest problem facing the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland" (Herar, 2009; Singh, Waterhouse & Plecas, 2006). Indo-Canadian gang involvement has been a hot-button issue in Metro Vancouver since the early 1990s. Some of the high-profile cases, such as the Dosanjh Brothers and Bindy Johal, even inspired the Canadian film *Beeba Boys* (2015). The Canadian television show *The 410* (2019) also dramatizes Indo-Canadian gang life. These artistic portrayals are accompanied by swathes of journalistic articles on the topic, suggesting an ongoing public interest.

In the popular imagination, defects in "Indo-Canadian culture" are seen as the major cause of Indo-Canadian gang crime (Buffam, 2018). This has resulted in a perceived need to "fix" Indo-Canadian culture to protect the public. To address public concern, many cities in British Columbia have developed strategies to address Indo-Canadian gang crime. Many strategies take on a racialized overtone, as they focus on "correcting" perceived "cultural flaws" that are understood to cause Indo-Canadian gang crime. Interventions often take the form of parent forums and classes where Indo-Canadian parents are taught how to pass on positive and "non-criminal" values to their children.

This study examines the gang response of one British Columbian city, through employing a "studying up" methodology and utilizing semi-structured interviews as the primary method. Participants in this study worked in key positions within the gang response structure of one British Columbian city; they included police officers, politicians, social service workers, school district members, and grassroots organizers. This thesis views these groups collectively as the city's "anti-gang apparatus," as they work to both create and implement anti-gang policy in their community.

The study adopts a Whiteness Studies paradigm to understand municipal responses to the "gang problem". This paradigm seeks to shift the focus "from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served" (Morrison, 1992, p. 90). It is a suitable framework since the study's focus is on the city's anti-gang apparatus as imaginers of Indo-Canadians and Indo-Canadian crime.

Indo-Canadians themselves play a major role in shaping and perpetuating an Indo-Canadian crime mythos. Indo-Canadian professionals continuously characterize their fellow Indo-Canadians for a white audience, often making use of common racist tropes. This sometimes takes place on a large scale through their use of the media, or on a small scale through formal/informal professional and social roles in which they instruct white colleagues and friends. Explanations often centre around an admission of cultural guilt where cultural flaws are confessed to and laid bare. This process is beyond the simple revealing of insider knowledge, as the content of these lessons tends to consist heavily of these admissions of collective cultural guilt and racist stereotypes (Buffam, 2016). Through admitting guilt, Indo-Canadians thus open themselves up to broad scrutiny and subsequent interventions (Foucault, 1978).

This thesis does not seek to generalize findings to a broader population. Rather, participant interviews are unpacked through a critical race lens to reveal their broader sociological and ideological contexts. Namely, what is known as the race-crime nexus (Chan & Chunn, 2014). The race–crime nexus refers to the overlapping of ideologies of race and crime wherein non-whiteness is aligned with criminality. This intersecting image creates the conditions for the intense surveillance and subjugation of racialized populations in the name of public safety (Chan & Chunn, 2014). Racialized peoples acquire a "folk devil" image in the public imagination, becoming "dangerous populations" to be managed (Chan & Chunn, 2014). Through a dialectical contrast, whiteness can then be exalted as good and lawful (Dabashi, 2011; Tator & Brown, 2008; Thobani, 2007). As such, the race–crime nexus serves as a hegemonic ideology to affirm a racialized social order. This thesis serves as a case study and microcosmic example of

this race–crime nexus as it is expressed through participant understandings of Indo-Canadian gang crime.

1.1. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters.

The literature review in Chapter 2 presents a broad overview of race and crime in Canada, followed by a closer discussion of Indo-Canadians and Indo-Canadian gang crime. Scholars have noted that ideologies, race, and crime blend together to uphold a racially hegemonic status quo (Brown & Tator, 2008). In particular, the concept of "gang" can be politicized to suit wider cultural and political contexts (Nijjar, 2018). Understandings of Indo-Canadian gangs are explored as a microcosm of these broader ideological contexts of race and crime.

Chapter 3, the theory and methodology chapter, covers the theories employed by this study, chiefly, the works of Gramsci and Foucault, as well as Said's concept of "Orientalism" (1978). As a description of western hegemony against brown folk, Orientalism is the major theoretical lens through which the study analyzes participant responses. This is followed by an outline of the "studying up" methodology and the qualitative methods used in this study.

In Chapter 4, I present the results of this research project and discusses the study's four major findings, namely, participants' characterization of Indo-Canadian gangs, views on the cause of the gang problem, views on effective solutions to the gang problem, and understandings of reliable intelligence regarding Indo-Canadian gangs.

The conclusion summarizes the paper and offers recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the surveyed literature relevant to the topic of this study. The chapter is divided into four sections: race and crime in Canada; gangs as a racialized concept; the history of the racialization of Indo-Canadians; and Indo-Canadian gangs. In the first two sections, the surveyed literature provides the theoretical background to "crime" and "gang" being linked in the public imagination to racial anxieties and the subjugation of racialized people. The third section provides the historical and political context of Indo-Canadians as racialized people within Canada. The last section describes the racialized public discourse about and response to Indo-Canadian gangs in particular. Together, this provides an overview of the role of race in crime ideology and Indo-Canadians' position within this ideology as racialized folk.

2.1. Race and Crime in Canada

Racialization can be understood as the development of a white epistemological gaze upon racialized others (Fanon, 1967; Morrison, 1992; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988). Blackness as we understand it is not a fact of skin colour; rather, it is an ideological image developed through the white gaze (Fisk, 2000, p. 64). The white gaze, in this case, refers to an ideology of white supremacy that constructs Blackness to be its ultimate and archetypical "other" (Fiske, 2000). Whiteness acts as a subject of knowledge creation regarding a racialized object; whiteness is the imaginer, and the racialized is the imagined (Fanon, 1967; Morrison, 1992; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988).

Within this racialized meaning-making process, white supremacist narratives are produced that link the racialized other to crime. Black folk, particularly black men, are characterized as socially, culturally, and physiologically different from Whites and as a threat to the dominant norms and social order with which Whiteness identifies itself (Brock, 2009; Tator & Henry, 2006). Through this ideological lens, the very existence of black men is a threat to the social fabric. This conceptualization of blackness as

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threatening renders it hyper-visible to surveillance measures. Fiske conveys this notion when alluding to Foucault's panopticon: "Today's seeing eye is white, and its object colored" (Fisk, 2000, p. 64) — meaning that through an ideology of white supremacy, blackness in particular becomes hyper-visible and over-surveilled. Thus, the ideological notion of blackness takes on real-world consequences through formal and informal surveillance of, and sanctions against, black folk.

The over-policing of racialized people is often understood through the concept of racial profiling. Criminologically, profiling is defined as being counter to policing. In policing, a crime is committed and then law enforcement investigates the crime to find the perpetrator. Conversely, profiling occurs when law enforcement selects a potential perpetrator who is then investigated to determine the existence of a crime (Holland, 2000; Martinot, 2003). Beyond apprehending a single offender, the philosophical underpinning of racial profiling is the management of "risky populations" in relation to their perceived dangerousness (Rose, 2002). That is, communities are viewed collectively as being *potentially* dangerous and therefore are managed to prevent crime from ever occurring.

Members of law enforcement as individuals within their broader social context bring their society's norms and values to this profiling process, often applying commonly held notions about race, class, and gender (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Essed, 2000). Stereotypes regarding the dangerousness of black, brown, and aboriginal folks mean that these groups are often targeted in surveillance measures. Indeed, the landmark Supreme Court case of R. v. Golden (2001) affirmed the existence of problematic racial profiling in Canada. The ruling recommended that Charter standards be developed to "reduce the danger of racist stereotyping by individual police officers" (Tanovich, 2002, 52). However, palpable resistance remains amongst law enforcement, who deny the existence of structural racism in favour of a "bad apple" explanation (Harris, 2001; Tator & Henry, 2006). Nevertheless, as demonstrated by Mosher (1998, pp. 162–181), racial bias has been visible through statistical data. In six cities in Ontario, including Windsor, Hamilton, London, and Toronto, 12% of all public order charges were against African Canadians, 11% against Aboriginal people, and 2% against Chinese. This was vastly

disproportionate to their actual numbers in these cities. Of those charged, African Canadians and Aboriginal people were the most likely to be imprisoned.

In their efforts to control public order offences, the police in these Ontario cities tended to focus on African Canadians. This led to the use of "disorderly-house and other public-morals laws . . . to control Black populations." African Canadians were required to appear in court more often than other groups to defend themselves against charges of property crime, and they received longer sentences when convicted. Moreover, African Canadians found in areas where property offences had occurred "were often identified as suspects, and the courts often found them guilty on the basis of such limited evidence." The mean sentence length for African Canadians for property offences was 10.51 months, compared to 8.33 for Aboriginal people and 6.26 for Whites.

Increased surveillance leads to an increased number of arrests, which in turn justifies increased surveillance of racialized communities, creating the impression of an effective approach (Glasser, 2001). Yet, importantly, the "hit rate" — the rate at which police discover a crime — is the same across racial lines, making racial profiling an ineffectual approach to crime management; nevertheless, it persists (Glasser, 2001). The persistence is therefore not due to an empirical reality. Rather, the racialized other is *symbolic* of a threat to a virtuous white society. The criminal justice system thus serves as a tool to protect this virtuous society against the threat of the "other" (Tator & Henry, 2006).

Accordingly, the racialized other is often not regarded as a "legitimate" victim of crime (Chan & Chunn, 2014; Comack, 2012; Thompson, 2010). Various studies have indicated that the legitimacy of one's victimhood increases in relation to one's adherence to normative class, race, and gender expectations (Diduck 1998; Hill Collins, 1993; Kline, 1993). Racialized folk by the fact of their race deviate from this normative standard and find their victimhood undervalued in the dominant discourse (Chan & Chunn, 2014). In this way, the notion of the racialized other as a threat creates not only over-surveillance but also leaves racialized others unprotected in the justice system.

Simultaneous to the racialized other being objectified into a symbol of criminality, whiteness becomes invisible. In short, while popular discourse has notions of "Black crime," "South Asian crime," and so forth, there is no notion of "white crime." In fact, Delgado (1995) refers to the category of white crime as "laughable in the dominant gaze," even though the majority of crime is committed by white folk and the majority of those incarcerated are white. This is because white crime is not understood racially but rather as a personal pathology and failing, particularly due to low socioeconomic status or mental illness (Tator & Henry, 2006). Yet in reference to racialized people, race as a monolith is pathologized and made problematic (Tator & Henry, 2006). The dominant discourse thus renders the racialized other as a highly visible aberration against the normative backdrop of whiteness, whereas "Whiteness normalizes itself . . . [and] thus ensures its invisibility" from the surveillance apparatus (Fiske, 2000, p. 62). Instead, the surveillance apparatus focuses on the highly visible racialized other.

2.2.   Gangs as a Racialized Concept

Social understandings of crime are often shaped by their historical and political contexts. For example, Tsoukala's (2016) study of the normative discourse on football hooligans and terrorists found that although terrorists pose a greater threat of harm, they are dehumanized to a lesser extent than hooligans. This is due to their position in the political field, where society assesses potential for harm based on social and political factors rather than objective measures.

Similarly, Alexander (2008) wrote that "'the gang' has developed a public life independent of any empirical foundation or conceptual exploration — full of its own sound and fury, but signifying very little" (p. 4). Essentially, the term "gang" has become a powerful buzzword, despite meaning little for practical application. What, precisely, constitutes a criminal gang is disputed and nebulous within the contexts of both policing and academia (Wood, 2010). Common definitions seem to centre around a group of youths who engage in criminal activity. In particular, some key characteristics include that "gangs" are an almost exclusively male phenomenon, with an emphasis on young men, and that "gangs" are primarily made of members of racial minority groups

(Alexander, 2008). However, the Metropolitan Police of London (2007) critiqued these definitions as still being "too varied and broad"; the boundaries of what constitutes a gang are inconsistent and blurred with other concepts such as peer groups and criminal networks.

