

**Moral Panics and the Governance of South Asian Gang Involvement: The Construction of
a Local ‘Cultural’ Problem**

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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ABSTRACT

In the last three decades, nearly two hundred South Asian men have died in gang violence in Lower Mainland British Columbia. These deaths, coupled with the fear that young men in the community are susceptible to joining gangs, have both triggered and constructed a regional panic over South Asian gangs. This thesis examines the problematization and governance of this phenomenon through 34 in-depth, qualitative interviews with law enforcement officials, educators, and representatives of community organizations who are on the frontlines of gang programming in lower mainland BC. Drawing on the insights of governance scholarship as well as critical studies on moral panics, race, and masculinities, this thesis illuminates the explanations, folk heroes, and villains that play out in official responses to South Asian gang violence. The analysis reveals the multiple ways in which respondents draw on mainstream ideas on culture to explain gang involvement of South Asian boys and men. Assuming this group possesses a distinct value system at odds with mainstream society, interviewees attributed the appeal of gang affiliation to the desire for a 'gold-collar lifestyle.' The effect is the pathologization of South Asian 'culture' as inherently criminogenic and the neglect of analytical distinctions between 'culture' and structural factors. The thesis further examines how the community is differentially enlisted to manage the South Asian gang involvement. Focusing on a controversial strategy known as the BRE program as well as the various programs delivered by ethno-specific South Asian community organizations, the analysis reveals the ways in which community is mobilized for the contradictory objectives of social exclusion and inclusion. The dissertation concludes with an examination of the cultural mythology surrounding the notorious South Asian gangster, Bindy Johal. Drawing attention to his status as both a folk devil and hero, the discussion reveals two duelling narratives framing his legacy. On the one hand Johal is perceived as a contemporary folk devil who continues to draw South Asian youth to gangs today. On the other, he is perceived as an anti-hero or sympathetic figure who overcame racism and the diminishing of South Asian masculinity. The overall effect of these contradictory narratives is the overshadowing of racism, class oppression and related structural factors that underlie why gang involvement may appeal to some disenfranchised boys and men in the South Asian community. Overall, this study makes an important contribution to the growing literature on the role of community in the governance of crime as well as on the topic of South Asian gang involvement, which has received little empirical attention.

Key words: South Asian, governance, gangs, community, moral panic, risk, masculinity, culture

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DEDICATION

First, I dedicate this work to my niece and nephew, Rayna and Jeevan Kalsi, who I have always considered like my own children. My hard work should inspire you to pursue a good education and an endless pursuit of knowledge. Second, I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father, Parminder and Amarjit Singh Pabla, who have stood by me from the beginning. I am truly happy and grateful now that this journey is done and could not have made it here without your support. You are all in my heart.

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Chapter One: Introduction

I would say three risk factors are... I would say some of the cultural traditions. You know if you get into that *Jatt* mentality. A little bit of that bravado kind of thing. I think that probably comes into play. That also overlaps into parents maybe, if you're talking mostly boys, maybe not providing as much oversight when they should early on and nipping things in the bud, rather than just saying: "boys being boys". ... I think another risk factor would be again the culture and tradition that's been created here of kind of the Indo gangster, kind of I guess phenomena. That it's a cool thing, it's almost kind of elevating it to a different level. Well I think some of that, again anecdotally, comes from you know, there's the movies made about it now. So much of that stuff can be more hyped up. The history that we've had here over the last 30 years of Indo-Canadian gangsters. As far as I know, I've never heard that phenomenon anywhere else in the world other than here. So it's kind of, you sit here with the Blacks and the Crips and all these kinds of gangs, and now you kind of got that quote-on-quote trademark here. It's almost kind of emulating that subculture here. People think that's cool.

This quote is from police officer "Ranjit" and provides several common insights on the

"problem" of South Asian gangs and gang involvement that exists in British Columbia (BC).

First, when outlining risk factors some tend to pathologize South Asian "culture" as being risky due to a set of distinct values and orientations that is believed to be inherently criminogenic.

Second, "culture" is used to suggest that a unique "gang culture" exists in BC, with its own set of explanations, symbols and folklore, and rich history. The legend of notorious gangsters, like

Bindy Johal for example, are told for decades as they become folk devils to some and heroes to

others. Finally, Officer Ranjit's commentary provides an indication that such a regional problem

requires innovative policies and strategies to tackle the problem. For example, later in his

interview, Ranjit discusses a controversial bar and restaurant ejection (BRE) program that is used

in many municipalities across BC, a policy premised on the social exclusion of undesirable

people. Thus, this dissertation explores three distinct, yet interrelated facets of the South Asian

gang involvement "problem" in BC that touch on these major themes.

The South Asian gang "problem" in Canada finds its earliest roots in the bloody gang wars of the 1980s and 1990s between high profile Indo-Canadian gangsters, most notoriously

among them being Bindy Johal. In the two-decades since Johal's murder in 1998, the concern by local politicians, law enforcement officials, educators, anti-gang workers and activists, as well as ordinary citizens has intensified as more young South Asian men are killed in suspected gang violence, which has caused concern that these victims are following in the footsteps of Bindy Johal or other notorious gangsters. Between the years of 1990 to 2006 over a hundred young South Asian males in BC were murdered in gang-related violence (HC deb, 2006). That number has risen since then, leading to the perception that the problem has only gotten worse and mobilizing the community to speak out against gang violence. For example, a 2018 anti-gang violence rally in Surrey brought out over 1,000 community members in the wake the murders of two teenage South Asian boys (Ferrerias, 2018). The event entitled "wake up" was a coordinated effort by community activists, gang workers, and citizens to demand action by the police and policy makers. In addition, these incidents have been extensively covered by the local news media leading to a very regional story and panic surrounding South Asian gang involvement.

The call to action, coupled with the extensive media attention, has caught the attention of law enforcement who have developed polices, such as the controversial BRE program, to respond to the problem. The BC Integrated Gang Task Force, a special unit within the Vancouver Metropolitan police force, attributes an alarmingly high rate of gun violence, trafficking and drug use to South Asian males, while an RCMP annual report ranks South Asian gangs third in terms of strength and organization (Totten, 2012). Further, South Asian gang violence has often been described as extreme in nature compared to other more structured gangs active in Canada, such as motorcycle or Asian gangs (Totten, 2012). The perceived brazenness of South Asian gang violence, such as the murder Bindy Johal in a crowded nightclub, has placed the impetus on police to craft unique solutions to gang violence. Most notably, BRE

utilizes police-community partnerships to remove gang members and others from public spaces and is used to counteract the perceived extreme nature of South Asian gang violence.

South Asian gangs have been associated with a wide assortment of criminal activities, ranging from drug distribution to murder, often attracting youth between the ages of 14 to 25 for membership (Totten, 2008). Johal operated one of the most successful South Asian gangs in Canada prior to his murder in 1998 by an associate. At its peak, Johal's gang earned a profit of \$4 million annually, largely generated from the gang's most troubling activity, contract killing (Pearce, 2009). His gang also engaged in drug trafficking and selling, automobile theft, money laundering, fraud and extortion (Pearce, 2009). Although it has been twenty years since his death, Johal's notoriety still resonates among some South Asian males who view him as a legend and hero, and likely inspiring them to become involved in gangs as well (Pearce, 2009). It seems much of the current gang offending by South Asians is now more loosely structured and less organized since the Johal era, primarily involving young men engaging in dial-a-dope operations. Dial-a-dope refers to a delivery system where each "foot soldier" is given a geographic territory and telephone number for customers to call when in need of illicit drugs, particularly marijuana.

Considering how South Asian gangs and gang involvement have been constructed as a significant problem by authorities, this study finds its place in the criminological research on subcultural theory, moral panic, theorizations on masculinities and crime, and governance scholarship. This thesis contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it adds to a body of research on subcultural theory by examining how South Asian "culture" is imagined as risky and leads to certain values and orientations that make gang offending more likely. Second, an important contribution is made to the governance literature through an analysis of how community is mobilized for the contradictory purposes of social exclusion and inclusion when

responding to the South Asian gang problem. Finally, the last chapter contributes to the literature on moral panics as well as the theorizing on masculinities and crime by arguing that the community's fear towards notorious gangster Bindy Johal and his dangerous hold and influence on young men largely overlooks or conceals a greater and more significant crisis involving masculinity plaguing young South Asian men in the community.

Theoretical orientations

In lieu of a traditional book-style dissertation format, I have chosen to produce three-relatively independent, standalone manuscripts that, with further revision, will be submitted to academic journals. This approach provides me the intellectual freedom to pursue three different, yet interrelated, discourses on South Asian gang involvement in Western Canada. The overarching theoretical questions that brings this collection together can be articulated as follows: how is the problem of South Asian gang involvement governed? What logics and practices are deployed in this governance project? And how do the racial dimensions of the “problem population” structure how the problem is represented and made actionable? Each chapter examines different dimensions of these questions. The second chapter examines how risk is conceptualized by key authority figures and how South Asian “culture” is identified as criminogenic and South Asian men are constituted as risky. The third chapter examines how the problem of South Asian gangs and gang involvement is responded to through various logics of governance, which results in the mobilization of ‘community’ for contradictory outcomes of both social exclusion and inclusion. Finally, the fourth chapter provides an intimate look into how the legacy of one notorious gang member, Bindy Johal, has been imagined and reacted to as both a folk devil and a sympathetic folk hero.

These manuscripts share an overarching theoretical scheme and relate to the under-explored area of South Asian gangs and gang involvement. However, multiple and different theoretical frameworks are deployed and form the basis of the analysis in each chapter. Central to each manuscript are subcultural theories, Foucauldian theorizing on governance, moral panics, and masculinities and crime.

Neoliberal government and police regulation

The overarching theoretical approach this dissertation adopts is derived from the body of work by Michel Foucault and several other critical scholars who have contributed to the studies of governmentality by examining the governance and construction of social problems. Foucault's work remains influential for his ability to map out centuries of governmental power, from its early pastoral form, to a period of police regulation and sovereign power, and to the more contemporary neoliberal governmental power that exists today. This collection focuses on two main and inter-related components of neoliberal governance; including: 1) how local authorities are constituted as "experts" and their knowledge is solicited so that they can think and act on problems, and 2) the responsibilization of non-state actors so that community itself can autonomously manage problems, such as gangs, themselves. Eliciting the support of and mobilizing the community to develop knowledge and strategies of crime control are indicative of neoliberal style of governing Foucault labels as governmentality, or the art of governing.

Governmentality

In his seminal lectures *Security, Territory and Population*, Foucault (2007) introduces the concept of governmentality, a concept that has had a profound impact on numerous academic fields. Notably, the discipline of criminology has used Foucault's ideas to better understand the

crime control strategies used by authorities (Garland, 1997). Foucault defines governmentality as:

The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security (Foucault, 1979, p. 20).

Other scholars have provided a more straightforward definition of governmentality. Murphy (2010) defines governmentality as “the techniques for directing human conduct, techniques found not only in the bureaucracies of the modern nation-state, but also in a wide range of institutions from schools to businesses.” (p. 71). In essence, governmentality concerns a collective way of thinking about governing and government (Lippert and Stenson, 2010). It is this reason why government is defined as the ‘conduct of conduct’ and as a form of activity that shapes, guides or affects the conduct of individuals (Burchell et al., 1991).

Ilcan and Basok (2004) suggest that government seeks the engagement of citizens by engaging in partnerships with the community. This form of governing through the community shifts the task of responsabilizing citizens to non-government agencies, becoming an increasingly popular form of rule (Ilcan and Basok, 2004). Hence, central to governmentality is the idea that human conduct is regulated primarily by non-government agencies and individuals with limited involvement by the state. Mobilizing the community to regulate the conduct of citizens is premised on the notion that civil society, with its own set of values, remain autonomous and free from minimal state regulation (Rose, 1999). Thus, the community must collectively develop knowledge on problems, like gang involvement, and implement its own programmes and techniques of government. This conforms to the idea that there are limitations when it comes to the state’s ability to govern certain aspects of social life (Garland, 1996). Precisely, a clear

distinction should emerge between the state and civil society, the latter of which should be able to better govern social life (Garland, 1996). Thus, a responsabilization strategy exists where non-government agencies are mobilized to act on crime. Yet the state does not relinquish complete control or simply watch over these organizations, but instead, takes on the role of coordinator by activating these groups to self-govern or providing funding so they can carry out strategies of governance (Garland, 1996).

While there is a fair amount of research examining the governance of gang violence few studies have utilized a governmentality perspective to understand the phenomenon of ethnic gangs, particularly South Asian groups active in Canada. The literature on how gangs are governed points to two types of intervention strategies most commonly used: suppression and intervention and prevention models. Suppression tactics tend to include practices such as hot spot policing, saturation patrols, enforcement of exclusionary zones, and gang sweeps (Tita and Papachristos, 2010). Much research on suppression tends to look at the effectiveness of such practices (Braga, 2005; Fritsch et al., 1999; Sherman, 1990). A practice like the BRE program, could qualify as a suppression tactic without fully being characterized as a law enforcement strategy due to its community-lead emphasis. This project examines such community-police partnerships that allow for this type of programming to operate. A governmentality approach is not so much concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of a program like BRE, but rather, is interested in the perceived outcomes when such modes of governing are exercised. For example, taking a more critical look at a community-based program, such as BRE, that essentially serves as a social rejection project.

Intervention and prevention methods, on the other hand, attempt to address the underlying causes of gang involvement, focusing on the conditions that give rise to gangs or help

youth exit them (Linden, 2010). These programs tend to draw support from the community and community organizations, which is where governmentality scholarship becomes especially relevant. By adopting a governmentality approach, this analysis captures the narratives of community gang outreach workers, along with other community actors, on how they conceptualize South Asian gang involvement.

From a methodological standpoint, research on the governance of gangs has been limited to positivist inquiries into the causes of gang violence and involvement. Much of this research tends to rely on taken for granted assumptions of ‘culture’ as criminogenic. This dissertation remedies this gap by examining two dimensions of governance: 1) how “culture” is imagined as criminogenic and deployed to govern racialized men; and 2) how community agencies and actors are mobilized to govern the problem of South Asian gang involvement with minimal state influence through contractual agreements and other technologies of governance.

The contemporary appearance of police and pastoral power in neoliberal societies

As contemporary governance is centered on devolution so that the community is mobilized and encouraged to govern itself as a separate entity (i.e. civil society) from the state, other historic logics of power however, including pastoral and police regulatory power, have not entirely disappeared (Stenson, 1999). The highly dogmatic form of pastoral power is concentrated on the salvation of souls and relies on scripture to guide a folk of individuals from straying from gospel (Foucault, 2007). Police regulation, on the other hand, emphasizes stricter control of citizen behaviour and the removal of threats that impact the moral functioning of society in part through the regulation of space (Valverde, 2017). As these traditional and historic forms of power still exist they are now influenced by neoliberal principles of freedom and

autonomy. In this sense, neoliberal governmentality has transformed modern practices of pastoral power or police regulation so that the community is mobilized to govern crime themselves. This is exemplified through a controversial bar ejection program that allows the police to enter certain businesses and remove gang members and their associates, appears to be an exercise of police regulation (see chapter 3). Nevertheless, this program is only carried out if businesses and the police enter into a contractual agreement, requiring private establishments to essentially initiate their involvement and primarily operate the program themselves with law enforcement playing a key supporting role. This illuminates a contemporary display of police regulation where the community is mobilized and supported by officials as to limit the state's coercive power and govern a problem like gangs through the actions of autonomous agents.

Expert knowledge and criminological theory

Part of fostering the support of the community and non-state actors to implement their own strategies of crime control is allowing them to develop and exchange knowledge on problems such as crime. According to Garland (1996), crime is treated as a routine social hazard where strategies to manage it requires thinking and knowledge generation to effectively respond to it. Consequently, Foucault describes neoliberal governance as critical and problematizing (Burchell, 1996). Central to liberal democratic governance then is the role of expert knowledge and professional expertise in problematizing and developing knowledge which is then translated into particular technologies of government (Lupton, 2006). For Foucault, neoliberal strategies that aim to responsabilize individuals rely on expert knowledge of human conduct which is derived from the social and human sciences (Burchell, 1996). This is achieved when governing institutions collaborate with each other to develop and exchange information, which is then used

to facilitate strategies of control (Ericson & Haggerty, 1999). Consequently, knowledge is a valuable property or resource that guides action and decision-making (Ericson & Haggerty, 1999). In summary, as Townley (1993) best articulates, government “rationality is dependent upon specific knowledges and techniques of rendering something knowable and, as a result, governable. Governmentality, therefore, is a reference to those processes through which objects are rendered amenable to intervention and regulation” (p. 520). As Chaskin (2010) notes, most gang prevention strategies rely on theory and knowledge to operate.

Foucault believed criminological theories constitute a form of disciplinary knowledge, used to legitimize disciplinary crime control strategies and justify punishment (Garland, 1996). He suggests that criminologists and other experts identify the causes of crime to justify the use of power by using such discourses to enhance regulatory, disciplinary or biopolitical control (Valverde, 2017). In other words, these theories are complicit in the formation of expert knowledge and used to develop certain technologies aimed at managing the threat crime poses, and used to extend control over the governance of social problems.

While it is unclear if local actors possess any knowledge of key theories of crime when conceptualizing risk, it is evident that many do draw on mainstream ideas of culture to argue that South Asian “culture” promotes values and orientations that are conducive to gang involvement. Additionally, criminological theories relating to moral panics are used in the fourth article of this collection to examine how notorious South Asian gangster Bindy Johal has been conceptualized as a folk devil and evoked a particular counter-reaction. This vilification of Johal is contrasted with a competing conception by some respondents that is more sympathetic, suggesting that his “heroic” appeal emerges from his affirmation of South Asian masculinity within a hegemonic system that typically subordinates the masculinity of racialized men. While less explicit in its

analysis, this article also relates to the governmentality literature and the use of criminological theory to understand how such constructions of a legendary figure fall into line with long-standing theories of crime and deviance.

In summary, mainstream ideas on culture tend to be adopted in the everyday explanations for gang involvement by respondents in this present study yet should also be subject to examination under the same critical lens as traditional subcultural theories of crime. Below I elaborate on how I supplement this theoretical orientation with other schools of thoughts and analytical orientations that are influential in this collection.

(1) Subcultural theories versus structural theories

The first article examines how risk is conceptualized in the governance of South Asian gang involvement in BC. These conceptions are largely in line with how subcultural theories of crime imagine the phenomenon by emphasizing cultural values that explain crime. Subcultural theories have significant influence in criminological theory and are premised on the notion that certain groups have values, beliefs, and orientations that are more conducive to violence and criminal offending. Early theorists like Cohen (1955) and Miller (1958) argued that lower-class youth are most likely to develop values oriented towards crime. For Cohen (1955) deviance is a reaction to the frustration lower-class youth experience as the result of failing to achieve culturally approved goals, facilitating a value system that condones the use of violence. Miller (1958) expands on Cohen's (1955) analysis by developing a distinct set of values and focal concerns that are prevalent among lower-class delinquents, including trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate and autonomy.

While Cohen (1955) and Miller (1958) focused on lower-class communities more generally, the deviant values of racialized minorities groups becomes the focus for theorists such

as Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967), who examine the question of why African American men in Philadelphia had higher rates of violent crime than White offenders. They suggest that African American men likely developed values and orientations that viewed violence as acceptable through family practices such as child rearing and social conditioning. This line of theorizing would be revisited by Anderson (1999) decades later, suggesting that African American men living in ghettoized neighbourhoods may be inclined to violence as the result of the economic and social conditions of their communities and the failure to adopt “middle-class values”. Anderson (1999) advances the notion of the ‘code of the street’ a set of informal rules that governs the use of interpersonal violence in dealing with violence and threats to masculinity. Although Anderson (1999) suggests that not all people in these communities fully adhere to this code, most are willing to draw on it under certain conditions (i.e. a decent father who is protecting his family from external threats).

Subcultural theories can be contrasted with those that focus more on the structure of society that cause crime rather than on “culture,” and the associated variables of norms and values. Of the most prominent structural theories is Merton’s (1938) theory of strain, which focuses on how economically constrained individuals innovate through criminal behaviour to achieve the universally desired economic goals they are blocked from obtaining. Social disorganization theories are also structural in nature and centre on how poorly disorganized neighbourhoods fail to adequately control criminal behaviour due to a lack of community cohesion (Shaw and McKay, 1942). These theories focus on economic conditions and how they influence offending while subcultural theories examine criminal values and beliefs that are believed to have developed among various subcultures and groups in society.

Subcultural theories have been challenged for: a) failing to articulate the relationship between “culture” and “structure” and b) pathologizing the racialized offender (Covington, 1995; Wacquant, 2002; Case, 2008). First, theorists like Cohen (1955) suggest that lower class delinquency is the result of a repudiation of middle-class values while Miller (1958) argues that lower-class youth have a distinct set of values that form the basis of their offending. These theories however, do not do a good job explaining how structural factors, like socioeconomic status or neighbourhood, might influence or lead to the development of values and orientations that are conducive to crime (Rosner-Kornhauser, 1978). Second, these theories may be used to pathologize racialized minorities as being inherently deviant or criminal. Thus, these theories can have racist implications where populations, particularly African Americans, become defined as “risky” and having a set of values that are considered antisocial. Pathologizing in such a manner might overlook the role of structural factors, such as poverty, discriminatory racial practices in the criminal justice system, or a lack of legitimate opportunities, in explaining the overrepresentation of certain racial minority groups amongst the justice statistics (Wacquant, 2002). In other words, these knowledges enhance control over racialized populations.

(2) Moral panics and folk devils

Central to the fourth article of this collection is literature on moral panics and folk devils. This perspective, developed by theorists like Cohen (2011) and Hall and colleagues (1978) reflects some the fears and anxieties surrounding gang involvement and the hold one particular gangster, Bindy Johal, has on a generation of young South Asian men in BC. Cohen (2011) defines a moral panic as a condition or episode of time where a person or group of people are defined as a threat to societal values and interests (p.1). These targeted “folk devils” represent the most dangerous elements of society, are blamed for particular types of criminal acts, and are

subject to immediate action by agents of social control. In summary, folk devils are viewed as an existential threat to a morally decent society (Cohen, 2011). Thus, moral panics centre on a *concern* over a potential threat; *hostility* that is directed at certain targets; the reaction to them is often *disproportionate* to the actual level of harm folk devils might inflict; and are considered *volatile* since these panics can disappear just as fast as they appear (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Hall et al., (1978) examined the moral panic fear over muggings in Britain during the 1960s and 70s. They argued that this moral panic was manufactured for the purposes of diverting the public's attention away from the recession, a deeper or more pervasive crisis, to a specific group of people (Black youth) that were a much easier target.

Some have criticized Cohen's (2011) analysis as being outdated, arguing that morality is no longer universal with different groups having their own interpretation of moral boundaries (Hier, 2008). This suggests that any universal reaction to moral panics is replaced with the idea of different groups reacting differently to certain situations. This leads to the creation of a morally ambiguous gray area that can elicit multiple reactions. For instance, certain individuals defined as folk devils by some may receive sympathy and support by others. This suggests that as soon as a moral panic develops, groups with dissenting voices emerge to challenge and make counter-claims that are oppositional to the ones made by initial alarmists. Cohen (2011) himself understood the need to adjust his theory by introducing the concept of a 'generalized moral stance' to reflect the changing nature of contemporary moral panics. Instead, moral panics today emerge from a web or stream of endless anxieties that plague the public conscience, like the fear of crime, and are a part of living in a risk society (Hier, 2008).