As a nebulous concept, "gangs" become susceptible to malleability in wider social–political contexts, usually taking on highly racialized implications (Nijjar, 2018). For example, the politicization of "gang" as a concept can be illustrated by examining its use during the British Raj. In that period, British discourse stressed the rule of law as the mark of civilization, emphasizing that unlawfulness was synonymous with barbarity; this served as the key distinction between the colonizer and the colonized (Nijjar, 2018). In England, crime was often viewed individually, as an outcome of the personal shortcomings of a particular criminal; in India, however, the British viewed certain castes or tribes as more barbaric and thus more crime prone. The Thuggee and Dacoity Department was established in 1829 for the sole purpose of extreme surveillance and collective punishment of tribes (Nijjar, 2018). The department developed lengthy cultural reasons for why some tribes were inherently more crime prone than others, coming to associate "cultural primitiveness" with criminal behaviour. This form of governing through crime management helped not only justify colonial rule but also build and solidify myths regarding race, culture, and collective criminality. This is not to say that today's discourse is a direct continuation of the colonial one but rather that the race–crime nexus can be viewed as "a scavenger ideology, which gains its power from its ability to pick out and utilize ideas and values from other sets of ideas and beliefs in specific socio-historical contexts" (Solomos & Back, 1996, pp. 18–19).

Today, conceptualizations of gang activity continue to be highly racialized. In fact, criminal activity conducted by non-white people is more likely to be labeled as "gang activity" than similar behaviours conducted by a group of white youths (Cacho, 2012; Nijjar, 2018; Symons, 1999). For example, in London, England, the majority of Black citizens were listed as gang members or gang affiliated, with 78.2% of its gang database comprised of Black citizens. In contrast, only 12.8% of gang members in the database were white (Nijjar, 2018; Williams, 2015). The dominant discourse further

racializes the notion of gangs, with white gangs categorized and understood by activity (e.g., the KKK as a far-right hate group), while non-white gangs are categorized and understood based solely on ethnicity (black gangs, Latino gangs, Indo-Canadian gangs, etc.) (Symons, 1999; William, 2015).

The dominant discourse on gang crime has been described as a major site of othering. In particular, non-white people become "folk devils" through the gang discourse, in that they are viewed as "others" who are deviant and the cause of social problems (Williams, 2015). Symons (1999) found that the extreme reliance of police on cultural explanations for gang crime speaks to this process of viewing non-white people as folk devils. Non-white people are viewed as being unassimilated to their "host culture" and are therefore susceptible to joining gangs (Symons, 1999). This decontextualizes gang crime from a wider social context and serves as a boundary-making device between "lawful" Western culture and the "unlawful," unassimilable non-white people (Berda 2013; Nijjar, 2018). As such, explanations of "the gang" say more about the construction of racial/cultural difference, defined against the norm of [whiteness] than about "the gang" itself (Alexander, 2008). This is perhaps why "white gangs" have not formed a central part of the current media and policy debates, since this would focus on (structural) similarity rather than (cultural/racial) difference.

From a purely policy perspective, the vague gang concept presents other concerns, including becoming a catch-all concept; in a mode of circular logic, someone was murdered by a *gang* for being a *gang member*, because this is "what gangs do" (Alexander, 2008, p. 4). Thus, "gang" becomes a potent mythology, as it is used to describe and explain a plethora of criminal events and behaviours. By this process, gangs are collectivized through the notion of a "gang culture" and stereotypical images of senseless "ghetto" violence permeates public discourse (Alexander, 2008, p. 4). The notion of gang often serves as a public policy shorthand at the expense of understanding and addressing youth deviance through more complex and structural explanations, limiting the effectiveness of potential interventions (Pitts, 2007).

In fact, The UK's Youth Justice Board advised against the use of "gang" in its current form, citing it as an ill-defined concept:

> *Recently there has been a noticeable trend towards referring to groups of young people indiscriminately as gangs. This is not appropriate, and it could exacerbate the extent and seriousness of group-related offending or create problems where none previously existed.. . . most young people involved in group offending do not belong to gangs — even if others label them in this way (Daily Express, 2007).*

Instead, Alexander (2008) advocates for new and alternative interventions that can better encapsulate the structural context of youth deviance. They stress the importance of meeting youth needs in general; beyond a narrow focus on "gang prevention" and those who fit the "gangster" stereotype.

In summation, the imprecise notion of "gang" has various implications. Firstly, it causes confusion amongst law enforcement as to what constitutes a "gang" as opposed to a peer group or criminal network. Secondly, the vagueness of the concept allows it to be politicized as a "scavenger ideology," often at the expense of racialized communities. Thirdly, the catch-all use of the concept can affect public policy through overemphasizing an "ethnic" or "gang culture" rather than addressing the complexities of the structural context that contributes to youth deviance. In light of this, the present thesis understands the notion of Indo-Canadian gangs as revealing a "scavenger ideology" reflective of its historical and political context.

2.3. The History of Indo-Canadian Racialization

Against this ideological backdrop of the race–crime nexus and the politicization of "gang," Indo-Canadians represent a form of the racialized other. This section seeks to track the historical trajectory of Indo-Canadian racialization in Canada, from their initial arrival over 100 years ago to the present day (Failler, 2009; Johnston, 1984). As will be discussed throughout this section, Indo-Canadians have consistently been represented in the Canadian imagination through an imagery of deviance.

There are some token stories of Indians in Canada going back several hundred years; however, the first recorded landing of Indians in Canada took place in 1897, when Punjabi Jatt-Sikh soldiers stopped briefly in British Columbia on their way to take part in the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria (Walton-Roberts, 1998). Between this initial event and 1903, several hundred Indian immigrants settled in Canada, followed by continuous waves of thousands more settlers each year. In this early period, Indian immigrants mostly settled in Victoria, Vancouver, northern British Columbia outposts, and the villages of Matsqui, Clayburn, and Clearbrook, which today make up the city of Abbotsford. Most of these migrants found work in the lumber industry, some even coming to own their own lumber mills by the 1930s (Buchignani et al., 1985).

This wave of Indian immigration in the early 1900s had followed in the wake of Chinese and Japanese immigration to Canada in the late 19th century. British Columbians, mostly of Anglo descent, responded to the migration from Asia with racist fervency, advocating Canadian racial and cultural purity. This backlash included formalized legal sanctions, such as the Chinese Head Tax, and informal discrimination and attacks, such as the 1907 Vancouver anti-Asian race riots. Johnston (1984, p. 7) wrote: "The Chinese and Japanese had already been identified as unwanted immigrants, because they were foreign by culture and foreign by race, and Indians automatically fell into this same category." Hence, by the time Indians arrived on the Pacific coast, Canadians had already developed a deep disdain for non-white immigrants.

However, within the context of international politics, the case for Indian immigrants was markedly different from that of their Chinese and Japanese counterparts. In the early 1900s, Canada remained a protectorate of the British Empire and, like India, was under the rule of the British government and crown. Therefore, Indians as British subjects were entitled to automatic entry into the country, as well as the right to vote (Johnston, 1984), so the Canadian government could not enact overtly discriminatory laws (Khan, 1991; Sampat-Mehta, 1984). Instead, the governments of British Columbia and Canada began implementing discriminatory laws to curb Indian immigration.

The first of these, enacted in 1907, withdrew Indo-Canadians' right to vote, hold public office, and work in the public sector and remained in place until 1948 (Nayar, 2012). In 1908, the infamous Continuous Journey regulation was enacted, which required that immigrants "come from the country of their birth or citizenship by a continuous journey and/or through tickets purchased before leaving their country of their birth or nationality" (Statutes of Canada, 1908). At this time, India was the only country with no direct travel to Canada.

These political initiatives were coupled with hateful public and media vitriol. Inflammatory news articles were not uncommon, with Victoria and Vancouver newspapers painting Indian immigrants as "undesirable, degraded, sick, hungry, and a menace to women and children" (Johnston, 1984, p. 6). The negative perception of Sikhs in the public imagination continued to develop over the coming decades, particularly the association between the Sikh community and crime.

In the 1980s, Canadian officials found Sikh extremists in the Lower Mainland responsible the Air India bombing. Though the chief architect of the bombing could not be prosecuted, the Sikh community of the Lower Mainland experienced an increase in state and public scrutiny (Failler, 2009). In the 1990s, these concerns were coupled with fears of the "Indo-Canadian gangster," as the highly publicized case of the Dosanjh brothers came to public attention (Frost, 2010). Indo-Canadians thus have been understood as "unwanted immigrants," "terrorists," and "gangsters" in different periods of time as well as simultaneously. Today, all three images can be evoked in the imaginings of Indo-Canadian deviance (Johnston, 1984).

Permeating these images is the sense of Indo-Canadians as dangerous cultural "outsiders." Within the context of Canadian multiculturalism, race and ethnicity are conflated and seen as "natural," static, and distinct categories (Anderson, 1991). Through the lens of multiculturalism, European heritage is not a distinct ethnic category (other than in Francophone Quebec); rather, Anglo-European whiteness is the normative standard to which other groups are compared and subordinated (Walton-Roberts, 2005). Anderson (1991, p. 27) wrote: "Multicultural rhetoric supports popular beliefs about

'differences' between groups of settlers and strengthens the exclusionary concept of a mainstream (Anglo-European) society to which 'others' contribute." Porter (1965) revealed that the implication of this set up is the "vertical mosaic," wherein Anglo/French culture is regarded as most intrinsic to Canada and other racial categories remain in the cultural siloes of their heritage. A racial hierarchy exists in which Canadians of colour cannot break through a glass ceiling of whiteness to claim their Canadian identity entirely or fully access the structural opportunities available to their white counterparts.

Thobani (2007) further explored the notion of the "legitimate" Canadian citizen who embodies the values of the nation and is most entitled to its rights and privileges. A legitimate Canadian, or "exalted subject," is mythologized into representing positive qualities that are coopted by the state, such as peaceful, compassionate, rational, and so forth. Simply by virtue of their group membership, the exalted subject is seen as naturally embodying these positive traits. This is contrasted against "illegitimate" Canadians or "outsiders" (Indigenous peoples, immigrants, refugees, and racialized folk), who represent oppositional qualities. According to the national imagination, Indigenous peoples represent an unending demand for "special treatment" and land rights, while other racialized groups are seen as responsible for importing backward values, terrorism, and gang crime (Thobani, 2007).

Differences between the exalted subjects and the "others" are exaggerated, and commonalities are minimalized. The subjects and the others are seen in diametric opposition, despite living side by side in the same communities. Moreover, moral failure by an exalted subject is viewed as an individual shortcoming, since their group status allots automatic virtue. Conversely, failings of the other are seen as inherent defects of "their" culture, while successes are individualized (Thobani, 2007). The other as a collective is viewed as inherently defective, so any success at embodying state values is a personal triumph over their nature. Within this Hegelian dialectic, the identities of the subject and the other are compared to one another like a thesis and anthesis through which the national mythology of the legitimate Canadian is developed, negotiated, and reaffirmed (Thobani, 2007).

According to Thobani (2007), Indo-Canadians, as racialized people, fall into the "illegitimate Canadian" category and represent the outsiders within. The popular imagination paints Indo-Canadians as embodying oppositional negative values through which legitimate Canadian identity can be affirmed. Accordingly, Indo-Canadians' identity as exalted subjects is challenged through the imagery of "the unwanted immigrant," "the terrorist," and "the gangster." For this reason, the term "Indo-Canadian" is used in this thesis rather than "South Asian." The half-citizen implication of the hyphenated identity speaks to the structural power relations and identity politics central to this study's theoretical underpinnings.