While there is an abundance of literature theorizing folk devils, the concept of a folk hero has not received as much sociological analyses in relation to the broader moral panic literature

(Flinders and Wood, 2015). As folk devils become defined from certain events and conditions that amplify the public's fear and anxieties, heroes too can be shaped from events and conditions that have the opposite effect from moral panics (i.e. produce euryopia, excitement, or happiness). Further, Flinders and Wood (2015) note the moral ambiguity that some folk devils might possess, which suggests that some of these "villains" might actually be considered "heroic" or "anti-heroes" by some. This relates to a body of literature on how some criminals become romanticized when they are perceived to be in opposition to some social injustice that has inflicted them or others (Duncan, 1991). In relation to the problem of South Asian gang involvement and how a folk devil like Bindy Johal may also be perceived as a heroic or a sympathetic figure by some, it is necessary to turn to the literature on hegemonic masculinities. This area of theorizing sheds light on the perceived social injustice that Johal is considered to be fighting and why he may be admired by some.

(3) Hegemonic masculinities and crime

The question of why men commit more violent crimes than women forms the basis of the literature on hegemonic masculinities and crime. This theorizing is premised on the idea that a dominant, hence hegemonic, form of masculine identity exists and is typically allocated to white-heterosexual males who display traits such as aggression and sexual prowess (Connell, 1995). This hegemonic masculinity defines power relations in society and ensures that men who meet this ideal can hold their dominance over not only women but other men who fail to meet this standard. For these men, their masculinity is considered subordinate (Connell, 1995). Thus, subordinated males may often resort to violence and aggression to achieve their "manliness" and reclaiming their position on the hegemonic masculine hierarchy. This idea has been used to explain the gang offending of numerous minority males who often find their masculinity

subordinated in such a manner. For instant, hypermasculinity through crime helps alleviate some of the struggles and threats to self-esteem that plague working class males (Messerschmit, 1997).

Literature on South Asians offending/gang involvement

For South Asian men in particular, several scholars note how their masculinity is often subordinated by being perceived as effeminate and emasculated (Kalra, 2009; George and Rashidi, 2014). Frost (2010) notes how South Asian men in Canada have to do masculinity differently, particularly those who get involved in gangs. Frost (2010) suggests that the readiness to use violence, treat women as sexual objects, and adopt a style of dress and appearance is a way for boys, referred to as “Surrey Jacks”, to reclaim their masculinity. Navigating masculinity in such a way becomes a means to carve out their identity under feelings of cultural isolation and experiences of racism these boys experience. This suggests a crisis exists in the region and that hypermasculinity through gang involvement and violence might be an alternative way of doing masculinity. Thus, by examining the legacy of Bindy Johal, who in many ways represents the “Surrey Jack” archetype, this analysis provides a deeper look into the perceived identity crisis plaguing South Asian males in Lower Mainland BC.

South Asian culture and gang violence is the focus of Buffam’s (2016) piece on cultural confessions. In his analysis, Buffam (2016) notes how editorials and other forms of media have given South Asians a forum to denounce the sins of “culture” and a way to scrutinize the South Asian family who, as an institution, has contributed to the “gang problem” as well as other problems (i.e. domestic violence) in the community. This analysis expands on such cultural analyses by examining the narratives of those on the frontlines of BC’s gang intervention strategies and programming and how they often South Asian “culture” is often constituted as

criminogenic (Chapter 2). These theoretical insights on South Asian masculinity provides some much-needed context in terms of how risk is imagined in relation to South Asian gang involvement as well as how the legacy of Bindy Johal is framed.

Clarification of key terms, concepts and terminologies

'South Asian gangs' versus 'South Asian gang involvement'

A debate central to this analysis is over the distinction between “South Asian gangs” and “South Asian gang involvement”. While these two concepts appear to suggest the same thing, they actually represent two entirely different meanings. The term “South Asian gang” refers to a gang that is largely comprised of South Asian individuals, suggesting an entity that is culturally and racially homogenous. The concept of “South Asian gang involvement” represents the process of South Asian youth or young adults getting involved in gangs. Although South Asian gang involvement could result in individuals getting involved in exclusively “South Asian gangs”, they may also be getting involved in more ethnically diverse gangs. Thus, several respondents caution against using the term “South Asian gang” since it fails to account for what they believe is the involvement of South Asian youth in gangs that are not divided along racial lines. Indeed, some respondents argue that the concept of a “South Asian gang” carries a racist connotation that only South Asians are getting involved in gangs, ignoring the ethnic heterogeneity of gangs in their area and contributing to the perception that this is a South Asian problem or a consequence of “South Asian culture.”

This debate is explored further in the first article of this collection. Nevertheless, for present purposes, this project makes use of both terms depending on the context. For example, gangs comprised of mostly South Asian members did likely exist in the days of Bindy Johal

before becoming more diverse. Additionally, some respondents argue that “South Asian gangs” are a real entity and so in order to accurately capture their perceptions on the phenomenon, it is necessary to draw on the language they use directly.

‘South Asian’, ‘Punjabi’, ‘Indo-Canadian’, or ‘Sikh’

There is also some ambiguity around how to characterize the racial and ethnic backgrounds of individuals getting involved in gangs. The term “South Asian” is largely used in this analysis because it is more inclusive and recognizes a broader range of ethnic subsets that fall under its umbrella. For example, while most gang members are viewed as “Punjabi”, a few research participants argue that Pakistani and Fijian youth are also involved in gangs. Nevertheless, some respondents use the terms Punjabi, Indo-Canadian, or Sikh to refer to the race or religion of gang members as they see it. Thus, while relying mainly on the concept of “South Asian”, this study will occasionally purposefully slip between various terminologies when deemed relevant. This includes providing contextual meaning where differentiation is necessary. For example, the concept of ‘Sikh youth’ is used when examining particular anti-gang responses that utilize Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) to deliver gang programming due to the religious backgrounds of these individuals. Further, various different concepts are contingent on terminology captured in direct quotes from the research participants themselves. In this sense, if a research participant uses the term “Indo-Canadian”, for example, in the course of an interview, that concept is used for analytical purposes to ensure their perspective on the issue is accurately captured. Further, it is not the purpose of this study to develop a definitive set of concepts that should be uniformly applied, but rather, take into consideration how research participants

view/conceptualize the problem and how they interpret the racial backgrounds of those involved in gangs.

Methods

This collection examines stakeholders' perceptions on issues related to South Asian gang involvement. Therefore, in-depth semi-structured interviews with 34 professionals with some first-hand knowledge and expertise on South Asian gangs is used to address this study's research questions and objectives. Accordingly, this study has undergone review from the University of Waterloo's Office of Research Ethics and received ethical clearance. All interviewees are fully informed prior to their involvement and have given their consent to participate. To respect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants names have been altered. Since most research participants are South Asian, pseudonyms are racially and ethnically sensitive.

Both in-person and telephone interviews were conducted from August 2016 through January 2017 in the Lower Mainland of BC. This includes cities such as Metro Vancouver, Surrey, Delta, Richmond, and Abbotsford. Research participants fall into three organizational categories, which includes: community organizations (such as anti-gang programs, immigrant settlement groups, youth organizations, and legal and court advocacy groups), law enforcement, and education (n=16). Law enforcement includes police officers that serve on gang units or engage in some related community work on their spare time (n=6). Educators interviewed include school principals, vice-principals, teachers, counsellors and district level employees (n=12). The diversity in backgrounds of research participants supports the reflexive and interpretive nature of this study as it allows us to make comparisons and understand the differences among perceptions of different categories of participants.

A combination of snowballing and purposive sampling techniques was used to gain access to appropriate research participants. This sampling scheme gave me an opportunity to reach out to suitable candidates and then elicit their support to recruit other participants so that the sample could grow. Data collection stopped when I reached theoretical saturation, a point where no new and relevant information was being derived from interviews. With the permission of participants, interviews were audio-recorded on an MP3 device. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 11.4.0 qualitative analysis software. A process of open coding was used to develop some key concepts, categories, and properties from the raw data. Particularly, the constant comparative method was used to develop some insights on how participants problematized South Asian gangs or understood risk. To account for validity in this qualitative study, the process of member checking was used when appropriate. This technique requires a researcher to seek clarify on data and interpretations with the research participants themselves (Creswell and Miller, 2000). It is important to be accurate in capturing how participants problematize the issue of South Asian gangs and drawing any tentative and preliminary conclusions.

Overview of dissertation

This collection of articles tackles the phenomenon of South Asian gang involvement in Western Canada. Since each article examines a different aspect of the problem, an overview of each article, including individual research questions and findings, is necessary.

Chapter 1 examines local conceptions of risk and centres in particular on the question of how culture is used and problematized when authorities respond to “South Asian gangs” or South Asian gang involvement. Many authorities and stakeholders tend to adopt subcultural explanations, suggesting that some South Asian families have a distinct value system that

emphasizes materialism, which orientates boys and young men towards gangs. By adopting the language of traditional criminological theories of subculture, these frameworks tend to pathologize South Asians 'culture' as inherently conducive to gangs. Additionally, these accounts often neglect the complex relationship between structure and culture.

Chapter 2 examines how South Asian gang involvement is governed by focusing on the question of how these anti-gang strategies reflect various logics of governance. Adopting a Foucauldian analysis, I argue that the response to South Asian gang involvement involves a complex assemblage of various logics of governance including more historic forms of police regulation and pastoral power. However, these practices are influenced by contemporary neoliberal governmental practices where the state fosters the support and mobilizing community actors and agencies to manage the problem of gangs directly. Community is then used for the contradictory purposes of exclusion, through a controversial BRE program, and inclusion through various community-based programming.

Finally, Chapter 3 takes a look at one of the most notorious South Asian gangsters in Western Canadian history, Bindy Johal. This analysis aims to discover how Bindy Johal has been conceptualized by authorities and how these conceptualizations influenced practices of governing others. Johal has evoked two legacies, one where he is viewed as a contemporary folk devil who, despite being dead for over 20 years, still pushes youth to gangs, and second, an anti-heroic or sympathetic figure who was able to secure recognition and reclaim masculinity for South Asian men. Each constructed legacy can be better understood through moral panic literature and theorizing on hegemonic masculinities and crime. I argue that the fear over Johal's influence largely masks or conceals a far greater crisis of masculinity South Asian boys might be experiencing.

Scholarly contributions and intention of work

This research makes an important contribution on several different fronts. First, it adds to what I hope is a growing body of research on South Asian gang involvement in Canada (Frost, 2010; Buffam, 2016). Noticeably, there is very little academic attention on this issue despite the perception that it is a major problem by community members, law enforcement, educators and policy makers. Second, this thesis also contributes to the governance literature by examining how this understudied phenomenon is conceptualized by authorities. This is in relation to how risk is problematized as well as how the legacy of notorious gangster Bindy Johal is imagined. This analysis contributes to the governance literatures by examining how the problem has been governed through the community, a key feature of neoliberal rule. The conclusions drawn from this analysis can help stakeholders understand the various “explanations” of South Asian gang offending that exist. The purpose of this is not to necessarily influence policy or action but for stakeholders to conduct some introspection and debate as to where these ideas come from and how they might influence their reaction to the problem in terms of implemented strategies and programming.

My reasons for choosing the sandwich dissertation option is because it provides relative flexibility, adding both depth, in terms of exploring each topic in detail, as well as breadth, allowing me to examine various different aspects of the problem of South Asian gang involvement. I intend to submit all three manuscripts to reputable peer review journals for publication. The first article on problematization will be submitted to the *Canadian Journal of Criminology* with Dr. Rashmee Singh as the second author. The second article on exclusion/inclusion (to be second-authored by Dr. Boyle), will be submitted to either the *British*

Journal of Criminology or *Theoretical Criminology*. Finally, I will submit the article on moral panics and Bindy Johal to *Men and Masculinities*.

Chapter Two: Re-examining the issue of “culture” as a risk factor for South Asian gang involvement in Western Canada

From the moment a Punjabi boy opens his eyes, his parents hand him the keys to the Porsche of life. From now on, his mother will ride in the back seat, literally and figuratively, putting her son ahead of the world. Her boy will have the privilege of eating a warm meal, without the chore of clearing the dishes alongside his sister. In a fit of childhood rage, he will kick and punch his mother, as his father and grandmother look on, taking great pride in their boy’s supposed courage (Bakshi, 2002).