2.4. Indo-Canadian Gangs

Despite their notoriety, Indo-Canadian gangs in British Columbia are described as "Level 1" of Knox's typology of gangs. As cited by McConnell (2015), these are gangs who "lack formal leadership or ties to other gangs" (p.28). At the lowest level of threat or sophistication, Indo-Canadian gangs can also be understood as "Wannabe Groups". As defined by Gordon (2000), these are youth who loudly boast to be "gangsters" for clout and engage in criminality as a spontaneous activity for social prestige.

Indo-Canadian gangs consist of groups of five to seven youths involved in mostly petty crimes (such as small-time drug trafficking) and personal rivalries for prestige (Hemmati, 2006, Kaloti, 2009; Singh ,Waterhouse & Plecas, 2006; Tyakoff, 2003). Tyakoff (2003) opined that a more accurate term for these youths would be "nuisance groups," though "gangs" remains the dominant term. These gangs have no cohesive organization, initiation rituals, turf, gang names or colours, or even specific goals (Kaloti, 2009; Singh, Waterhouse & Plecas, 2006; Tyakoff, 2003).

Studies have labelled Indo-Canadian gangs as the fifth most prevalent in Metro Vancouver behind East Asian, White, Aboriginal, and Middle Eastern gangs (Hemmati, 2006). Statistically, Indo-Canadians have a "significantly lower" crime rate than the general population in Canada (Tyakoff, 2003), with white youths being more likely than Indo-Canadian youths to take part in gang activity (Owusu-Bempah & Wortley, 2013).

In contrast, a 1994 study found that newspaper stories about Indo-Canadians were "nearly always crime related" and tended to emphasize the gruesomeness of violent crimes (Singh, 1994). In particular, since at least the 1940s, crimes committed by Sikh people have been emphasized in the media over those of other South Asians (Prahst, 2008). Sensationalism in the media has been labelled the major cause of public misconceptions about the scale and seriousness of Indo-Canadian crime (Gwiazda, 2008; Kaloti, 2009; Singh, 1994; Tyakoff, 2003), with 56% of British Columbians reported as believing that Indo-Canadians were responsible for the majority of gang activity (Braid, 2007; Bridge & Fowlie, 2006). Vancouver residents, in particular, felt that Indo-Canadians were the "most pressing danger" to public safety (Bridge & Fowlie, 2006).

Journalistic and academic enquiries have attempted to hypothesize the cause of Indo-Canadian gang involvement. Indo-Canadian gang members appear to be incongruent with the standard gang demographic (Singh & Plecas, 2006). Typically, it is thought that youths who come from poverty and have weak social bonds turn to gangs. However, Indo-Canadian youths involved in gang crime tend to be from the middle or upper class and have strong familial bonds (Singh & Plecas, 2006). This has caused many to turn to Indo-Canadian culture as the defining explanation for Indo-Canadian gang crime — specifically, Indo-Canadian cultural values are viewed as inferior and unassimilable to Canadian lawfulness, preventing Indo-Canadian youths from successfully embodying normative standards.

Several sources cite three (purported) problematic facets of the Indo-Canadian private sphere as the cause of gang crime: Indo-Canadian patriarchal values align with the patriarchal values of "gang culture"; Indo-Canadian children are spoiled, causing a lack of work ethic and a drive for the "easy money" of gang life; Indo-Canadian children are unsupervised because their parents are always working, allowing them opportunities to join gangs. These three alleged cultural problems continue to be repeated in various newspaper and academic sources (Bakshi, 2002; Hemmati, 2006; Herar, 2006; Kaloti, 2009; Singh & Plecas, 2006). One academic source claims the gang phenomenon is due to Indo-Canadians living in "a vacuum of misconception, irresponsibility and lack of awareness. . . . Indo-Canadian youth [lack] identity, spirituality, ethical values, and self-

esteem" (Kaloti, 2009, pp. 19–20). Similarly, the former BC Attorney General Wally Uppal claimed that Indo-Canadian parents were "more inclined to provide their children with material things than rules, limits, and guidance" (Brown, 2004). Indo-Canadians thus are being collectively pathologized and criminalized as a morally weak and dangerous population. As in the above example, this often occurs by Indo-Canadians upholding this process by repeating and affirming racist tropes about themselves.

The prevalence of Indo-Canadian gangs in the public imagination has caused policy makers to develop anti-gang interventions, many relying on anecdotal and autobiographical "cultural confessions" by Indo-Canadians who admit to the backwardness of "their" culture (Buffam, 2018). In particular, Bakshi's (2002) article in *Maclean's* magazine, which suggested defects in Sikh culture as the root cause of the gang issue, has stood out as a major policy influence and continues to be cited more than a decade after its original publication (Buffam, 2018). As a result, the perceived need to "fix" Sikh culture has led to parenting interventions and mentorship programs being implemented through various channels.

Buffam (2018), who agrees with Thobani (2007) that Indo-Canadians are painted as culturally isolated and inferior to law abiding white people, explains the racial implications of this phenomenon. Individual Indo-Canadians are utilizing "cultural confessions" to engage in this "legitimate Canadian" identity dance. By appealing to dominant ideologies of Indo-Canadians as importers of corrupt values, violence, and crime, they can align themselves (as individuals) with the legitimacy of the Canadian mythology. These confessions are painted as freeing and progressive forms of activism against Indo-Canadian backwardness, yet in reality they function as a method of racialized state subjugation (Buffam, 2018). Buffam explained that the Indo-Canadian domestic sphere has been politicized as an insulated incubator of anti-Canadian values and behaviours, and these cultural confessions serve as the means to render the Indo-Canadian home open to public scrutiny, control, and surveillance.

Buffam (2018) likened this phenomenon to the colonial experience in two ways. Firstly, in conducting "cultural confessions," Indo-Canadians are serving a similar role to

that of the informant who provides information to the colonial master. Secondly, colonial-style relations are affirmed through the content of the confessions. Namely, the confessions paint Indo-Canadian parents as failed authority figures who are unable to instill the values Indo-Canadian youths need to function in rational and lawful Canadian society. This encourages the Canadian state to take up a paternalistic role towards Indo-Canadians: "Young Indo-Canadians are afforded a political subjecthood that is characteristic of colonial regimes, which promised recognition to subject populations under the 'tutelage' of the ruler's (paternal) authority" (Buffam, 2018, p. 60). This is not to say that Indo-Canadian home and family life cannot be critiqued by insiders. The issue Buffam (2018) presented is that these cultural confessions continually seek to affirm hegemonic discourse regarding Indo-Canadians and thereby sanctify a paternalistic response from the Canadian state.

2.5. Conclusion

The reviewed literature implies that discourse regarding crime is developed in the context of power relations and meaning making. Notions of dangerousness are enmeshed with racialized fear and anxiety so that racialized peoples are collectively pathologized and seen as dangerous populations to be managed. This causes racialized peoples to be oversurveilled as well as delegitimized as victims of crime, and even as citizen-subjects (Tator & Henry, 2006). Within this context, the concept of the "gang" is weaponized as a political tool for the surveillance and subjugation of racialized groups (Alexander, 2008). Indo-Canadians have experienced racialization throughout their history in Canada, represented as "unwanted immigrants," "Sikh extremists," and "Indo-Canadian gangsters" across time and simultaneously (Johnston, 1984). Today's Indo-Canadian gang discourse views the Indo-Canadian home and family as dangerous enclaves of a backward cultural inertia that produces crime and violence, threatening Canadian values and society (Buffam, 2018). In doing so, this conceptualization affirms the identity of the white "exalted subject" as the true lawful, rational Canadian, in contrast to Indo-Canadians, who serve as the dialectical "other" and the outsiders within (Thobani, 2006). This study is situated within this scholarly context and argues that the Indo-Canadian

gang narrative can serve as a case study to explore these theoretical concepts of ideology, race, crime, and Canadian mythology.

Chapter 3.

Theory and Methodology

This chapter describes the theoretical framework informing this study as well as the methodology employed. The first section presents the theoretical framework as being situated within a critical perspective on ideology in line with the works of Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and Edward Said. Namely, ideology is seen as a discourse of power. Knowledge creation is not neutral but rather an ideology that legitimizes the social order (hegemony). As such, ideologies express and reaffirm power relations. This lens will serve to situate participants' perceptions as expressing a broader ideology that is based in power relations. This ideology will be understood through the works of the above scholars.

The second section of this chapter covers the study's methodology. Methodologically, this research falls under the umbrella of Whiteness studies by placing its focus on white supremacist hegemony. To support this focus, the study employs a "studying up" approach by conducting interviews with the city's anti-gang response structure to understand their conceptualizations of Indo-Canadian gang crime. Altogether, 12 interviews were conducted across various organizations in one British Columbian city. These interviews were then analyzed through a critical qualitative inquiry method to reveal five codes and two major themes.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

3.1.1. Knowledge Creation and Hegemonic Ideology

This thesis seeks to explore a city's anti-gang apparatus' conceptualizations of Indo-Canadian gang crime—in essence, the underlying *ideological* assumptions informing anti-gang policies and practices. No single, cohesive definition of "ideology" is used in sociology. Since sociologists are often looking at different phenomena when employing this concept, a cohesive definition would not necessarily be helpful (Eagleton,

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2007). As the purpose of this study is to add to a critical body of literature on Indo-Canadian gangs, I will employ a critical perspective on the concept, namely, ideology as a conjuncture of discourse and power, where knowledge is politicized to affirm the power of dominant classes. This definition reflects the works of Gramsci, Foucault, and Said, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

The epistemological base of this study views knowledge creation as a subjective, rather than objective, process. Nietzsche wrote: "every great philosophy has hitherto been a confession on the part of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir. . . . in the philosopher there is nothing whatever impersonal" (1973, p. 37). For Nietzsche, reality ceases to be an objective truth at the moment it is abstracted into a conceptualization. Each conceptualization reflects the creator rather than the reality they are observing. To put it simply: reality cannot be objectively described; all descriptions of reality instead represent "unconscious memoirs" of their creators, which reflect all their personal and social standpoints towards the subject of interest. This study thus understands participants' conceptualizations not as testimonials containing objective truth but as subjective reflections of broader ideologies and power relations apparent in the participants' sociocultural context. As such, the analysis of their statements does not serve as a generalization but as a critical unpacking.

Those in power (the hegemon) coerce their subjects not only through physical intimidation but also through the production of a common sense, a set of beliefs that is accepted by people (Gramsci, 1971; Hoare & Sperber, 2015). This common sense expressed through different narratives supports those in power and justifies their position at the top of the hierarchy, reaffirming the social order. Hegemonic ideas are widely accepted within society and believed even by those whom they actively oppress. Hegemonic ideas serve to legitimize the power of dominant classes and reaffirm the social order (Hoare & Sperber, 2015). In this way, knowledge is not neutral; rather, it is a discourse of power used to achieve specific goals.

Foucault followed the Nietzschean logic cited above, viewing knowledge as a highly subjective expression of the social context: "knowledge does not slowly detach

itself from its empirical roots, the initial needs from which it arose, to become pure speculation subject only to the demands of reason" (Foucault, 1991, p. 11). As such, knowledge does not uncover some pre-existing core truth; rather, it defines our reality by creating the confines of the definition and can therefore be observed within reality (Foucault, 1991). These definitions are made within the context of power, where "'power is everywhere', diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and 'regimes of truth'" (Rabinow, 1991). Truth becomes a "general politics" where types of discourses are accepted as true (or false) by those in positions of power who can confirm what is true (Rabinow, 1991). This vision of truth becomes a major site of social discipline and conformity, and Foucault pointed to the "disciplinary power" that makes up administrative systems and social services such as prisons, schools, and psychiatric hospitals. As such, knowledge becomes the basis of these corrective institutions, which shape individuals accordingly.

In the context of power/knowledge there exists three modes of objectification. Where medieval regimes viewed land as the site of subjugation, shifts in Renaissance-era thought placed a new focus on the control of bodies— referred to as "biopower" (Ranibow, 1991). This process of objectification—that is, the body being rendered as an object to be studied and controlled—occurs in three ways. The first mode is "dividing practices," where a group is understood as ontologically separate from the masses and is isolated, sometimes spatially and always socially (e.g., in prison) (Ranibow, 1991). The second mode of objectification deals in scientific classification through the development of disciplines charged with understanding and classifying human life, bodies, labour, and language in ways that appeal to "universal human truths," despite their situatedness within a particular historical context. The final mode of objectification is self-subjugation. Individuals within the third mode are actors in understanding and defining themselves in relation to sanctioned discourse and rendering themselves as objects of this power/knowledge.

Edward Said built upon the work of Gramsci and Foucault through examining the role of European knowledge systems in developing a hegemonic narrative about brown folk (North Africa to India) that justified their colonial oppression. Said's work is

particularly relevant to this study, as it relates to ideologies of the white hegemon regarding brown folk. As the dominant class in Canada is white, whiteness holds the power to develop knowledge regarding Indo-Canadians as racialized folk (Thobani, 2013). Notably, Orientalist ideology was directly employed by the British Raj in India and continues to influence modern understandings of those of Indian descent today. For this reason, Said's *Orientalism* is a major theoretical influence in this thesis, as it seeks to critically deconstruct narratives about Indo-Canadians as brown folk in relation to a white hegemon.

The Orientalist hegemonic narrative painted the East as the negative antithesis to the West where "European culture gained strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said, 1978, p. 3). Indeed, the popular notion of the Orient was largely invented by colonial Europe to define the East "politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" as its contrasting image (p. 3). The implications of this invention reached beyond the realm of ideas, as Orientalism helped Europe claim and justify its global supremacy. Therefore, hegemonic ideas have historically created real material consequences for both the Occident and the Orient.

Exteriority is a major characteristic of Orientalist thought. Representations of the Orient have historically been constructed by Westerners, through a Western lens, for consumption by a Western audience. Orientalism is concerned primarily with its own perception of the Orient, rather than deep study of that subject, creating an "imaginative geography" (1978, p. 72). This scholarly undertaking allowed the East to become more knowable to the West and ultimately informed Europe's colonial undertaking. Said argued? That Orientalist thought was self-reinforcing at the expense of accuracy. The assumption of Western authority gave Westerners permission to speak about and for the Orient, creating second-order knowledge (1978, p. 72). For example, French writer Gérard de Nerval problematically cited British scholar Edward Lane's book on Egyptians to lend authority to Nerval's book about Syrians (1978, p. 72). Despite the two men writing about two different countries in different time periods, the view of Orientals as an ahistorical and homogenous mass made such cross-referencing possible.

The result of this self-reinforcing meaning-making process was "Europe's collective daydream of the Orient," which was largely stockpiled with reoccurring images of the East as violent, fatalistic, and lustful (Said, 1978). This allowed Europe to view itself as a beacon of progress and civility in contrast to this imaginary of the Orient. Hegemonically, this rhetoric justified western presence as benevolent in an Orient marked as too backward for self-governance.

Said's methodology rests in an analytical approach known as cultural history. His attempt to describe the framework, creation, and perpetuation of Orientalist ideology focuses on analyzing a large breadth of texts on the Orient spanning several centuries and encompassing many genres. His theoretical vantage point is heavily influenced by Gramsci and Foucault, focusing on the concept of the hegemonic narrative and the role of power relations in the production of knowledge. The epistemological viewpoints of all three authors thus inform this study, which understands participants' views (meaning-making) as subjective expressions of their social context and broader power relations, rather than as objective truths. Said's (1978) work provides the critical lens through which the study understands participant views of Brown folk.

Thus, in the context of this thesis, the knowledge presented within participant interviews is understood to be both highly subjective and an expression of power. Knowledge creation is reflective of an individual's positionality within a cultural, historical, and political context. When the subject of knowledge creation is in a position of power, their knowledge becomes hegemonic in nature when it is widely accepted and used to discipline others and reaffirmed the social order. In this case, participants are able to create and enforce policy within their city, meaning their knowledge is an expression of power that can result in real material consequences for those under their jurisdiction.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Studying Up

As indicated earlier, the methodology of this study is informed by Whiteness Studies. Key scholars such as Toni Morrison and Ruth Frankenberg worked to develop a

critical study of whiteness in the early 1990s. This perspective views whiteness not as neutral but rather as a meaningful social construction. In her seminal book *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993), Frankenberg argued: "race shapes white women's lives, just as much as gender shapes men's lives or sexuality shapes heterosexual lives." Indeed, whiteness studies seeks to shift the critical race focus from "blackness" or the "other" (the racial object) to whiteness as the racial subject. Likewise, Morrison (1992) wrote: "My project is an effort to avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served" (p. 90). Whiteness studies seeks to understand the ways in which white folk and white supremacist hegemony work to perpetuate the subjugation of racialized peoples, and it attempts to destabilize whiteness as a knowable, rather than invisible, social category (Tator & Henry, p. 22). For this reason, the present study focuses on a city's anti-gang apparatus as producers of knowledge, rather than on Indo-Canadians, who are the subject of this knowledge-making process. As subjects of anti-gang conjecture and policy, Indo-Canadians are made visible, whereas the city's anti-gang apparatus is invisible. This study seeks to make this anti-gang apparatus visible and knowable through an analysis of their views.

I employed a "study up" methodology by conducting interviews with professionals working on the city's gang response. In this approach, a researcher studies a group that has considerable social power, to understand and critique how established social structures contribute to social inequalities (Nader, 1972). A "studying up" methodology shifts the line of questioning from the oppressed to the advantaged: "Instead of asking why some people are poor we would ask why other people are so affluent? [sic] How on earth would a social scientist explain the hoarding patterns of the American rich and middle class?" (Nader, 1972, pp. 5–6). As such, the studying up approach represents a shift from a traditional research approach that would focus on participants who have less social power than the researcher.

This critical approach is particularly important due to India's history of colonization and the way knowledge production has been historically used as a tool to justify colonial oppression (Said, 1978). It is acknowledged within the social sciences

that the researcher's standpoint affects both the types of questions they ask and how they interpret the data (Harding, 1992). Power deeply affects this standpoint, so when researchers "study down," they run the risk of producing knowledge that reaffirms the status quo and their privileged position. This study thus seeks to focus on the gang-response structure as opposed to the "Indo-Canadian gangster" to gain insight into dominant ideologies (employed by participants) in relation to the "racialized other" (Indo-Canadians).

3.2.2. Research Questions

The key research questions of this study are:

1. How do participants understand Indo-Canadian gang activity?

2. How does this understanding inform their gang-prevention and response strategies?

3. What ideological mythos are invoked by participants, and what are their potential implications for race relations?

In essence, I seek to understand the ideological underpinnings of the views of participants through a critical race lens.

3.2.3. Qualitative Case Study

The qualitative case study was chosen as the primary method for this study—specifically, one-on-one interviews of professionals from one British Columbian city. Qualitative research analyzes the subjective meaning of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardized and non-numerical data (Flick, 2014). Qualitative methods seek to understand participants' subjective constructions of social phenomena. Usually, qualitative research questions are concerned with exploring and describing participant beliefs and experience. This contrasts with quantitative methods, which seek to find conclusively generalizable data and establish causation (McGill, 2022). In particular, the one-to-one interview method is used in qualitative research to gain nuanced understandings of participant beliefs and experiences (Ryan et al., 2013). As such, qualitative methods and the one-to-one interview method corresponds well to the purpose

of this study, which seeks to understand participants' beliefs regarding Indo-Canadian gang crime.

After obtaining ethics approval from Simon Fraser University, I conducted twelve one-on-one interviews with participants across several institutions of one British Columbian city. The interviews were conducted over a period of three months from March-June 2020. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and took place over the phone. As this was the beginning of the pandemic, zoom meetings were still a rather new phenomenon, so participants chose the phone-call format. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I did not meet with any participant in-person at any point during the study. Participant observation of these groups' anti-gang events was chosen as a supplementary method; however, no events took place over the course of the study, due to Covid-19 restrictions, so the qualitative interviews were the sole method used in this study.

The qualitative interview method is often used to ascertain opinion and lived experience (Rahman, 2017). While surveys can be employed for this purpose, I felt this approach was inappropriate in this case, as the pre-set questions of surveys limit participant responses. Though the survey method could have allowed for a larger study population, a qualitative interview method would provide depth (over breadth) of data (Rahman, 2017).

3.2.4. The Participants

The study population was comprised of professionals who were working to respond to Indo-Canadian gang activity in a British Columbian city or had recently retired from such a role. These individuals included members of a city council, an anti-gang task force, a municipal police department, a school district, a community services group, and an affiliated grass-roots advocacy group. There were no exclusion criteria, outside the topic of this study. In total, I interviewed 12 participants.

In order to protect participant confidentiality, the British Columbian city that is the subject of this case study is not disclosed. I have also given participants pseudonyms, using a random name generator based on the ethnicity of their original names. I decided

to keep the ethnic component of their identities due to the study's central theme of race and culture. Participants self-identified as Indo-Canadian (66%) and European-Canadian (34%). The gender ratio of the participants was 75% male and 25% female. Participants' ages ranged between approximately 30 and 65 years old.

Table 1. **Study Population**

Name (Pseudonym)	Institution	Ethnic Heritage
Tejinder	Anti-gang task force	Indo-Canadian
George	Anti-gang task force	Indo-Canadian
Harjeet	Anti-gang task force	Indo-Canadian
Susan	City council	Indo-Canadian
Fred	City council	European-Canadian
Gary	School district	European-Canadian
Brendon	School district	European-Canadian
Peter	Municipal police	European-Canadian
Diljot	Municipal police	Indo-Canadian
Sukh	Municipal police	Indo-Canadian
Jenny	Advocacy group	Indo-Canadian
Kalwinder	Community services	Indo-Canadian

Initial contact was made with research participants through already established connections with the police department, school district, community services, and municipal government (city council). I developed these distant professional acquaintances as an undergraduate. I do not know whether participants would have recognized me by either face or name, and I do not believe this distant professional acquaintanceship from five years prior to the study caused participants to feel any personal obligation to participate in the study. After this initial contact, snowball sampling was utilized to recruit new participants: once, I had finished the interview, I asked the initial participant to ask a colleague whether they would be interested in taking part in the study and whether I had permission to contact them. Once permission had been established, I contacted the potential participant.

3.2.5. Data Collection

The interview was semi-structured, with a set of pre-determined questions, plus additional probing questions used as clarifiers. The interview questions were divided into

two parts (see appendix). The first part focused on the participant's organization and its role in addressing Indo-Canadian gang crime—for example, "How does [institution name] work on the Indo-Canadian gang issue?" and "Who does [the institution] collaborate with on the issue?" The second part delved more deeply into the participant's personal views on Indo-Canadian gang crime, with questions such as: "What do you see as major causes of Indo-Canadian gang activity?" The interview questions thus sought to develop a general overview of the participant's understanding of Indo-Canadian gang crime and intervention methods (see the Appendix for the interview structure).

3.2.6. Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and uploaded to NVivo 12, a qualitative data analysis software package. The transcripts were then assessed for codes and, later, emergent themes until saturation was achieved. Critical qualitative inquiry (CQI) formed the lens of inquiry throughout the data analysis process. CQI seeks to investigate power as a major theme in a qualitative study. This is achieved through a "making the familiar strange" approach to data by critically engaging with taken-for-granted and common-sense beliefs as expressions of hegemonic discourse (Denzin, 2015).

Using NVivo, I identified five major codes across the interview transcripts: characterization, causes, critiques, solutions, and intelligence.

1. Characterization refers to participants describing the nature of Indo-Canadian gangs in terms of either activities or demographics. Fictionalized example: "Indo-Canadian gangs tend to be engaged in the small-time drug trade."