The arguments advanced by this quote, taken from a controversial Macleans Magazine essay written by contributor Anu Bakshi sparked wide-spread debate among the local South Asian community in the Lower Mainland of BC. Faced with the murders of nearly 100 young South Asian men in gang-related violence, the concept of a “South Asian gang” or ‘South Asian gang involvement’ was predominately constructed as a significant problem. Despite this characterization, there remains no clear consensus among authorities and key stakeholders when it comes to constructing a definition of these gangs or identifying the underlying root causes or risk factors for South Asian gang involvement despite attempts to address the problem through various forms of programing. This chapter will not attempt to put forward a theory on South Asian gang involvement, but rather, will try to understand the various narratives and perspectives of those who are on the frontlines of the problem with the objective of understanding how the concept of the “South Asian gang” is imagined and constructed. Precisely, this chapter will attempt to understand how the South Asian gangs are conceptualized and problematized by stakeholders such as law enforcement, educators, frontline anti-gang workers and other representatives from community organizations.

Problematizing is a feature of the public policy process, as a problem must first be known before appropriate action is taken. Modern penal strategies stress the importance of collaboration between various institutions and state and non-state actors with the purpose of developing and

exchanging information or knowledge in order to guide decision-making and facilitate effective strategies of crime control (Ericson and Haggerty, 1999). This perspective is a departure for many, more positivist-oriented criminologists who tend to grand-theorize when explaining criminal behaviour patterns. In relation to South Asian gangs, this theoretical perspective is not interested in the question of *why* South Asians might join gangs, but to understand *how* south Asian gangs are conceptualized, thought about, and acted upon. From a methodological standpoint, this provides theoretical flexibility to account for various competing and contradictory accounts of South Asian gangs and which ones tend to get picked up as the normative explanation for gang involvement.

For instance, subcultural theories suggest that certain groups have values and orientations that are supportive of violence or conducive to criminal behaviour. Anderson (1999), for example, focuses on African Americans males in urban Philadelphia and suggests that criminal behaviour, such as gang involvement, can be attributed a distinct value system (i.e. the code of the street) that legitimizes the use of violence under certain conditions. Consequently, similar ideas to the ones that inform subcultural theories become the go-to explanations used by authorities to explain South Asian gang violence.

Drawing on the narratives of key stakeholders, this chapter examines an important theoretical question: How has “culture” been used in the construction of a “South Asian gang” or South Asian gang involvement? In other words, this chapter explores how various authorities understand the phenomenon and ultimately pathologize South Asian ‘culture’ as risky. This chapter draws on in-depth interviews with 34 such stakeholders with some expertise on South Asian gang involvement through their role in anti-gang programming. Interview participants are

selected from a variety of organizational fields and backgrounds including law enforcement, education, and community agencies across BC.

In examining the narratives of key stakeholders then, such as the police, school officials or gang workers, this analysis reveals that these authorities tend to draw on mainstream ideas of culture and the language of risk to construct an image of the “South Asian gang”. However, this article asserts that most stakeholders conflate or fail to distinguish “culture” and “structure”, a common criticism of subcultural perspectives on gang delinquency (Ball-Rokeach, 1973; Rosner-Kornhauser, 1978). Additionally, I argue that when “culture” is used to pathologize gang involvement, it accentuates key differences that exist with South Asians that are imagined unique to or different than the offending of other groups including that of racialized minorities.

Consequently, some of the risk factors identified are intertwined with the diasporic, racial and cultural challenges faced by the South Asian community and have not been identified in the broader gang literature. For example, cultural explanations of gang involvement centre on the “South Asian family”, where the title of “the golden boy” or “prince” is bestowed on male offspring, or are characterized by the pursuit of materialism or the ‘gold collar lifestyle’. These explanations for South Asian gang offending revitalize the debate regarding cultural deviance theories by adding legitimacy to a school of thought that emphasizes distinct cultural risk factors in the offending patterns of a racialized minority group. However, structural factors such as the issue of racism, the socioeconomic backgrounds of gang members, or the racialized division of labour have further complicated our understanding of “South Asian gangs” and the relationship they have on “cultural” factors, like value orientations towards materialism. Ultimately, cultural accounts need to be examined through a more critical lens that examines how culture-centric

explanations are influenced by structural factors and how ideas on a “culture of crime” are rendered commonsensical knowledge by authorities.

This analysis begins with a brief overview of theory, including an examination of the criminological theory on gangs and delinquency with an emphasis on subcultural theories. The next section examines how interviewees such as police, educators, and representatives from community gang organizations conceptualize the South Asian gang, including their perceptions of the problem and its scale and scope. Using the rich narratives of my research participants, the next section will examine how risk is conceptualized and how it accentuates the cultural distinctness of South Asians as a key contributor of young South Asian men getting involved in gangs.

Literature review

The existing literature on subcultural theory provides an important starting point in understanding two relevant thematic debates central to this analysis. First, it is necessary to examine how subcultural theories have been critiqued for overlooking the relationship between and conflating “structure” and “culture.” Second, a common criticism found in the literature is the tendency of subcultural theories to use “culture” as a way to pathologize different racial groups. Here, culture becomes the basis of pointing out things that are wrong with a racialized population. Nevertheless, these debates illuminate how the typical subject is constructed in the literature and how the South Asian gang member is imagined. Also included in this literature review is a brief overview of the limited work on South Asian gang involvement and how the South Asian male has been characterized as risky.

Subcultural and structural theories: The relationship between culture and structure

One of the major criticisms of subcultural theories is that these theories fail to adequately articulate the relationship between “culture” and “structure” or how these factors interact to explain criminal offending. However, an overview of some ‘classic’ cultural deviance and structural theories is first necessary. Theoretical perspectives on gang delinquency are plentiful in the criminological literature. These perspectives are quite diverse and offer unique accounts on why individuals get involved in gangs and enable stakeholders to position the problem of South Asian gangs. For present purposes, two perspectives on gang delinquency will be examined: subcultural and structural perspectives.

Subcultural deviance models are premised on the notion that there are conflicting cultures that exist in a differentiated society (Rosner-Kornhauser, 1978). This perspective has been put forward by several theorists and claims that violent behaviour is value driven, and that certain individuals adhere to a set of values or beliefs that condones violence (Ball-Rokeach, 1973). In other words, those who adopt antisocial values and attitudes may act more violent when motivated (Markowitz, 2003). These values and beliefs are typically developed through a process of socialization that condones such behaviour (Rosner-Kornhauser, 1978).

Unfortunately, there is no consensus as to what role gangs play in the socialization of these values. Mainly, it is unclear whether youth who already have violent values join gangs or if youth develop these beliefs after joining gangs. The result is circular arguments where theorists have a difficult time explaining if pro law-breaking values and orientations proceed gang involvement or are formulated afterwards. Nevertheless, many theorists have contributed important ideas to the subcultural perspective, especially in the case of gang delinquency. The communal or group nature of gangs makes the assertion easy to accept that a shared value system

exists and is reinforced through a process of learning among its members (Miller, Cohen and Bryant, 1997).

Albert Cohen (1955) one of the earliest contributors to the subcultural perspective, argues that youth from lower-class families experience frustration at being held to the same academic standards as their middle-class counterparts. Cohen (1955) advanced the concept of 'reaction formation,' suggesting that delinquency was the result of the frustration youth experience from failing to achieve culturally approved goals. This condition allows for a delinquent subculture to emerge where values and beliefs that condone delinquency and violence become prevalent. Like Cohen (1955), Walter B. Miller (1958) suggests that delinquency is a reaction to the extreme conditions youth in lower class communities are subject to and is a direct repudiation of middle-class norms. To Miller (1958) lower class youth develop a set of focal concerns, defined as a set of values, a way of life, and a pattern of behaviour, characterized by trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate and autonomy, which provide lower class youth with the status they need to navigate their social worlds (Miller, 1958).

In contrast to the subcultural perspective, structural theories emphasize the economic, social and class structure of society and how they might influence offending. Strain theories predominate in structural accounts of gang involvement. Merton (1938) notes that emphasis on socially desirable material and economic success without access to legitimate means to achieve these desired goals results in working class youth experiencing strain. One way to adapt to such a strain is to innovate (i.e. criminal offending) (Merton, 1938). Agnew (1992) contributes to strain theory by adding the role of negative emotions, where individuals who experience strain may be angry at the social system that excludes them from legitimate means to achieve success. This

anger, and other related negative emotions, largely mediates the relationship between strain and delinquency (Agnew, 1992).

Like strain theories, social disorganization theories also fall under the umbrella of structural perspectives. Shaw and McKay (1942) examine certain high crime neighbourhoods, noting that these socially disorganized communities have low levels of solidarity, cohesion and integration among citizens, leading to poor informal social control. This low level of community efficacy results in increased crime in these communities (Shaw and McKay, 1942).

Some scholars have argued that both structural and cultural factors work together to explain delinquent behaviour. Heimer (1997) argues that many studies fail to find the link between social and economic structure of society in shaping delinquent or violent beliefs. Oliver (2013) suggests that institutional racism has prevented African American access to legitimate opportunity structures. This institutional racism stems from Caucasian dominance over institutions, which is based on the desire to maintain the European appearance and achievement of such institutions (Oliver, 2013). This has directly led to the erosion of a cultural identity among Blacks, and what Oliver (2013) classifies as a dysfunctional cultural adaptation. Among other things, this adaptation takes the form of distorted definitions and beliefs of manhood. This might explain offending as the result of coping with the stress of ghetto life (Oliver, 2013). This perspective has led to a body of literature on hegemonic masculinities and crime (Connell and Messerschmit, 2005).

Cultural theories are not without some general criticisms and largely fell out of favour in the 1970s for their perceived lack of theoretical foundation, ignoring the role of social disorganization and economic strain, and their tautological reasoning (Rosner-Kornhauser, 1978). At this time, the civil rights movement caused a paradigm shift in criminology where the

focus went to social structure as well as an emphasis on labelling theory (Miller, Cohen and Bryant, 1997). One of the most common criticisms of subcultural theories is that they tend to focus primarily on explaining the offending of lower-class delinquents and do not do an adequate job accounting for the offending of middle or upper-class populations. Sutherland (1945) is an exception to this as he wrote extensively on the offending of white-collar criminals. For Sutherland (1945), a capitalist society produced values oriented towards greed and selfish gratification. Criminal behaviour, such as white-collar crime, is the result of a materialistic society that equates wealth with personal worth. It is society and the push to achieve the “American Dream” that explains the behaviour of white-collar criminals. Other criticisms of the subcultural perspective include a lack of clear definition of subculture; the subcultural status serving to marginalize youth further; and overestimating crime in lower-class communities (Nwalozie, 2015).

Rosner-Kornhauser (1978) is well regarded in her criticisms of subcultural theories, with one such central argument being that they fail to adequately show how social structure and culture work together to produce criminal behaviour. It has been long regarded that the marriage between structural factors (i.e. socio-economic status) and cultural factors (i.e. distinct value-orientations) remains unsuccessful despite research suggesting they are independently strong predictors of criminal behaviour (Hiemer, 1997). According to the literature this could be corrected in two ways. The first way is to better integrate culture and structure when theorizing about crime, something Hiemer (1997) attempts to do through an analytical model that integrates socio-economic factors, parental supervision, discipline, and the learning of ‘subcultural definitions favourable to violence’. The second way is to disregard certain structural variables like social class altogether. Here Nwalozie (2015) calls for a new post-subcultural theory that

underplays the significance of class and social inequalities and instead emphasizes the dynamics of contemporary youth culture. According to these scholars, removing social class in cultural theories broadens its scope, making it applicable to middle and upper-class offenders, as well as offering a solution to the poorly articulated culture/structure relationship.

Subcultural theories as a way to pathologize the racialized offender

Another common criticism of some subcultural theories is their tendency to use ‘culture’ as a way to pathologize different racial groups. Precisely, when describing the offending of racialized minorities, inherent cultural differences becomes the primary explanatory factor, causing these individuals to be regarded as socially or psychologically abnormal. These theories tend to promote the idea that a distinct pro-law breaking or violent value system exists among particular groups which are transmitted and reinforced through a process of social learning (Hawkins, 1983). However, early subcultural theories were primarily concerned with explaining variations in crime among White offenders but did not attribute crime to a White culture or a distinct set of values and orientations associated with White populations (Covington, 1995). Instead, these theories focused on explaining the crimes of lower-class male offenders, which were attributed to a lower-class value system.