2. Causes refers to participants stating causational factors for Indo-Canadian youths to join gangs. Fictionalized example: "Indo-Canadian youths join gangs because they would like easy money to buy high-status goods."

3. Critiques refers to participants making critical statements about intervention methods. Fictionalized example: "The public forums are ineffective because they tend to attract parents who are already concerned with parenting well."

4. Solutions refers to current or hypothetical intervention methods that participants view as being effective. Fictionalized example: "A focus on early-childhood prevention, such as elementary school talks, would be most effective in stopping Indo-Canadian gang crime."

5. Intelligence refers to participants' views on important and unimportant sources for understanding gang crime. Fictionalized example: "I like to rely on internal reports to understand Indo-Canadian gang crime."

Once identified, these five codes were re-evaluated to extract key findings. Across these codes, four major categories in participants' understanding of Indo-Canadian gang crime became apparent: (1) characterizations of Indo-Canadian gangs; (2) understandings of the causes of Indo-Canadian gangs; (3) understandings of effective solutions to the gang problem; and (4) understandings of reliable intelligence. I then explored these conceptualizations through a critical race lens to identify any emergent racial narratives and assess the potential implications of these narratives. These findings and my critical analysis of them will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

3.3. Limitations of the Research Methodology

This study employs just one research method (qualitative interviews). The use of one or more other methods may have helped to mitigate the weaknesses of a qualitative interview method and added to the breadth of understanding of the phenomena under consideration. Weaknesses of a qualitative interview method can include an overemphasis on individual perspectives, devoid of their social context (Rahman, 2017). This weakness was lessened by using a critical race lens, which applied a macro (contextual) perspective to the data analysis.

Secondly, policy makers and institutions, wrongly or rightly, commonly view the qualitative interview method as less credible than quantitative methods. Studies have found that policy makers preferred the cut-and-dried nature of quantitative statistics and were less likely to take qualitative research seriously when developing social intervention methods (Sallee & Flood, 2012; Ratvich, 2010). Thus, the very use of a qualitative method in this study may make it appear less significant in the eyes of participants as

they create social interventions. However, providing practical suggestions is not within the scope of this study.

Lastly, as is common in qualitative interview methodology, the study employs a relatively small population size in just one city. This makes generalization to a larger population less accurate than quantitative methods, which can study a larger population (Rahman, 2017). While this study does not necessarily seek to extrapolate to a larger population than studied here, the macro theoretical perspective can enable inferences to the larger structural context of the participants, who do not live in a social vacuum.

3.4. Summary

This study's theoretical framework is based on the works of Gramsci, Foucault, and Said. Specifically, it holds that the ideas expressed by the participants do not represent neutral knowledge; instead, the participants' meaning-making narratives are an expression of power that works to serve the social order. In particular, Said (1978) revealed that brown peoples are often painted as an "ideal other" in the Western imagination, where the West represents goodness, rationality, and progress, and Brownness comes to represent badness, irrationality, and backwardness. This type of ideology serves to legitimize the subjugation of Brown peoples. I employ this theoretical lens in the context of this study because participants engage in meaning-making processes regarding brown folk.

Methodologically, this study falls under the Whiteness Studies paradigm in its focus on white supremacist hegemony. In accordance with this perspective, a "studying up" method was employed through one-on-one interviews with 12 professionals who hold relatively high positions of power in addressing the gang issue within one British Columbian city. Through a critical qualitative inquiry approach, data was assessed from the critical race perspective, with a focus on common-sense assumptions and their evocation of a hegemonic discourse.

Chapter 4.

Findings

This chapter addresses the four major findings that emerged from the analysis of participant interviews. Finding 1 addresses how Indo-Canadian gangs are characterized by participants. Finding 2 explores participants' views on the causes of Indo-Canadian gangs. Finding 3 examines participants' views on effective solutions to the gang problem. Finding 4 explores participants' views on reliable intelligence and confessions of cultural guilt.

4.1. Defining Indo-Canadian Gangs

Participants described Indo-Canadian gangs in three main ways: as being small groups of friends engaged in low-level drug dealing; as representing a "new" sort of nebulous and unidentifiable type of gang; and as gangsters tending to come from "well-off" families. These three descriptors and their interlocking nature will be explored in detail in this section.

Across nearly all participant interviews (n = 11/12), Indo-Canadian gangs were described as small friend groups engaged in low-level drug trafficking. Sukh, a police officer, said:

> *It's not like your traditional gangs; like if you look at movies and American gangs, it's not sitting there on street corners or anything like that, where you wear your colours or are openly representing one side of a gang compared to another—it's very subtle in that sense. It's just low-level drug trafficking happening in town.*

This is congruent with studies that defined Indo-Canadian gangs as having the lowest levels of organization and sophistication, as they lack organization, leadership, turf, or goals (Hemmati, 2006; Kaloti, 2009; Singh & Plecas, 2006; Tyakoff, 2003). Brendon, from the school district, echoed this sentiment:

We don't have traditional gangs here. So, traditional youth gangs are hierarchical leaning. We don't experience that here. They very much don't have a geographic area. So, they can just float around. They don't even have necessarily allegiances to one organization or another. They don't have a code of conduct.

Yet despite this characterization by participants, an immense number of resources are directed at quashing these gangs. The police department has its own anti-gang task force, with Indo-Canadian gangs being a major issue. Moreover, the city's school district and social services run two parallel rehabilitation programs: one for Indo-Canadian gangsters and one for all other ethnicities. When asked, Brendon (school district) and Kalwinder (social services) stated that they didn't know why the program was split into two streams, but the difference was that the Indo-Canadian stream offered family counselling (as compared to the individual counselling of the other stream). Thus, while participants describe Indo-Canadian gang crime as unsophisticated, their focused intervention efforts seem incongruent with this view.

Diljeet, a police officer, explained:

they're struggling to make money at the end of the day, the South Asian portion of gangs . . . [those really making money are] the more bigger criminal organizations like the mafia or the Hell's Angels. On that large scale, from my experience, I haven't really seen a lot of South Asian people involved. Overall, in the grand scheme of things, we're not that heavily entrenched as a community.

He and another participant, George, shared the sentiment that with so many anti-gang resources focused on Indo-Canadian gang crime, other communities were slipping through the cracks. George, a police officer who rehabilitates gang members, said:

I kind of realize hey, wait a minute. Like, why are we, I know it's disproportionate but this is like ridiculous when 90% of your referral [is Indo-Canadian] but when I realized well, that's where we advertise right now. . . . Why are we not reaching out to [other communities]? . . . the advertising is to that community primarily. It's like we're just here to help the South Asian community. That's why we had a lot.

Even though participants described Indo-Canadian gangs as small-time criminals, as George explained, the majority of anti-gang police resources were being poured into quashing them.

Part of this overfocus can be explained by the shifting definition of "gang," as described by many participants. They explained that initially, definitions of gang were centered on an organized crime group with a clear hierarchy, geography, and goals. Subsequently, the definition shifted to include any loose group of acquittances engaged in any sort of crime. It was under this new definition that Indo-Canadian crime was being understood as a "gang" issue.

Only one participant, Susan, a city counsellor, expressed a critical take on the shifting definition:

> *I saw different fads come in with the gangs. Loosely, I'm using that term "gangs," loosely. You know that what we see today is not really "gangs," right? . . . Now even anybody in the drug trade can be loosely identified as connected to the gangs.*

Others described this shifting definition as a hinderance in their work—as if the nature of gangs themselves were changing rather than the definition. Diljeet expressed this notion:

> *When I first started . . . that was the era of a different type of gangster. You had the Bacon Brothers, they were identifiable. There's this trend, it's like new gangs, but they're not identifying themselves when they're interacting with the police or the public. They're not saying, "Well, I'm a part of this organization," right, the markings are there not there anymore. . . . So it makes our job a little bit hard in terms of like, identifying.*

In this case, Diljeet felt it was not the definition of gang that had changed, but rather gangs themselves had shifted into being more discreet.

Diljeet's colleague, Peter, shared this characterization:

> *What I am noticing though is that in the last three years, you know, certainly previous to that, all the gangs had a leader and were very identifiable, like the Red Scorpions. Now, I think it's more nebulous. . . . So, it may not be as identifiable.*

Again, Peter understood this shift as relating to changes in the nature of gang crime rather than its definition. Brendon also shared that the lack of identifiable characteristics of gangsters made it increasingly difficult to identify at-risk youths in the school setting.

In the context of this study, as noted earlier, participants found that definitions of "gang" have shifted over time to encompass activities by Indo-Canadians. They explained that previously, gangs constituted sophisticated groups with clearly identifiable leaders, hierarchy, turf, and goals. Over time, this definition swelled to include Indo-Canadian gangs' lack of these features. Participants explained their work as becoming more difficult as they tried to accommodate the vague gang concept in their interventions.

Indo-Canadian gangsters were commonly understood to come from affluent families. Participants explained that there could be little financial motivation for Indo-Canadian boys to take part in gangs, given that their parents could provide them with ample financial support and luxury goods. Diljeet, a police officer, said, "I don't understand why our youth are gravitating towards this type of lifestyle. They all come from good homes, right. Parents are pretty well-off. Some of these kids would probably never really have to work a day in their life." Harjeet shares his colleague's confusion: "We financially were pretty well off. And that used to baffle me too. Why is it our kids? Our money's not the issue, right? And that's it. That's the difference [between Indo-Canadian gangsters and other gangsters]." Manpreet, a social worker, expresses a similar sentiment: "I've heard at different conferences, that usually with other gangs and other gang members, they're usually in low poverty homes and their families are broken…what they do – they connect with gangs, right? But for South Asian youth, it was like these kids are all coming from - I keep hearing this over and over – they're all coming from middle-class families. They come from these hundred-thousand/million-dollar homes."

Other participants also alluded to these families' luxurious and high-profile lifestyles. Bruce, a city councillor says Indo-Canadian parents provide their children with the "latest iphones" and "latest shoes" but fail to provide the "love…guidance and supervision" required to keep children out of gangs. Peter, a police officer, agrees that

parents who drive "a Mercedes" and wear a "gold watch they can barely afford" set a poor example to their children who then seek out the flashy lifestyle associated with gangs.

Buffam (2014) hypothesized that this economic component adds to the social anxiety regarding Indo-Canadian gangs. That is, traditionally, racialized people were seen as people of the outskirts, geographically and economically isolated and subordinate. The financial prosperity of some Indo-Canadians and, consequently, any deviance, is being shifted into spaces previously associated with whiteness. Racialized criminal activity is not being relegated to some far-flung ghetto but rather to high-end nightclubs, restaurants, and "nice" areas of town. Transgressions by the "other" in these forbidden places adds to the indignation caused by the transgressions themselves. This cognitive dissonance, of brown bodies in white spaces, can be understood as the social context and racial anxiety surrounding the shifting definition of "gang" to fit the case of Indo-Canadian crimes.

In summary, participants understand Indo-Canadian gangs as being unsophisticated friend groups who engage in small-time drug trafficking. Yet despite this conceptualization, major policy initiatives are being enacted to quash the Indo-Canadian gang issue. This is in part due to a shifting definition of "gang," which has expanded to include less organized and less serious forms of crime. Within their careers, the study participants had witnessed the definition shift from organized criminal networks with clear hierarchies, turf, and goals to encompassing any friend group engaged in any sort of criminal activity. A shifting definition is to be expected, as "gang" is not a clearly defined concept within criminology or policing. Instead, it works as a scavenger ideology to be politicized within a particular social context. In this case, Indo-Canadian gangsters' affluent family backgrounds may contribute to a racial anxiety about their bodies (and deviance) beginning to appear in spaces where they were previously forbidden. In this way, the changing gang definition reflects cultural notions that view Indo-Canadians as a "dangerous population". Thus, the "gang" label justifies increased policing and surveillance of this group to assuage racialized anxiety associated with brown bodies in white spaces.