Subculture theories eventually shifted from a focus on lower class crimes to crimes committed by racialized offenders, particularly African American offenders. Indeed, these theories were used to make sense of police data that showed Blacks were more likely than Whites to be arrested and overrepresented in the justice system (Covington, 1995). By focusing on racial identity and cultural characteristics, social scientists were largely able to minimize, or

even completely overlook the role structural factors, such as poverty or institutional racism, in accounting for differences reflected in the police data (Case, 2008).

Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) were some of the earliest theorists to focus on Black offenders and were primarily concerned with the question of why African American men in Philadelphia had higher rates of violent crime like homicide than White individuals. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) draw on psychological, biological, and sociological accounts to argue that certain subcultures tend to have values and orientations, either through child-rearing practices and social conditioning and learning, that promote violence and view it an acceptable response to conflict. Nevertheless, Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) stress that not all members of a subgroup support the use of violence. This work touched off a significant amount of statistical analysis that generally rejected the subculture of violence thesis attributed to Black homicide rates (Dixon and Lizotte, 1987; Loftin and Hill, 1974; Parker and Smith, 1979). In other words, research found no evidence that Black offenders had a distinct set of values that explained higher rates of violent offending like homicide.

Despite some of the criticisms levied against such accounts, some scholars continued pathologizing Black offenders in such a manner. One of the more recent contributions to the subcultural perspective in this regard is Elijah Anderson's (1999) seminal book the *Code of the Street*. Similar to Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1966), Anderson (1999) advances a theory of offending by Black males in urban Philadelphia. Anderson (1999) suggests that some poor African American men may be inclined to violence due to their adoption of violent values, which they embrace for the objective of survival in ghettoized neighbourhoods. These individuals adopt what Anderson (1999) refers to as the code of the street, which he defines as a set of informal rules that govern interpersonal violent behaviour. Individuals may resort to violence to settle

disputes, particularly when they feel their respect has been threatened. For Anderson (1999) violence under the code functions as a form of cultural adaption to social conditions in the urban neighbourhood, which most notably includes the loss of manufacturing jobs that has resulted in high unemployment among African American men, coupled with the historical realities of slavery and segregation. Through hyper-masculine forms of aggression, the code of the street allows African American men the ability to reclaim their perceived loss of masculinity and survive under the harsh conditions of the ghetto. The code is crucial for people to protect themselves when they are faced with threats of interpersonal violence and aggression. Thus, the code offers a set of behaviour patterns associated with a system of values and beliefs that can literally keep people alive in dangerous inner cities.

Anderson (1999) outlines two types of families and categories of people that reside in these communities: 'street' and 'decent'. Street oriented families and individuals are considered selfish and angry, perform parental duties sporadically, socialize their children under the code, and often resort to violence when they feel disrespected (Anderson, 1999). Street families are also largely headed by single-mothers or grandmothers and the presence of a strong authoritative father is absent. This aligns with the arguments made by earlier theorists, such as Messner and Sampson (1991), who outline how family disruption and the prevalence of female-run households in Black communities causes violent juvenile offending. Decent families, in contrast, have some hope for the future. They work hard and are thought to value the role of a man in a family as a role model and form of informal social control. While not as heavily invested in the code as street families, decent families understand the necessity of resorting to the threat of violence if necessary (Anderson, 1999). For Hazlehurst and Hazlehurst (1998), the assertion of

masculinity is what motivates some African American males, particularly when they feel disrespected.

Despite some of the relevance of Anderson's writing, there are some general critiques that cannot be overlooked. First, Anderson's use of the mutually exclusive categories of 'street' and 'decent' is generally problematic as it ignores social or structural mechanisms that might push one individual or family down a particular orientation than the other (Wacquant, 2002). Precisely, the code must work in conjunction with other social forces that are active in the ghetto, including lax gun laws and the 'prisonization' of street life (Wacquant, 2002). Second, Anderson's analysis fails to adequately address the issue of causation. Are street families poor because of their morality and value orientations or does their position and state of destitution shape their values (Wacquant, 2002)? Anderson also adopts a moralistic tone, clearly taking and vindicating the side of the 'decent' father, grandmother, or family.

Relevant to this analysis is concern over whether Anderson is simply perpetuating racist stereotypes of African Americans living in disadvantaged communities. Calling out the detrimental nature of such theorizing, Case (2008) suggests that the tendency of cultural theories to pathologize along racial lines works to increase the sense of "otherness" associated with minority populations. This may ultimately obscure what are believed to be more relevant structural factors, such as systemic discrimination in the justice system, an unequal access to opportunities, and family-structure. As much of subcultural theory pertains to Black offenders, these perspectives are not extended to other racialized minority groups, particularly those that are not typically pathologized as "risky", such as South Asians. The next section examines how the South Asian "gangster" has been constructed in the very limited literature on South Asian gang involvement.

“The keys to the Porsche of life”: The problematization of “South Asian culture” in mainstream media

An influential essay by Anu Bakshi (2002) caused a local controversy among some in the South Asian community when it was first published in Macleans Magazine in December 2002 and remains a source of contention and debate today. Bakshi begins her article by posing a question asked by B.C Supreme Court Justice Wally Oppal: “*why has the Indo-Canadian community raised a disproportionate number of killers?*” Bakshi argues that the South Asian community has likely ignored this question out of denial. Adopting a moralistic position, Bakshi overtly suggests that the Punjabi boy is inherently aggressive and has contempt for the law, situating blame directly on the parents who have given the boy “*the keys to the Porsche of life*”. Bakshi posits that sons are given every comfort at the expense of others in the family. Moreover, displays of aggression, like kicking or punching their mother, is often looked upon with pride by fathers and grandmothers as an indication of their son’s courage. Bakshi paints a bleak picture of the Punjabi household, where a cycle of alcohol abuse, domestic violence and a sense of bravado among males is responsible for producing the gang violence that has occurred in the greater Vancouver area. This essay produced significant debate among the South Asian community with some arguing that Bakshi forwarded racist ideas that the Punjabi male was inherently violent as well as stereotypes of the Punjabi family, even being reposted on the racist website Immigration Watch. However, others believed Bakshi’s article launched an important debate that needed to occur in the community to address the gang problem.

Dissecting Bakshi’s arguments, Buffam (2016) wrote one of the few articles on South Asian gang offending in Canada and is more critical on the use and construction of “South Asian

culture” as risky. Analyzing media editorials and letters in local newspapers and magazines from the South Asian community on the gang problem, Buffam (2016) argues that these texts are ‘cultural confessions’ that aim to renounce the sins of culture that contributing to the South Asian gang problem. Buffam (2016) argues that the Punjabi home has been framed as a space that is culturally distinct and patriarchal, and ultimately antithetical to the practices of modern ‘Western’ norms that value and promote things like gender equality. Buffam (2016) challenges Bakshi’s assertion that much of the blame of gang delinquency falls on cultural beliefs, traditional practices, and the dynamics of the South Asian family and argues such confessions form the basis of racial differentiation.

Bakshi’s account attributes the South Asian gang ‘problem’ to cultural conditions where the bad behaviour of sons, as the preferred gender, is overlooked and subject to less control by parents. According to Buffam (2016), people like Bakshi are considered ‘cultural insiders’, people who have the ability to provide authoritative accounts on the cultural differences that exist and contribute to the gang violence the community is witnessing. Buffam’s (2016) study, while illuminating, relies on archival data to critically challenge any cultural explanations that arise for gang involvement. This chapter aims to identify how the “South Asian gang member” is constructed by directly interviewing individuals Buffam (2016) would consider ‘cultural insiders’.

Making sense of how factors such as patriarchy influence gang offending deviates from how “culture” and “structure” are typically problematized in the subcultural literature. This is further complicated by the construction of South Asians as a ‘model minority’ among immigrant groups. Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005) deconstruct the ‘model minority’ myth often ascribed to South Asians in Canada and offer some clarity in terms of reconciling the idea that South

Asians can both be perceived as model immigrants and at the same time as having a culture that is more patriarchal and oppositional to the West. Immigrants tend to be conceptualized as patriarchal in both positive and negative ways, where the ‘good’ model minorities are those with productive and entrepreneurial extended patriarchal families. ‘Bad immigrants or minorities’ are viewed as such because of their economic dependency or violent patriarchy norms (Honig, 1999). Okin (1999) takes this type of analysis one-step further by suggesting multiculturalism may promote and protect negative patriarchal practices, while undermining Western principles of gender equality and women’s rights.

Like Buffam (2016), Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005) draw on the infamous Bakshi article to note how South Asian gang offending has been attributed to such patriarchal practices where sons are believed to be raised in a “*testosterone fueled environment run by an iron-fisted patriarch*” and where violence is often a tool used by the head of household against his wife or subordinate members in the family hierarchy. Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005) caution against viewing patriarchy in such a way, suggesting that analyses of patriarchy fail to consider its intersectional nature and how it might manifest itself differently in Canada than it would abroad. For Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005), patriarchy is not something people bring with them from the ‘third-world’, but rather, something that is shaped through an adjustment to the existing social conditions they experience in their new host countries. For instance, Hage (1998) argues that patriarchal authority is often a defensive strategy for immigrants within hostile societies, with Thobani (1999) suggesting that Canadian immigration policy itself reinforces and produces patriarchy since immigrant women are often placed in conditions of dependency on male breadwinners and heads of households.

Much of this limited research on South Asian gang offending does not consider the narratives of those on the frontline of the issue. This is important for two reasons. First, from a governmental standpoint, it is critical to understand how these stakeholders conceptualize a social problem since they play a significant role in delivering programming or enforcement. Secondly, how stakeholders conceptualize the problem or imagine risk does not have to be grounded in reality. The perception that South Asian “culture” is inherently criminogenic will have real consequences in everyday life in terms of how they manage the “problem.”

Conceptualizing the problem

South Asian gangs versus South Asian gang involvement

When defining the concept of a ‘South Asian gang’ a problem becomes immediately apparent: do South Asian gangs actually exist as a homogenous entity of entirely South Asian members or does the construct refer to individuals of South Asian descent getting involved in gangs? On the surface both concepts of “South Asian gangs” and ‘South Asian gang involvement’ might appear to be synonymous and interchangeable or at least related. However, when conceptualizing the problem of South Asian gangs, some respondents emphasize the difference between ‘South Asian gangs’ and ‘South Asian gang involvement’. The former is racially homogenous, implying that there might be something unique about South Asian ‘culture’ that contributes to gang involvement. The latter describes South Asian involvement in gangs that may be multi-ethnic.

Some respondents felt their community had a South Asian gang problem. Others felt that the problem was more of an issue of South Asians getting involved in gangs. A few suggested that both dynamics exist. Nevertheless, accurately conceptualizing the phenomenon was

important for many participants because of the perceived social ramifications. These individuals felt that a distinction was required, due to concerns that references to a “South Asian gang problem” could result in perpetuating discriminatory and racist beliefs about South Asians. Anju, a researcher and member of an organization that does advocacy and public education in the area of South Asian gang involvement, makes an important observation:

There was a study that was done by the Vancouver Sun media and they were trying to see what the perception was of the public of who are the gang members and the majority of people thought it was South Asian. But, when you look at the actual statistics, they're not. It's members of the Hells Angel. It's people of Caucasian extraction. So, the fact that we have this convenient language, South Asian, it's not South Asian gangs, it's members of the South Asian community. Cause if we're to say Italian gangs, well we don't have Italian gangs. We have Italian members that are very involved in Hell's Angels.

Anju, along with other stakeholders, cautions against the label of ‘South Asian gangs’ since it might stigmatize the South Asian community. Here, some respondents suggest that the term ‘South Asian gangs’ carries the damaging connotation that this is a distinctly South Asian problem, neglecting or overlooking the gang involvement of non-South Asians in their community. Many respondents recognize however that because some communities, like Surrey, have highly dense South Asian populations, their involvement in gangs is likely over-represented and that South Asians actually only represent a small percentage of gang members in BC as a whole.