4.2.   Causes of Indo-Canadian gangs – obsessions with wealth and bad parenting

In explaining the potential causes of the Indo-Canadian gang issue, participants referred to cultural problems that create the conditions for youths to join gangs—namely, that Indo-Canadians lack important values (such as humility and work ethic) and have poor parenting skills. This dysfunction in the Indo-Canadian private sphere is seen as creating an incubator for crime. Here, the Indo-Canadian family is understood as a site of danger.

Participants explained that Indo-Canadian culture is permeated with a lust for money and status attracting them to the "easy money" path offered by gangs. Harjeet referred to this as an "automatic gangland mentality. When you're a new immigrant—you're moving house to house, each house [getting bigger]. Yeah, we'll have the whole gangster mentality." To Harjeet, the drive to accumulate wealth can be seen as a criminal or gangster mindset. "People should be happy with what they have", he advises, as a means to avoid the temptation of "easy money" allotted by gang life. Within this explanation is a connotation of immorality, whereby a quest for financial achievement is equated to the greediness of a gangster. Moreover, Indo-Canadians' taste for wealth is seen to breed an unhealthy drive to accumulate more, making them particularly susceptible to crime.

 Peter further culturally exoticizes a quest for wealth as a purely Punjabi phenomenon, not exhibited by Canadians, when he explains why Punjabis are uniquely predisposed to gang life:

> *it's all about the show . . . and that's really important, in my understanding, in the Punjab is, you know, when they go back, they can show wealth and that really helps with their status . . . the projection of wealth and the atmosphere that you have wealth is really important.*

Peter used phrases such as "in the Punjab . . . when they go back," "show wealth," "help with status," as if Punjabis display wealth in a uniquely strange fashion. The Canadian relationship between economic capital and social status is seen as different or perhaps even non-existent, in Peter's perspective. He explains that this need to show off

prompts them to join gangs for easy money. Peter feels that other Canadians do not have this need and are not tempted to join gangs for this reason.

This notion of brown folk's irrationality and poor handling of wealth has its roots in the colonial imagination of the Orient, understood to be a land of excess and needless luxury, in contrast to the West's frugality and practicality. Said (1978, p. 108) described this image of Brown folk as "hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization"; within the system of capitalism there is the "assumption that although the Western consumer belongs to a numerical minority, he is entitled either to own or to expend (or both) the majority of the world resources." It is in this sense that this image becomes a part of the repertoire of Western hegemony. Capitalism is for the wealth of the human through exploitation of the natural world. Through aligning the Oriental with the (illogical) natural world, the Oriental is placed in a position of being exploitable rather than being a benefactor of the system (Said, 1978).

This notion was clearly conveyed by Tejinder:

[the problem is] they are trying to actually achieve a higher financial status beyond what would be necessary. So, going for looking to become not, you know, just trying to make ends meet or trying to survive. But rather trying to achieve wealth, and you know, becoming millionaires.

To become millionaires, Tejinder goes on to explain, Indo-Canadians are joining gangs to gain more capital than they could achieve from a conventional path. From this perspective, the pursuit of wealth is not something meant for Indo-Canadians and not something they can engage in responsibly. This rhetoric serves as a direct affirmation of a social order that identifies Indo-Canadians as less deserving of Canada's opportunities than those "exalted subjects" who truly deserve it (Thobani, 2007).

This lust for money is viewed as corrupting children, who become greedy and too spoiled for honest work causing them to turn to gang life. Peter, a police officer, provided the following advice to Indo-Canadian parents to help curb the gang issue:

Stop giving your youth everything. Don't go buy them the expensive fancy car. Make him earn it, make him respect it. We can certainly see more, you know, so many South Asian kids in high school and they're driving [very

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expensive cars] and it's just been given to them. So, you know, these are some of the kids that are taking advantage of their parents.

From this perspective, because they do not value hard work, Indo-Canadian kids look for the "easy money" provided through crime instead of a more conventional path. Moreover, in saying Indo-Canadian children "are taking advantage of their parents," Peter implied that Indo-Canadian parents are unable to take an authoritative role in their children's lives.

Kalwinder echoed this view of poor parenting causing the gang issue:

teaching your kids those morals. Teaching them, you know, ethics. Don't just buy them what they want. . . . You need to get them working at the right age. Not being—we have families where fathers are like, "no, my daughter's not going to work, I will pay for everything.'

As ineffectual role models, Indo-Canadian parents are unable to instill these important "anti-crime" values, thereby fueling the Indo-Canadian gang issue. Through this conceptualization, the Indo-Canadian home is a site of danger. It is therefore in the interest of public safety to open the Indo-Canadian home to surveillance and scrutiny (Berda, 2013).

This scrutiny has resulted in the general view of Indo-Canadian parents as ineffectual in raising children who can thrive within civilized, rational Canadian society. Values they have imported "from the Punjab" are essentially criminal within a Canadian context. Tejinder described:

a very large body of parents within the South Asian community that are still relying on traditional parenting methods that they have been taught or brought from the old country, which are not applicable here

All participants identified poor parenting as a major cause of the Indo-Canadian gang issue, but interestingly, the group was split as to what exactly was problematic about Indo-Canadian parenting. Just over half of the participants (n = 7/12) viewed Indo-Canadian parents as being too lenient. The rest (n = 5/12) explained that Indo-Canadian parents were too strict. From either perspective, Western (Canadian) parenting was exalted as having found a correct balance of leniency and discipline that guides children

into being good future citizens. The idea of fundamental difference and dialectical opposition remains key to the explanation.

The "lenient" perspective saw Indo-Canadian children as running amok, with no clear guidance or support from parents. With no one to teach them right from wrong, Indo-Canadian children are vulnerable to joining gangs. Fred, a city councillor, expressed this view when asked about the cause of the gang issue:

> *There's no kind of leash; they have no discipline. No, no consequences, nothing like that. . . . [T]here's a lot of these kids that I'm noticing that lack discipline. They lack it because they're not taught consequences because a lot of them have been just given everything.*

In contrast, Western parenting was seen as being firm, providing children with clear boundaries and expectations. This group of participants wanted to see Indo-Canadian parents become more authoritarian towards their children.

The "strict" perspective saw Indo-Canadian children joining gangs to "free" themselves from overbearing parents. Tejinder explained that discipline in Indo-Canadian families is harsh: "the traditional method is basically a yelling match. A sort of tirade, you know . . . [it's top down], there is no reasoning or there's no conversation [with the child]." Jenny echoed this notion, explaining life in Indo-Canadian families is "strict— very strict," with harsh expectations and constant supervision that infringes on children's freedom of self-expression. From this perspective, Western parenting values individuality over the communal pressures that dictate "Indo-Canadian culture." As kids raised by Western parents find themselves as individuals, they are able to identify their appropriate place in the capitalist system. This group of participants felt Indo-Canadian parents should give up their authoritarian approach to let their children flourish as individuals.

Both perspectives construct a narrative in which Indo-Canadians represent a dark mirror image to mainstream Canadians. Indo-Canadian parents are too lenient in relation to firm Western parents or, conversely, too overbearing in relation to understanding Western parents. As authority figures, Indo-Canadian parents are being challenged in a manner reminiscent of colonial critiques of Oriental leaders—namely, through the stock image of the "Oriental despot" and the "Oriental impotent." In the case of the despot,

Oriental peoples are severely oppressed and require Western interference to introduce them to "liberty." Conversely, the impotent leader allows chaos to reign, so Western governance intervenes "amicably" to bring order (Said, 1978). In this context, Said (1978, p. 172) quoted Chateaubriand: "Of liberty, they know nothing; of propriety, they have none: force is their God. . . . They are soldiers without a leader, citizens without legislators, and a family without a father." This last point illustrates the important connection between notions of governance and notions of family. Here, even at the level of the family, Orientals are seen as incapable of self-governance. Similarly, participants emphasized ineffectual fathers as the crux of the issue. "Our South Asian males lack male adult role models," explained Brendon.

> *Often, the fathers were absent and so they weren't aware of what was going on with their sons. And when we brought the fathers in and they realized what was going on, they had no idea. . . . Mothers had a lot of the responsibility for parenting and were not telling fathers for them to [administer the necessary discipline].*

This statement highlights the perceived impotent leadership of the Indo-Canadian father. Moreover, Indo-Canadian mothers are not seen as able to fill this void, as fathers are required for male role modeling and administering discipline.

Buffam (2018) urged a critical examination of this questioning of Indo-Canadian parents' ability to be good leaders within the home. He explained that if the state undermines Indo-Canadian parents' authority, it must step in to provide Indo-Canadian youths with the guidance they are lacking. In the case of the Oriental impotent, the West must offer its amiable leadership to fill the nothingness. This sets up a paternalistic, rather than democratic, relationship between Indo-Canadians and the Canadian state (Buffam, 2018). Essentially, infiltration of the Indo-Canadian home functions like a "White Man's Burden" civilizing mission (Buffam, 2018; Said, 1978). The dysfunctional parenting narrative thus serves as a hegemonic discourse to weaken Indo-Canadians' ability to engage effectively with the Canadian state (Thobani, 2007). Again, the social order is affirmed, contrasting the "outsiders within" and the "exalted subjects."

This is in line with literature that has found that white criminality is continuously understood as a personal failing, while racialized criminality is a collective cultural failing (Tator & Henry, 2008). Brendon summed up this view as he lamented:

> *there was almost an acceptance of this type of behaviour in the South Asian community. Not "we support it," but certainly "it exists and there's nothing we can do about it . . . these gangs exist, and these groups of boys exist . . . we are powerless to do anything with it. So we accept it."*

In this statement, Brendon hearkens back to the Orientalist trope of Oriental fatalism and passivism. Orientals fail to reach their full potential as a race because they lack the Western initiative to tackle issues head-on (Said, 1978). Indo-Canadian culture is again made a problem: it is too passive even to fix itself. Many participants agreed that if Indo-Canadians were not willing to "handle their issue," outside intervention could never be fully successful.

This understanding of Indo-Canadian youth deviance is decontextualized from both its structural context and its Canadian context. Using the cultural explanation ignores structural factors as possible alternative explanations (Pitts, 2007). Moreover, the Indo-Canadian home is viewed as intensely isolated from the Canadian context (Buffam, 2018). The Indo-Canadian private sphere is exoticized as an enclosed space where imported anti-Canadian values are free to flourish. Buffam (2018) criticized this view as a vast overestimation of the private sphere's ability to remain untouched by the social context, as well as its ability to influence social problems.

Ultimately, a clash of cultures is seen as the root cause of the Indo-Canadian gang issue. Indo-Canadians' poor values, including avarice, are causing their youths to turn to crime. Indo-Canadians' financial success is understood to be their downfall, as their spoiled children are unable to commit to the hard work required to succeed in the capitalist system. Indo-Canadian parents are understood as "Oriental despots" stifling their children's ability to flourish as individuals or, conversely, as "Oriental impotents" unable to provide firm leadership. Both scenarios require a "benevolent" and paternalistic intervention from the Canadian state to set Indo-Canadians right. Susan said, "Yesterday, it was the Italians and the Irish. Today, it's South Asians. Tomorrow, it will be some

other group. [The gang issue] is an acculturation problem. . . . South Asian families are still learning to accept the Canadian culture." Through this lens, the Indo-Canadian family is politicized into a site of danger (Nijjar, 2018). Blame and responsibility for solving the gang issue is placed squarely on Indo-Canadians as a collective. With the help of outside "Western" benevolence, Indo-Canadians must shift their criminal culture to be more compatible with Canadian society.