Some stakeholders acknowledge that the South Asian gang/gang involvement distinction might be temporally and geographically dependent. These respondents felt that distinct South Asian gangs may have proliferated in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a response to racism in Metro Vancouver but have now evolved into gangs that are less structured around race but instead are a formation of mostly (but not limited to) young South Asian males in suburban communities claiming a stake in the lucrative drug trade. Since the 1990s, many South Asians

have settled in specific communities outside downtown Vancouver, such as parts of Surrey or Abbotsford. This has led to the creation of silos that are largely insular areas where South Asians have formed communities that may be somewhat closed off or not well integrated with the rest of the Lower Mainland. Whereas racism may have been a contributing factor for gang involvement thirty years ago, many respondents feel that South Asian gang involvement is associated with recent geographic settlement patterns forming communities where gang members are taking advantage of illicit opportunities available.

The scope of the problem

“Massive”, “really big”, “huge”, and “a growing epidemic” are just some of the words used by a few respondents to describe how prevalent the issue South Asian gangs or South Asian gang involvement is in their community. For many stakeholders interviewed, the problem of South Asian gangs is a major source of concern. This is particularly true of police who generally feel the issue of South Asian gangs, as well as gangs in general, is a major problem in their communities. When describing the prevalence of the problem, officer Surjit, a gang specialist, argues:

Oh, it absolutely is a problem. Like it's to the point where when we talk about overrepresentation, every street now has kids who are either getting into it or already in it. My neighbourhood there are two people that I know of that are heavily involved in these gangs and all these small pockets around the city, it's scary, a lot of kids are getting in to it. A lot of them.

For Surjit, the problem is significant because of the ability of gangs to influence a great number of youths in his community, including individuals in his own neighbourhood. Other respondents draw on gang violence statistics to illustrate the scope of the problem. Many police officers in particular list the number of casualties from gang shootings in their community as evidence of

the severity of their community's gang problem. As law enforcement is often the first to respond to gang violence and witness its outcome, they are likely to view it as a bigger problem than other respondents.

Although many respondents felt the problem was significant and of major concern, there were many that adopted a more pragmatic view. This shows that there is a disparity in how stakeholders imagine the scope of the problem. For these individuals, the media likely inflates or exacerbates the problem. Paul, a youth worker and former gang member, describes the media's role in perpetuating a moral panic:

So, when you look at the numbers of South Asian and really break it down to a percentage, what is the percentage of youth or South Asians getting involved in gang lifestyle? Well I don't think that number will break 2%, right? The media likes to glorify those that are in the lifestyle, those that are being killed, like the Bindy Johals

For respondents like Paul, the media has glorified the lifestyle of notorious gangsters like the late Bindy Johal. For these respondents, media coverage is disproportionate to the actual threat posed by these gangs. Many stakeholders argue that the occurrence of high-profile violent incidents may contribute to the skewed perception of the problem. These sentiments are shared by Ash, a youth and family worker who works with the South Asian community: "what happened is a lot of these cases became very high profile, therefore it gave the impression that South Asian youth were overrepresented in gangs." This perspective suggests that South Asian gang involvement may not be as massive a problem as argued by some other types of stakeholders, like the police, or at the very least there is not a community-wide consensus as to the scope of the problem.

While these respondents are not minimizing the impact of South Asian gangs, and are indeed involved in programming, they feel the media, and its tendency to sensationalize a few high-profile incidents, creates an inaccurate picture of South Asian gang involvement. There are some negative consequences that stem from the media's representation of the South Asian gang

problem. Mainly, some respondents felt the media was responsible for stigmatizing young South Asian males, which results in racial profiling and other racist outcomes.

Conceptualizing risk for South Asian gang involvement

Respondents were asked a series of questions to derive a sense of how they conceptualized risk in relation to offenders of South Asian descent. Although most respondents point to risk factors that are common among the literature, such as family, individual or the community, for many, these factors may be qualitatively different for South Asians. Precisely, in pathologizing South Asian culture as risky, many respondents point to a distinct value system that is inherent to South Asian communities that encourages and condones gang involvement, particularly among male offspring. Further, while risk is conceptualized in such a manner, there are still others who point to structural factors, including socio-economic status, as motivators for gang involvement. What makes these accounts more erratic is that both family wealth *and* poverty or working-class economic conditions are associated with gang involvement. This suggests that South Asian gang involvement is perceived to fall anywhere on the socioeconomic spectrum. Nevertheless, what is unclear is the relationship “culture” shares with “structure” based on these narratives.

“The Golden Boy” and “Gold Collar Lifestyle” and its relationship to the ‘South Asian family’

“I think that there's certain expectations, especially with young South Asian males, that they're put on a pedestal and they're given almost *carte blanche* and they can't really make mistakes in the eyes of their parents.” These are the words of Anita, who works with at-risk youth. According to stakeholders like her, culturally distinct family practices produce risk as

some South Asian families might create an environment that either overlooks, or at worst condones, the gang offending of sons. In other words, parents are more likely to excuse, dismiss, or rationalize the negative behaviour of male children. Here, respondents point to males being the preferred gender in some South Asian households, where their worth is often elevated above that of daughters. According to youth worker Ash, boys are often raised with a different set of principles that promote maintaining family honour, and using aggression to get their way. For Ash, growing up there is an expectation on boys to one day be the primary breadwinner, making the financial lure of gangs more appealing since the lucrative illicit marijuana trade in BC has produced many opportunities for easy wealth. These respondents felt that parts of South Asian culture promote bravado and aggression in males, while also emphasizing the capacity for them to be financially successful, pushing them towards gangs. Aggression is an important component that is associated with the patriarchal structure of some South Asian families, mainly the use of violence.

Youth worker Ash draws parallels between gang involvement and domestic violence, finding that both dynamics involve exercising power over others. Domestic violence then is constructed as a risk factor by a handful of respondents. Ash draws on her experience counselling South Asian male offenders of domestic violence and notices a connection to gangs. Many respondents point to incidents of domestic abuse in some immigrant families as risk factors for gangs as sons often learn violent behaviour from their fathers and reproduce it through their involvement in gangs. Police officer Gurjit describes the patriarchal class structure that exists in some South Asian homes, where the male is considered dominant and women play a more subservient role that is historically entrenched through the allocation of traditional gender roles that exist in India and are reproduced or transferred over in Canada. Like Ash, Gurjit

suggests that this mentality has a residual effect on younger generations and plays a role in their involvement in gangs.

Nevertheless, many respondents argue that there is a lot of denial in South Asian families. While denial is not necessarily unique to South Asian families, it does relate to the notion of the “golden boy” mentality. Anti-gang educator Anju makes another important observation in this regard as to how sons are viewed in some South Asian homes:

The other unique problem is, I think the big one, and I'm sure you've heard this a million times, is denial. And the denial is a problem and that is some South Asian families are always revering their sons as their ideal and it does not allow them to see some of the ugly side of activity and this constant protecting of their sons, in particular has allowed a lot of these boys to get away with particular kinds of behaviour and that does then translate later and then parents don't see the red flags early enough.

Denial is a major attribute many interviewees felt exist in some South Asian homes with parents being oblivious or purposively blind to their sons' activities.

For the casual observer, the problem might play out as an issue of denial, however this denial appears to emerge from a patriarchal structure that places high value on male offspring as the “*golden boy*” or “*prince*” of the family. Interviewees suggest that many South Asian parents have a hard time accepting their son's involvement in gangs or generally believe their sons can do no wrong. This perspective is highlighted by several officers and school principals who discuss their interactions with South Asian parents that have gang-involved sons. These interactions are often described as hostile towards authorities with many parents being in denial. According to school vice-principal Allen, parents are reluctant to even entertain the idea that their sons are lying to them about their involvement in gangs. For respondents like Allen, this denial is reflective of South Asian cultural forces that tend to want to handle problems and issues of shame at home. This relates to the tendency for some South Asian families to be closed off from authorities or other perceived outsiders. School principal David recounts a story of a former

student whose parents were reluctant to go to the police when their house was shot at by rival gang members or when they found a gun in their son's room. David feels that some South Asian families want to manage problems themselves and avoid police interaction.

David's argument is not necessarily unique to the South Asian community as other racialized minority groups have historically had adversarial relationships with the police or have largely closed themselves off from law enforcement through a code of silence. For example, studies have shown that African Americans have been reluctant to contact or cooperate with police than Whites due to a lower perception of procedural fairness (Tyler, 2005). Also, Chinese triads and other ethnic organized crime groups tend to adopt a strict code of silence that prohibits members from cooperating with police investigators (Etter, 2011). Hence, David's assertion that South Asians families tend to avoid police contact is actually a common response of many racialized communities that may be reluctant to contact or cooperate with authorities.

Additionally, many respondents argue that the mother is the most resistant towards accepting their son's lifestyle. This illuminates an important idea, which is that the South Asian mother often shares a heavier load of blame for the failures of children, particularly males. Mothers are often considered to be the ones hiding information from the police, school officials, and even their husbands, or generally condoning, rationalizing and enabling their son's behaviour by protecting them. It is also indicative of the failures in child rearing, which is placed at the feet of mothers, an argument subcultural theorists like Anderson (1999) often assert.

Other interviewees stress the differences in how boys are raised than girls. These respondents draw on the concept of the '*prince*' to illustrate the treatment of sons. John, a gang unit officer, makes an important observation: "The negative thing is some of the families would treat the boys like princes and the women would do all the work, go to school, take care of the

household so these kids, the males would be out there like the world's open to them.” For respondents like John, South Asian daughters are subject to stricter parental control and usually excel professionally in fields like medicine, law or business. Sons, on the other hand, are not subject to such parental control, as education and hard work are not as strongly promoted. This seems contrary to the broader literature, which suggests that South Asians are generally well educated (Xie and Goyette, 2003). According to respondents, this probably is not the case of Punjabi South Asians, who may be culturally ‘different’ than South Asians from other parts of India. Officer John draws on personal experience of having dealt with one family where the daughter became a doctor, but two sons from that family turned to gangs and were eventually murdered. John ties these divergent paths to a lack of responsibility instilled in the boys at an early age, the direct result of how some South Asian families raise their kids. The antisocial behaviour of boys is often chalked up to the adage of ‘boys will be boys’, which some respondents suggest is a component of South Asian culture.

Related to the ‘golden boy’ or ‘the prince’ concepts are that of materialism or a “gold collar lifestyle”. According to many interview participants, a large number of gang-involved South Asian youth reside in middle to upper-class neighbourhoods, and may live in multi-millionaire dollar homes with expensive cars. The South Asian community has generally done financially well in Canada and is often considered a model immigrant group. Nevertheless, the socioeconomic backgrounds of these gang members are believed to be much different than what is found in the broader research, which often points to poverty as a major risk factor for gang involvement. Some respondents, like gang unit officer Ranjit, believe that these youth have access to many legitimate opportunities for success, particularly higher education, but are still drawn to gangs. Thus, there would appear to be other forces at play, namely, the role of

materialism as a constructed risk factor and a culturally enshrined value, according to respondents.

A number of respondents suggest that materialism is a risk factor for gang offending.

Harjit, a community activist, describes the concept of 'a gold collar' lifestyle:

I'm not sure if you're familiar with that term, "gold collar lifestyle". So, there's obviously the blue collar, white collar lifestyle and then there's something called the gold collar, where you want to ascertain a certain level of success without putting in next to nothing for effort. The Kim Kardashian, the Paris Hilton lifestyles and stuff like that.

Harjit explains that this lifestyle creates a situation of self-entitlement, where young men are provided with an access to money, luxury cars, expensive clothing, and other material things.

This gold collar lifestyle feeds into the appeal of gangs, where young men are lured into the supposed glamorous life of a gangster and promised money, cars, and women. For respondents like Harjit, the patriarchal structure of some South Asian families, and the value placed on sons, has not only perpetuated the gold collar lifestyle but has made gang involvement much easier.

This line of thinking, which is repeated by many respondents, becomes adopted as common knowledge on South Asian gang involvement. However, these ideas actually find root in traditional criminological theories, including both subcultural theories and structural ones (i.e. Merton's strain), though these theories do not typically explain middle-class offending.