4.3. Solutions to the gang issue – managing children and civilizing parents

As seen in the previous section, participants perceived cultural differences in parenting styles between Indo-Canadians and the rest of Canada as the major cause of Indo-Canadian gang crime. This theme of difference continued as a major explanatory factor for participants in establishing effective solutions to address the issue. Indo-Canadians were seen as having culturally incompatible values, making them prone to crime. Instead, children should make "positive connections" with adults who embody "good values," through joining community groups and activities. For parents to be positive role models, parenting classes and family counselling are offered to help Indo-Canadian parents learn about the "right values" to pass on to their children. The participants felt that inculcating pro-social values into children at an early age would help them grow up to make "good choices" and thus avoid gang life. Through this approach, we can see the paternalism alluded to in Said's (1978) work, as the justice apparatus authoritatively works to fix the perceived dysfunction and immorality in the Indo-Canadian home.

All participants opined that the key to ending Indo-Canadian gang crime was to focus on prevention through zeroing in on Indo-Canadian children. Along these lines, participants describe Indo-Canadian children as potential future criminals who must be corrected to prevent crime from occurring. Children, in other words, are a potentially dangerous population in need of intervention.

Tejinder, a police officer, said:

they should start as early as 10 or 11 years old . . . [we need] some instrument of identifying kids—that if they exhibit some behaviour, like there's a high level of truancy at school . . . preventing that behaviour from continuing—where we are yet to see any type of criminal behaviour, but we start to see behaviour that is going to lead them down that path.

Here, Tejinder expressed the belief that children's behaviours should be assessed for the extent to which they suggest potential future criminality. From this perspective, the surveillance of children can become key to crime prevention. Tejinder's colleague, Sukh agreed:

We need to target kids in grade 1, 2, 3 . . . we need to start early and look for those "red flag" signs. . . . We can first educate educators and give them signs of behavioural changes to look for . . . and then we can knock on parents' doors to let them know what's happening. Not that we can stop every kid from joining gangs, but I can assure you, we can stop a lot.

This approach is a part of a wider cultural shift in views on crime and risk. Starting in the 1970s, policies began to become more hardline in terms of deterrence and safety management (Garland, 2001). Tator and Henry (2008, p. 29) referred to this shift as "an adaptive or managerial approach to crime." According to this approach, law enforcement seeks "to identify and manage risky population subgroups," sorted in order of their supposed danger. In other words, law enforcement takes a proactive approach to crime and, in doing so, focuses on the management of potentially dangerous populations, rather than particular dangerous individuals. In the case of gang crime, Indo-Canadians as a collective are a dangerous population to be managed, which includes preventative surveillance of Indo-Canadian children who might become future gangsters.

Participants found Indo-Canadian children often failed to display the "right" kind of values. Kalwinder said:

Talking with them, like with our kids, we know some of them are not honest. . . . I don't feel like the kids have enough compassion. Especially the ones that are getting involved. They don't have the courage to speak up when something is happening that's not right.

Kalwinder also commented that they lack the values of perseverance, leadership, and righteousness. She explained that Indo-Canadian parents are failing to educate their

children in these important values: "those are the five values that we are not teaching our kids. Our South Asian families are not teaching our kids."

To combat this, as mentioned earlier, participants have established parenting classes and family counselling for Indo-Canadian parents. Tejinder said, "There's a lot of value in having parenting classes. I think it's an important area. We have a very large body of parents within the South Asian community that are still relying on traditional parenting methods." Tejinder felt parental training should focus on values: "training which includes integrity, gratitude . . . being faithful, having appreciation for all that you've been given . . . living in within your means." As Indo-Canadian parents learn to embody these values of integrity, gratitude, faithfulness, and frugality, they can pass them onto their children. Tejinder stated this would "begin to create this insulation for that child to be able to make good decisions and choices."

Participants often look to the Sikh religion for inspiration in their value-based training. Brendon admitted, however, that "we never say with our white or Aboriginal kids, 'What does the church have to say about this?' We looked at the gurdwara as more of a cultural thing as opposed to a religious thing. . . . How can we get them connected with their roots?" Participants perceive the Sikh religion (on paper) as containing a wealth of valuable moral information that Indo-Canadians have been unable to understand and apply to its full extent. Therefore, training focuses on imparting the main tenets of Sikhism so that Indo-Canadians can represent their faith to its full potential.

The focus on Sikhism is interesting when viewed through the lens of John Porter's (1965) *The Vertical Mosaic*. In Canadian multiculturalism, categories of race and culture are conflated into static, almost biological categories (Porter, 1965). Indo-Canadians are seen as having values counter to Canadian culture—the home is a Punjabi bubble. Instead of feeling Indo-Canadians must have some understanding of mainstream Canadian culture as the one in which they live, work, and learn, Punjabi culture as a static category is deemed most appropriate for them. Therefore, teaching Sikhism works as a way of instilling the right values in a way Indo-Canadians can understand and in a manner that reaffirms this static notion of ethnicity which is represented by Canadian

multiculturalism. While their approach can represent an earnest attempt at reaffirming modern notions of an imagined multiculturalism, their conceptualization of Indo-Canadians and Sikhism appear to be informed by an Orientalist lens.

The value-based training is thus inspired by the complex theology outlined by Sikhism, particularly the Five Virtues and the Five Thieves. These are understood to be virtues that lead one towards enlightenment (truth of the Oneness; universal compassion; contentment and no attachment to material gain; humility within the oneness of the universe; pure love for the universe) (Nesbitt, 2005). In contrast, the Five Thieves are flaws that draw one away from enlightenment, towards illusion (*maya*): lust, anger, greed, earthly attachment, and attachment to an individual ego (Nesbitt, 2005).

The values-based training constructed by the city's anti-gang program reimagines the above concepts. The foundational basis of oneness and enlightenment is discarded. The Five Virtues are translated by the counselling program as honesty, gratitude, kindness, perseverance, and leadership; the Five Thieves are reduced to dishonestly and greed (with an emphasis on the importance of frugality). So, while the program seeks to bring Indo-Canadian youths "back to their roots" and help Indo-Canadian parents understand and apply the values of Sikhism, the training remains very much removed from Sikh theology (Nesbitt, 2005). These concepts seem to resemble rather generic, Western-style virtues rather than Sikhism "at its full potential." Instead of achieving enlightenment, participants state that these values will help Indo-Canadian youths avoid gang life and succeed in mainstream Canadian society.

Again, participants' conceptualizations invoked Orientalist thought. Though the West viewed itself as superior, this was not without the concession of what the Orient *could* have been (Said, 1978). Modern Orientals represent a tragic wasted potential. According to Said (1978, p. 99): "the 'good' Orient was invariably a classical period somewhere in a long-gone India, whereas the 'bad' Orient lingered in present-day Asia, parts of North Africa, and Islam everywhere." Likewise, while modern Indo-Canadians represent the worst of their culture, an imagined Sikh heritage contains the potential that Indo-Canadians have failed to live up to.

A part of the colonial mission therefore includes returning the Orient to its former glory and potential: "To restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in the ways of the modem West". (Said, 1978, p. 86) The Western administrator is not returning the Orient to a true historical self but rather to how they envision this potential. It is a display of the West's power and ability to shape Oriental identity.

Similarly, to instill the "right" values in Indo-Canadians, the value-training seeks to bring about the full potential of Sikhism. However, the watered-down Five Virtues of the training remain epistemologically Western. Yet, as Brendon (school district) put it, their goal is to "connect [children] to their roots". The values are not "true" representations of Sikhism but rather an imagining of Sikhism. The value-training serves as a power play in an authoritarian representation of Sikh values for Indo-Canadians who seemingly were not getting it right. Here, the program's creators' "expert knowledge" allows them to reconstruct Sikhism and define its full potential for Indo-Canadians.

4.4. Finding 4: Reliable Intelligence and Indo-Canadian Confessions

As participants seek to understand the gang issue, a major concern that arises is how to determine what constitutes reliable intelligence. In addition to internal institutional reports, participants have come to rely on the anecdotal opinions of Indo-Canadians as a reliable source of information regarding gang crime. The notion is that the Indo-Canadian private sphere is so enclosed and mysterious that it requires insiders to divulge all its secrets (Buffam, 2018).

Thus, white participants explained they needed to rely on Indo-Canadians to tell them "what's really going on." Fred, a city councillor, said, "I also have a group of very close, trusted friends within the South Asian community who are kind of 'in the know' that I will talk to and say 'okay explain to me. What's really going on? Can you help me with this? Why are the police not being as effective as they could be? Why do you think this is happening?'" This notion of Indo-Canadians holding some secret knowledge is reflected in Fred's phrases "in the know" and "what's really going on." His statement

implies that an Indo-Canadian understands exactly why the gang issue is occurring, why interventions are not working, and what should be done about it. He went on to say there was

> *no doubt that there was a lot of young South Asian men that were being caught in a gunfire dance. So why don't you help me understand why this is happening? . . . sometimes when you can have people from within a particular community that you can speak openly and honestly with one another . . . that's very helpful.*

For Fred, the correct answers already lie within the Indo-Canadian mind and just need to be extracted. He seemed not to display doubts around whether Indo-Canadians have the ability to answer these large and complex questions or whether they would do so honestly.

Peter, as a member of the police department, shared this reliance on anecdotal confessions. Peter likes to look for who he defines as "kind of leaders" amongst Indo-Canadians: "the ones I'm very comfortable reaching out to and asking questions and getting advice and getting some information." He added that he needs to be careful about who he asks for information, because he fears some Indo-Canadians may "try to take advantage of you . . . you have to make sure they have pure intentions." He explained that his main point of contact is Jenny (another study participant), as a leader in her advocacy organization. Jenny's insights and advice are of paramount importance for his understanding of Indo-Canadians and how he develops intervention strategies.

Gary, from the school district, also stated Jenny was a major source of information for the school district. "We've had [name of advocacy group] in to speak with our board. We've hosted a couple meetings with [someone] who's connected to that group as well. And we think their work is important." Thus, Jenny's viewpoints and the viewpoints expressed by her advocacy group serve as key sources of intelligence for both the municipal police and the school district.

Interestingly, Jenny referred to herself and her organization as nonideal sources for information on Indo-Canadian gangs. Jenny explained it was never her intention to become a key source of intelligence:

our main objective for this thing was to get a public safety manager, so I became a lobbyist in [the city] and I [wanted] a public safety manager who would basically work with the [police] and work with the school system. Basically, what I'm, what I'm trying to do now, but he would have a better level of understanding and the best background for the job.

This public safety manager role never came to fruition. When asked how Jenny and her organization have managed the informant role, she replied that they do not have structures in place to do research into the gang issue: "we are just volunteers," who also have full-time jobs outside this work.

Sukh, a police officer, also shared that he has often been used as a "cultural translator" for white colleagues. He said, "[they ask me] so there's no room for interpretation. We [Indo-Canadian colleagues] can kind of help them figure out why this is happening or what the true underlying causes [are] or whatever the case may be." Again, Sukh is being asked to answer complex questions such as "why" something is happening and the "true underlying causes" for it. Colleagues see him as a source of "secret knowledge" about Indo-Canadians. When asked how often he took on this role Sukh said, "It could happen like, three, four times in one shift." Therefore, Sukh finds himself in this cultural translator role on a very regular basis. Unlike Jenny, however, Sukh did not express doubts as to whether he and his Indo-Canadian colleagues were able to give accurate answers. Sukh imagines his role as being a helpful middleman for his white colleagues.

Susan, an Indo-Canadian city councillor, has found her white colleagues' reliance on Indo-Canadians' anecdotal opinions problematic. She shared an instance when she learned her colleagues in the municipal government had enacted policies based on inaccurate and harmful hearsay by Indo-Canadians. "Where did you hear that?" she asked her colleague. "You know this has nothing to do with research? You didn't even go check this information out?" She said that not only was the damning opinion they received from an Indo-Canadian inaccurate, but she told her colleague, "That's racist."

Here, Susan tapped into what Buffam (2018) described as the confessional nature of Indo-Canadians' descriptions of "their culture." Buffam (2018) found that Indo-

Canadians consistently admitted to "dysfunction" in Indo-Canadian homes and the "backwardness" of Indo-Canadian culture. The images conjured by them in their confessions consistently corresponded to established hegemonic notions of Indo-Canadians and their family life rather than an observable reality. Often, descriptions were not positive or neutral but instead focused on describing why Indo-Canadians are "bad" in a way that confirms racist or white supremacist views.