Yet, much of the knowledge that is propagated centres on culture. School district employee Jaspal, who works with at-risk youth, provides a related commentary on what he refers to as consequences of a such a materialistic lifestyle:

What the challenge now is that the individual male isn't at home or emotionally unavailable and you have these young, entitled, petulant, spoiled boys, who's dads work incredible hard to give them everything that the kid could want and so you grow at 16, 17, never having had any discipline. Never having put time and into a craft or skill or into your identity and you wake up at 17, 18 with a C- average, zero discipline, zero social skills, zero studying skills, zero work ethic and you're expected to go out and conquer the world.

Jaspal's perspective is similar to others in that sons are often subjected to less control by parents on virtue of being born a male, where values such as hard work and dedication might be minimized in favour of spoiling them with material items. For these respondents, the treatment of '*golden boys*' by their families is detrimental when they enter adulthood and are expected to earn a living and adapt to mainstream societal principles that emphasize a strong work ethic to earning wealth. The gold collar lifestyle or materialism that permeates in the dynamics of some families where socially accepted values such as hard work is deemphasized and replaced with instant gratification and wealth acquisition.

Despite these narratives, Alexander (2008) warns against focusing too much on cultural factors, arguing that it often becomes the primary, and sometimes only, signifier in understanding South Asian communities. This is problematic as culture often serves as an excuse when things go wrong in a racialized community and individuals are looking to place blame (Alexander, 2008). In this present study, many respondents imagine the patriarchal structure of some South Asians families as a risk factor for gang involvement, yet some also recognize structural factors. However, the manner in which risk is constructed along cultural lines raises an important question: if patriarchal family structures and South Asian 'culture' are to blame for the higher degree of gang delinquency among South Asian boys in BC, why has this phenomenon not been reproduced in other highly dense South Asian communities across North America, like the Greater Toronto Area or parts of the United States and the United Kingdom?

A central critique of subcultural theories is their tendency to downplay the role of structural factors in producing deviant outcomes. According to activist Harjit, the gold-collar lifestyle exists because of the drug trade in British Columbia, or in other words, the structural characteristic of criminal opportunities available in the region:

But I can tell you right now, speaking with gangsters, knowing gangsters, being on the street level, spending 12 years on this, I can tell you wholeheartedly, 100% with accuracy and confidence, it's fucking about the marijuana trade. That's it. It lives and dies with the marijuana trade.

For Harjit, the local gang problem should end with the legalization of marijuana. Respondents like Harjit conceptualize the problem of South Asian gang involvement as rising from a variety of cultural processes and/or structural factors where the negative aspects of South Asian “culture” are accentuated by factors such the structure of the criminal market.

Culture and Punjabi media – glorification of the gang lifestyle

It seems then that the story of South Asian gang involvement as seen through the eyes of respondents largely centres on materialistic values and opportunities available to engage in criminal activity. However, according to some respondents a materialistic lifestyle and the promotion of the gold collar lifestyle is not only validated by the family but is perpetuated by both the Western and the Punjabi media in particular. For these respondents, like Officer Scott, the glamorization of gangs has made some South Asian youth more susceptible to gangs than other cultural groups. Fellow Officer, John, makes a similar argument, noting that youth seek out the gang lifestyle after watching movies or videos. Gang unit officer Ranjit describes this cultural element of South Asian gangs as a distinctly BC phenomenon. In other words, when comparing the South Asian community in other parts of Canada, like Ontario, Ranjit believes South Asians in BC have developed a distinct subculture of their own that is not found elsewhere. Frost (2010) discusses the concept of a “Surrey Jack”, a form of masculine protest that developed in Surrey, BC and is indicative of a unique subculture that is specific to that region. According to Frost (2010):

Jacks are well known throughout Surrey, easily distinguishable by their spiky hair with blonde tips, chin strips, (intimidation) diamond stud earrings, low slung pants, and baggy tops. A Jack's life revolves around partying, heavy drinking, doing, and in many cases, dealing drugs, picking fights, and "messing around" with different girls. Jacks are not concerned with school or potential careers, and many are expelled from or are unable to cope with attending regular public schools with their peers. (P.221-222)

Further, Frost (2010) argues that Jacks tend to be negatively perceived by other, more prosocial, groups of South Asian youth, including the "Brown boys" and "Brown girls". Many South Asian youth in Frost's (2010) study believe that boys who fit the profile of a "Surrey Jack" are directly responsible for the gang violence in their community. Notably, during the course of this study, no research participant mentioned the concept of a 'Surrey Jack' specifically, yet the associated behaviour pattern and values they possess were identified by respondents.

Officer Ranjit further elaborates on the distinct subculture that has emerged in BC by tracing the developing of South Asian gangs in the late 80s and early 90s during the lucrative criminal reigns of Bindy Johal and the Dhosanj brothers. Their criminal empires paved the way for a cultural image of the "Indo-Canadian gangster", which was then glamorized in local movies, television and music and is emulated by the current crop of young South Asian males in the lower Mainland.

Countless respondents suggest that the legacies of Bindy Johal and Dhosanj brothers still resonate with South Asian men and are regarded as contemporary folk heroes in the region. This cultural element that appears to be distinctly Western Canadian provides an interesting perspective on South Asian gang involvement. School Principal Jessie suggests that figures such as these are negative role models to youth and idealised by the media. He argues that: "students see this in the community, young men who have got into this lifestyle, driving nice cars and having lots of money and jewellery and a bit of a glamorous lifestyle. So, they see that as an easy way of getting ahead and looking good."

South Asian youth gang intervention worker Priya describes the influence of the Punjabi media on the youth she sees:

We definitely have movies and music promote violence and, you know, tell men the message that it's giving is, especially the men, is to be more aggressive, how to handle your relationship with a woman, how he should treat family. Usually see portrayal of alcohol and drugs and so. It definitely plays a role, but what I'm seeing is these youth are definitely connected to their culture and their music.

For Priya, Punjabi media shares some blame in the appeal of gangs through the role they play in legitimizing violence or drug use. Further, Priya suggests it goes beyond just glamorizing the gang lifestyle by having a more damaging socializing effect on youth, where certain behaviour is taught and reinforced, particularly aggression and violence.

While many respondents suggested that aggression or violence might be a feature of South Asian culture and patriarchy, and can be perpetuated by the media or taught in the home, some are more critical of such arguments. Former gang member Diljit, who does some anti-gang intervention independently, cautions against cultural explanations for South Asian gang involvement. Diljit suggest that these theories work to develop a caricature of the South Asian male as being inherently violent or predisposed to aggression, the results of which can have damaging xenophobic and racist consequences.

Racism and masculinity – gang involvement and the emasculated South Asian male

According to many participants, racism is a form of strain, which in turn results in the formation of an exaggerated masculine ideal. For Connell and Messerschmit (2005), hegemonic masculinity is a pattern of practices and behaviour patterns that allow the dominance of men over women to continue. All men are required to position themselves in relation to this ideal masculinity with only some men being able to successfully achieve it. For young men at the time

then, the persona of a strong, aggressive, and powerful leader helped alleviate the social rejection and feelings of powerlessness they experienced being a minority group in a largely Caucasian community and to claim a stake in the masculine hierarchy. In a study on Asian American (both South and East Asia) masculinity, Shek (2007) notes that Asian Americans tend to create negative self-evaluations based on the perception of failing to live up to the expectations of others. “Within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, Asian American masculinities are subordinated, as are other forms of masculinity, such as those among men of colour, gay men, and bisexual men.” (Shek, 2007: p383)

As noted earlier, subcultural explanations tend to overlook structural factors that push youth to gangs. One such notable structural factor central to the South Asian diaspora is racism. Diljit, who was heavily involved in gangs during the 1990s, describes his experiences dealing with racism by drawing on one incident in particular that had a profound impact on his life:

[My parents] sent me across the line to [name of school removed] which is this super rich school. [My parents] were like ‘well he's got all these fucking study problems and we don't want to send him to fuckin [name of school removed]. So, we'll send him to a school on the West side. The richer neighbourhood.’ And, I got fucking bullied there too and I'm just kind of like: holy fuck. I'm getting slapped around by all these fucking white kids out here that are super rich. And what ends up happening is, there's this one kid that would always fucking beat the shit out of me all the time. I was fuckin' scared to go to the fucking locker-room all the time. So, one day we had this dance. I showed the fuck up and a whole bunch of these Vietnamese kids showed up from my fucking neighbourhood. Some of them I knew... And they were like ‘hey man. How's it going?’ And so the older kids, that were 17 or 18, they were like ‘What that kid's fucking bugging you?’ And they fucking pound him. These kids were all gang members, 16, 17 years old. When they did that for me, bam, a fucking thug light went off. I was like ‘I'm going to be a fucking gangster too.’ Nobody fucks with you. That's what I'm doing. That's what I want.

For Diljit, being consistently called a “*Hindoo*”, a regional derogatory racial slur, as well as regular physical abuse played a significant role in turning to Vietnamese gangs, eventually leading him to form his own predominately South Asian gang as an adult. Gangs became an avenue to cope with experiences of racism for working class youth in the 1980s and 1990s in

Metro Vancouver. These gangs also allowed boys like Diljit to reclaim their masculinity in the face of racism. Diljit makes an important observation:

You know there's always a notion of, you know, Apu of The Simpsons. 'Will you like a Slurpee?' [said in a thick Indian accent]. The fucking Hindoo is the fucking cab driver, as a nerdy doctor. You watch them in popular culture. The stumbling guy that never gets laid. You know what I mean? It's an emasculated male. Then Bindy comes along and he's fucking ripped with fucking muscles. He's got 40 fucking pounds of gold around his fucking neck. He's just shot three fucking people and he's laughing about it on fucking TV and he's got another fucking 30 Hindoos behind him, sitting down and saying 'who the fuck wants to fuck around?' Who's going to fuck around? It's an emasculated male driving around in a Corvette.

Diljit notes that these racist images of the South Asian male hobbled young men at the time.

Consequently, people like Bindy Johal and other predominant South Asian gangsters adopted hyper-masculine personalities to counter these negative stereotypes and deal with the realities of living in a more racially volatile time through exercising extreme violence and aggression.

Theorizing on hegemonic masculinity has received substantial attention in gender studies, including the area of crime and offending.

As Diljit notes, racist caricatures of the South Asian male in the media, like the character of Apu, and the racism he experienced in his neighbourhood, lead young men in the community to adopt hyper-masculine and aggressive personalities as well as making significant physical changes in both body and attire to subvert these negative ideas. Under this framework of hegemonic masculinity then, boys like Diljit are required to make changes deemed necessary in order to meet societal expectations on masculinity that they are otherwise denied or blocked from obtaining, which may also highlight why they join gangs. Aarti, a violence prevention worker, makes an important observation:

In the 90s when you think of people like Bindy Johal, they were very distinct ethnic gangs, specifically South Asian ethnic, which in my analysis I feel like rose out of the racism and discrimination that a lot of South Asians [faced]... and this was a way of retaliation and gaining the power back and showing quote on quote 'their manhood.'

Diljit's motivation for joining a gang is attributed to the typical struggles of a working-class youth and the racism he experienced in a predominately White community in the 1980s and 1990s. Hyper-masculinity is a tool used by racialized men in urban and working-class communities to reclaim their masculinity (Rios, 2011). This however has changed in that region as many suburbs, like Surrey and Delta, have seen the development of large South Asian dominated neighbourhoods. Many respondents who live in these communities suggest that racism may not play as a significant role in motivating young people into gangs as it may have in the past. For these individuals, racism has some historical roots that are not as influential in driving young South Asian men to gangs today.

However, some respondents suggest that this is not the case in other cities, like Abbotsford, where a clear racial divide is imagined. For some South Asian gang workers in these communities, the experience of racism is still very much alive and a potential risk factor for gang involvement. Veer works with at-risk and gang involved South Asian youth in this more racially divided city. Veer suggests that schools in the West, which are predominately attended by South Asian students, receive much lower funding than schools in the majority Caucasian East side of the city. According to Veer, this has a damaging consequence for a large number of South Asians who are excluded from a number of recreation and academic opportunities afforded to their Caucasian counterparts in the East.