Buffam (2018, p. 154) wrote about practices of speculation and surveillance that have transformed this domestic realm into a "locus of racial fantasy, desire, and political action." These confessions tend to gain a lot of traction due to their seeming ability to reveal the scandalous pathologies of the racialized home, a space often closed to outsiders.

Buffam (2018) explains that while "outsider critiques" are heavily scrutinized, Indo-Canadian confessions are seen as "insider critiques" and can pass unchallenged. This can have a cathartic effect for white citizens; managing their racial anxiety about Indo-Canadians, they can hear their exact imaginings repeated in the mouths of Indo-Canadians, who appear to unveil white citizens' exact fears, and this propels the discursive and epistemological force of their confessions (Buffam, 2018).

Fred pointed to this exact phenomenon when describing Tejinder's speech criticizing Indo-Canadian culture as being criminal in its essential nature:

> It's political correctness. It is not appropriate for an outsider—take myself—to basically go into another culture. . . . [T]here's also a hyper, hypersensitivity right now, but it is not appropriate, I think, or not well received for any outsider to another group and say, "This is what you're doing wrong." . . . That's why Tejinder was such an effective speaker, you know, he was brutally honest at times, but his message was always soft when he was being at his most brutal. A lot of us politicians can't speak up like this . . . without fear of being branded as a racist."

Fred admitted Tejinder's opinions were "brutal," but he agreed with him. Tejinder could repeat racist tropes regarding Indo-Canadian culture without the scrutiny Fred would face if expressing these same opinions, which he shares with Tejinder. Brendon also said that he felt the views he was expressing in his interview regarding the need to

fix Indo-Canadians' cultural backwardness seemed "racist coming from a *gora* [white man]," but he assured me: "this is information we are getting from [Indo-Canadians]." In both cases, participants referred to Indo-Canadians who expressed racist tropes; however, when expressed by Indo-Canadians, these were interpreted as "brutal honesty" rather than being assessed critically as potentially problematic.

These "cultural confessions," as Buffam (2018) has called them, were also apparent in this study. Indo-Canadian participants often confessed to Indo-Canadian cultural defects. This was apparent in Tejinder's disavowal of Indo-Canadian parenting methods; Sukh's statement that greed in Indo-Canadians causes a "gangland mentality"; Susan's assertion that the gang issue was caused by Indo-Canadians who had not yet adopted Canadian culture; Jenny's characterization of Indo-Canadian culture as repressive and prejudiced; and Kulwinder's characterization of Indo-Canadian youths as dishonest and cowardly, with parents who failed to teach them the right values. Indo-Canadian participants echoed their white colleagues in viewing Indo-Canadian culture as fundamentally different and oppositional to Canadian society, and they did so in a manner that affirmed hegemony.

When seen as providing secret "insider" knowledge, Indo-Canadians are given authority to speak about Indo-Canadian culture as a monolith. Due to their apparent status as "cultural insiders," they and their statements are endowed with particular authority (Buffam 2018, p. 155). This process of authorization is what Dabashi (2011, p. 18) views as a "green light" for dominant powers. At the global level, this can be exemplified by propaganda produced during the Iraq war. First, expatriate intellectuals told "populations targeted for liberation" that the invasion of their homeland was "for their own good." Second, the words of these Iraqi intellectuals were used to reassure Americans themselves that their mission was good and noble (Dabashi, 2011).

Indo-Canadian confessions serve a similar role hegemonically. The Indo-Canadian home is open to scrutiny and correction for "their own good," while the benevolent identity of mainstream Canadians can remain affirmed as they take such suppressive actions. Dabashi said this knowledge-making exercise serves to invert "fact

by fantasy, whereby the victims become victimizers, the terrorized terrorists." The confession plays a key role in the propagation of a social order.

This hegemonic logic can be seen in the gang issue discourse (Buffam 2018, pp. 59–60). The narrative undermines Indo-Canadian fathers as breeding into their children "aggression and contempt for the law." Indo-Canadian men are understood as being morally corrupt, with a "narcissistic obsession" with "money, status and upward mobility." They can only take part in society through "subjugation to Canadian law" as it steps in to fill this paternal role. Indo-Canadian men are offered recognition only under the Canadian state's "parental authority," as they do not have the rationality to participate otherwise. Racial anxieties about Indo-Canadian immigration are tempered through this disavowal of them as true citizens. Moreover, the white exalted subject is affirmed through this narrative, which says that true Canadians are good and lawful.

A knowledge-making process is occurring here that diverges slightly from Said's ideas (1978), as it complicates the racial landscape of the epistemological endeavour. Western hegemony remains central to these conceptualizations, as evidenced by their strong association with Orientalist tropes. However, it is no longer the "white specialist" who has epistemological authority over the "Oriental." As Fred said, a "politically correct" society prevents them from engaging in this effectively. Now, the West speaks on behalf of the Orient, and the Oriental takes this mantle upon themselves and then repeats it back for its affirmation (Dabashi, 2011). Hegemony sets the tone, but the "confessor" gives it authority. Here, skin colour is confused with progressive thought. As Buffam (2018) wrote, the insider's proximity provides them with unquestioned authority to affirm the hegemonic.

From a Foucauldian perspective, confessions are portrayed as liberatory acts but are the opposite; they are admissions of one's guilt and indicate acceptance of authoritarian punishment. So while Indo-Canadian cultural confessions are painted as progressive activism for the betterment of their community, in actuality, they serve as admissions of guilt and acceptance of subjugation (Buffam, 2018).

Ironically, the existence of Indo-Canadian confessions indirectly disproves the hegemonic narrative. If Indo-Canadians were so entirely culturally isolated and unassimilable to Canada, they would also be shielded from its hegemony and its subject mythology. However, by absorbing these narratives and having them inform their understanding of themselves and their fellow Indo-Canadians, they prove that Indo-Canadians are deeply enmeshed in the Canadian zeitgeist. Indo-Canadians are truly assimilated as Canadians, because it is through Canadian ideology that they understand their own inferiority.

In summation, participants understand Indo-Canadian culture to be so different from mainstream Canada that it requires "cultural translators." White participants repeatedly referred to using Indo-Canadian friends and colleagues as sources of "secret knowledge" who could accurately tell them the minutiae of complex social issues affecting the Indo-Canadian community. Indo-Canadian participants confirmed that they often played this role for their white colleagues, with varying levels of confidence in their ability to do so. The content of their "secret knowledge" often took on a confessional form, as they admitted to cultural defects in the Indo-Canadian home. This process was evident in this study, as Indo-Canadian participants frequently condemned Indo-Canadian culture.

4.5. Summary

From the analysis of qualitative interviews with the research participants, four major findings emerged about the interviewees' conceptualizations of Indo-Canadian gang crime: (1) participants understood the gangs to be small-time but also threatening enough to merit a heavy-handed approach; (2) participants viewed cultural defects as the cause of gang behaviour, (3) believed solutions lay in correcting these defects, and (4) felt a need to rely on (or act as) cultural translators, whose knowledge took on a confessional quality that condemned Indo-Canadian culture as inferior.

Chapter 5.

Conclusion

The analysis of participant interviews resulted in four major findings: (1) participants characterize Indo-Canadian gangs as unsophisticated. (2) Participants understand Indo-Canadian gangs to be the result of cultural defects. (3) Participants see re-training Indo-Canadian parents to pass on "good values" as a solution to the gang issue (4) Participants seek "insider knowledge" regarding Indo-Canadians though this information often consists of racist stereotypes.

Participants continuously defined the gangs as friend groups engaged in small-time drug dealing, with little entrenchment at the level of lucrative organized crime. Despite this, participants also described investing most of their anti-gang resources in quashing Indo-Canadian gang crime, and they advocated for extreme measures such as the surveillance of elementary school Indo-Canadian children.

This dissonance can be partly explained through the nebulous definition of gang, which is used as a catch-all for defining youth deviance and as a scavenger ideology that can be politicized and racialized based on wider social contexts. As definitions of gang shift from highly organized criminal networks to include friend groups engaged in crime, Indo-Canadian crime can be understood through this gang label, and anti-gang interventions are seen as justified.

The notion of Indo-Canadian cultural difference and inferiority is an epistemologically foundational factor in understanding Indo-Canadian gang crime. Notions of difference served as causal factors for participants, as they understood inferior cultural values and parenting as the major reasons for Indo-Canadian gang crime. Indo-Canadians' drive for wealth was exoticized as an anti-Canadian value imported from Punjab. By embodying negative values and failing to impart positive values to their children, Indo-Canadian parents were seen as failed authority figures.

Thus, the city's anti-gang program developed the interventions of parenting classes and family counselling to paternalistically instill the "right" values into Indo-Canadians. In a loose reimagining of Sikhism, the program packages a westernized set of values to correct the dysfunction in the Indo-Canadian home. From the participants' perspective, crime is a moral choice, and having the right or wrong values is a determinative factor in predicting whether a person will choose to commit crime.

In these conceptualizations, participants evoked Orientalist stereotypes of the greedy, venal Oriental, the Oriental despot, and the Oriental impotent in ways that confirmed hegemonic narratives about Indo-Canadians. When the Indo-Canadian is constructed as the "outsider within," legitimate personhood and subjecthood can be affirmed in the white exalted subject. These hegemonic claims are given further epistemological authority through their repetition by Indo-Canadian "confessors." By damning Indo-Canadian culture, these confessors seek to align themselves with the personhood and subjecthood allotted to white folk while alienating themselves from their own racialized identity and other Indo-Canadians. In this sense, we can understand these confessors as both victims and propagators of white supremacist ideology.

Tator and Brown (2008, p. 33) made an important distinction between repetitions of hegemonic ideology by an average person and by policy makers. Policy makers and community leaders play an active role in marking the boundaries between legitimate and radical discourse. Participants in this study did not simply parrot hegemonic ideology; in their avowal of it, and the production of social interventions based on it, they indicated that they play a key role in its propagation and demonstrated? the power of its impact.

The participants in this study understand Indo-Canadian culture as different, inferior, and ultimately the cause and solution to the Indo-Canadian gang issue. Through this conceptualization, they affirm the hegemonic narrative that views the West and the Orient in dialectical opposition, and they legitimize the constructions of the Canadian exalted subject and the Indo-Canadian "other" and "outsider within." Ultimately, this study affirms that discourses surrounding Indo-Canadian gang crime is a microcosm of larger hegemonic ideologies regarding race, crime, legitimate citizenhood, and even

legitimate personhood in Canada. Within the context of crime, whiteness (as white hegemonic ideology) serves as a meaning-maker in developing narratives that link race and crime. Blackness (and, by extension, all racialized folk) symbolizes an affront to society and a danger to public safety. Surveillance and law enforcement measures against racialized folk are justified because their very existence represents danger. Therefore, the gang as a concept works as a "scavenger ideology" and a catch-all to describe deviance committed by youths and racialized folk. Its nebulousness allows it to be weaponized and politicized against these groups based on social context. Against this backdrop, Indo-Canadian gangs are conceptualized in ways that confirm hegemonic ideologies and a white supremacist social order.

This study has a relatively small sample size of 12 participants, which may affect its generalizability. However, its aim is not to generalize but rather to unpack ideologies discussed by participants that speak to their larger social context of racial hegemony and Canadian citizen-subject mythology. This study also relied heavily on one research method (one-to-one phone interviews) due to Covid safety restrictions, so its findings could have been enriched through the use of additional methods.

This case study of Indo-Canadian gangs offers just one microcosm for examining racialized hegemonic epistemology. Future research could seek to explore how (and to what extent) racialized hegemony occurs in contexts outside of the Indo-Canadian gang crime illustration.

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