The racial division extends beyond just a lack of opportunities for South Asians students. According to respondents in this community, feeling racially stereotyped is a common experience among South Asian youth in particular. As a young South Asian male in his early twenties, Veer acknowledges personally feeling discriminated against, arguing that: "well everyone thinks that if you're an Indian male you must be a gangster. You must be on drugs."

Veer feels this very much a regional problem, noting that his city is a divided one. For Veer, police and schools are “a lot harder” on East Indian youth, especially when they offend. Veer’s colleague Ranbir echoes many of his thoughts on racism in the community. Ranbir notes that the youth he works with often indicate instances of being racially targeted by authority figures, like teachers and principals. Veer makes the connection to internalized feelings of racial discrimination and subsequent gang involvement:

When you grow up in a city where you are racially discriminated against, you slowly start to fit that persona, right? So we have a lot of kids that have quoted saying that in the schools they got into trouble so many times, and I got labelled this so many times that I just became it, because there was no longer a reason not to do it... When you get called a gangbanger for so long, you start to believe it and that's exactly what's happening to a lot of these youth. So, it somehow does become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Similar to the theorizing of interactionists, Veer argues that young males might internalize and oddly embrace labels such ‘troublemaker’ or ‘gangbanger’ that are the result of racism in the community. Young South Asian males essentially become the thing that they are labeled – a gangster.

Competing narratives: gangs an upper class or a working-class phenomenon?

The experience of individuals like Diljit, who came from a working-class family background and dealt with racism, stands in stark contrast to many other respondents who point to materialism and the perception that most gangsters today come from wealthy or successful families. According to these respondents, class is constructed as a risk factor for gang involvement.

Officer Gurjit however, who runs a community youth organization on his spare time, challenges the perception that South Asian gang involved youth come from affluence and wealth.

Whoever is telling you that they're coming from upper class families are dead wrong. ...I can tell you for fact, personally dealing with kids, a lot of kids coming to our programs, I say lower socio-economic I mean middle class to low socio-economic. These are families who are trying to make a living by making ends meet, by working multiple jobs. So just because they happen to live in a nice home doesn't mean that they're not part of the labour class working 2, 3 jobs to make ends meet. So, but whether they're driving Mercedes and Beemers, and they got millions of dollars in their account, absolutely not. If that was the case then what's the whole point of getting into the drug business in the first place?

Diljit delves deeper than Gurjit to challenge the perception that South Asian families are generally wealthy:

it's superficial it's fucking illusionary. So, what do you have? You got fucking property prices out in Surrey, you can buy a fucking brand-new house in Surrey, for what? 6-700,000 dollars. 66-foot lot. You got a 33-foot here, 33-foot frontage by 120 feet deep. Out in Surrey you get 66 to fuckin' 77 feet frontage. You get 130-140 feet depth, width. And then you build a big fucking palace with fucking 90,000 Hindoos inside. That's great. Stick fucking grandma and grandpa on fucking welfare and then we'll sit down and send them out to the fucking berry farms out in fucking like Abbotsford at the age 70 and 80 to pick fucking berries all fucking day in the fucking sun. Come back on a school bus. You know what I mean? And then you got another fucking 40,000 Hindoos sitting in there fucking working for fucking 8, 9 dollars an hour. With all the intended fucking sexism. All the fucking shit that's intended, and you're a social scientist, we can problematize certain notions of the extended families in certain cultural frameworks. What's going on in that fucking house? Are they fucking rich? Or do you have a home where a bunch of [redacted] live in in fucking ghettos... There's a fucking big story. You got fucking 20 people fucking living in an extended family in that mother-fucking house, sharing expenses. That's the only way they can sit down here, they don't go out. They don't eat anything, they don't go to fucking restaurants. *"Don't buy anything that's too expensive"*. They're fucking shopping at Wal-Mart, sitting there working some shitty ass job. That's fucking bullshit. The fucking notion that we're upper class, that's a myth of the Punjabi Jat. The Punjabi Jat who's like "look, my family has 2000 acres in Punjab". They don't have that shit anymore. Now I think it translates "look, my family has a big house in Surrey." It's fucking Surrey man. Fucking shit town. Who the fuck wants to live in Surrey. Nobody wants to live in there...What a joke. In terms of these kids that are coming over, to answer your fucking question, so they come from upper-middle, I would challenge that first. Do they?

It is important to note that Diljit does not discount the role of materialism as a culturally enshrined value. In fact, Diljit seems to advance the notion that materialism is an important principle that is valued among some South Asian families today. However, whereas some respondents tie materialism to wealthy families, Diljit argues that such materialism has actually

burdened working-class families. These narratives create more challenges for understanding the backgrounds of gangsters, which becomes somewhat obscure and complicated by the various narratives this study captures. Particularly, the question exists as to whether South Asian gang members come from upper-class families with relatively wealthy backgrounds or from more working-class backgrounds as Diljit and Gurjit suggest.

Diljit makes another important point in relation to the South Asian diaspora, which is the status decline that some immigrants might experience, especially those in the Punjabi/Sikh Jat class. Jats are the dominant caste in the province of Punjab in Northern India and are generally landowners and wealthier than other castes in the region. Among Sikhs then, Jats are on the top of the caste hierarchy and have been the most mobile of communities having the resources and financial support to immigrate and settle abroad (Kaur, 1986). In a study on the self-identity of Jats, Kaur (1986) recognizes that some Sikh-Jats tend to emphasize the importance of land ownership and earning and acquiring more of it. In some cases, the self-identity of landowner supersedes all other aspects of their identity such as religion or military service. Diljit's perspective captures the impact status decline might have on the self-identity some South Asian immigrants, particular the Jat subgroup. For a group, which has historically achieved great wealth and reverence in India, maintaining or recreating this in Canada may be difficult. For Diljit, the illusion that South Asian families in communities like Surrey are wealthy obscures the reality that these families might be struggling financially despite the houses they live in and are trying to maintain a positive identity of the self that confirms with their status in their home country.

Ghosh (2013) notes that despite having high levels of education, many South Asians have shown little upward economic mobility in Canada. Nevertheless, Ghosh (2013) acknowledges

that evaluating the socio-economic conditions of South Asians in Canada is problematic as they are often treated as a monolithic whole. So rather than develop a single profile of the type of South Asian family that is more likely to produce a gangster son, it is important to recognize that there is much diversity among South Asian families in Canada which is why there appears to be a lack of agreement among respondents as to what such a family looks like and the role socio-economic conditions play in gang involvement.

The racialization of labour in the South Asian community and the absentee father

Many respondents point to common risk factors found in the broader gang research, including peer associations, family problems such as domestic abuse, and parental monitoring and substance abuse among others. This would suggest that the risk factors of gang involvement for South Asians are no different than other racial groups according to stakeholders. For the most part however, research participants conceptualize South Asian culture as a risk factor. Risks factors along the lines of materialism, patriarchy, racism and masculinity are oriented, attuned or made culturally specific to South Asians. However, some respondents suggest that we are only scratching the surface of what might be a much bigger problem as they see it. These individuals believe gangs may be the result of profound experiences young South Asian male experience such as alienation, isolation or family struggles brought on by diasporic challenges commonly faced by immigrants or youth from immigrant families. This would mean that issues such as materialism and patriarchy are envisioned as symptoms of an underlying problem.

One such problem that respondents have identified is the lack of male role model, particularly a father figure, that is present in the lives of some South Asian boys and men. The absentee father has been researched quite extensively in the broader criminological gang

research. Much of this research stresses the complete absence of fathers and the problems stemming from being raised by a single mother or grandmother. For example, Anderson's (1999) ethnographic analysis of the street family highlights the impact of absentee fathers on the offending of young African American men in inner city Philadelphia. Anderson (1999) argues that a strong father serves as a role model and has the ability to steer children away from gangs and crime. In the case of South Asian fathers, the problem is not so much of fathers being completely absent from the family unit but of them being viewed as emotionally unavailable and/or unable to spend quality time with their children because of the nature of the labour market and the careers they adopt.

Similarly, respondents point to jobs that have a high representation of South Asians employees. In particular, the long-haul transport truck driving industry is a career path that often limits the availability of fathers. Galabuzi (2004) examines the racialized division of labour in Canada, noting the large number of South Asians involved in the transport truck industry. This is a major component of the South Asian diaspora. A universal problem for many Punjabi and Sikh immigrants in Canada is finding employment that matches their professional credentials and post-secondary education in India. Subsequently, these immigrants have found a niche in the trucking industry in Vancouver and Toronto (Johnston, 2005). The trucking industry can be quite financially lucrative but requires drivers to spend much of their time on the road and away from their families.

According to Raman, a South Asian youth gang worker: "I feel like a lot of youth are involved in criminal activity because they don't have that male figure in the home or their dads are long haul truck drivers and they're not as home as often." In the absence of a father, a mother or grandparent plays a more substantial role in raising children. Kulvir, a case manager for an

organization that works with South Asian at-risk and gang involved youth, echoes these sentiments: "...we've also noticed that dads who are truck drivers, long haul truck drivers, a lot of those kids are involved in getting into gangs, because that role model of a father isn't there. And then mom has a hard time doing both roles because mom also has to work. So, who's left to look after them? It's usually the grandparents." Typically viewed as a working-class career, long-haul truck driving can be lucrative for some depending on the hours and numbers of jobs truck drivers are willing to accept and may also explain how these families can afford the materialistic lifestyle some respondents associate with gang involvement.

Since mothers and often grandparents play a substantial role in childrearing, respondents suggest that many youth, particularly sons, gravitate towards gangs because of poor supervision and monitoring as well as a lack of quality time children spend with their fathers. Kulvir and Raman note that with the stress of spending long hours on the road, many fathers are simply too tired to spend time with their children, which has a detrimental impact on children through the weakening of family bonds. Many respondents argue that spending quality time with children at a young age offsets the risk of gang involvement later on. Sony, a high school principal, discussing the potential impact of long-haul truck driving on sons by drawing on a former student of his:

I had a student last year, grade 8, who was going down that path [of gangs] and his father was a long-haul trucker. So, when I met mum, he brought mum in, and I explained my concern and explained that what he really needs is he needs his dad around more to give him guidance and spend time with him. His dad actually listened and basically stopped his long-haul trucking. Did short haul trucking in the city and then picked up the long-haul trucking again in the summer and took his son with him on some trips. He's been transferred to another school, but as far as I know, he seems to be much more on the right path now.

Although Sony discusses a more positive outcome, he nevertheless makes a link between gang involvement and the absentee father. For Sony, the manner in which labour has become

racialized in the South Asian community has inadvertently heightened the risk for gang involvement because a strong male authority figure is absentee in a young man's life.

As a gang researcher, Anju works with community organizations and challenges the notion that South Asian gang involvement is inherent in the South Asian culture and instead similarly focuses on what she sees as the unavailability of parents:

When you are a member of a diaspora and you have family members that are not available for their children that's the variable that produces neglect and not very well-rounded kids. So, the question then is, within the South Asian community you do have a lot of parents that are working really hard that aren't available for their kids. So, it's not the South Asian culture that produces it, it's their social condition.

Anju elaborates further by arguing that an interaction between race and family disconnect results in gang involvement: "Disconnected from the home. Disconnected because you're a racialized subject. Disconnected just because neither here nor there culturally. Many factors, and that alienation is what makes youth vulnerable and vulnerability makes them susceptible to gang recruitment."

While Anju might deemphasize the role of cultural explanations, such as materialism, other respondents point to the relationship these cultural factors play in such disconnected families. Some respondents suggest a relationship exists between several risk factors. Mainly, they argue that spoiling children with material items is often used as a substitute for spending quality time by parents. South Asian youth gang worker Ranbir makes this assertion:

Parents buy them the newest electronic gadgets, like iPods, iPad, PlayStation 4, headphones, instead of spending one-on-one time. They're trying to replace those things with material things, instead of spending one-on-one time. But that's where it really comes down to; these kids are getting everything they want. They're basically spoon feed. They don't really understand the struggle their parents went through to get into here. They don't understand the importance of hard work. That's key.

Stakeholders like Ranbir believe that buying material items becomes an easy solution for parents who often do not have the time or energy to spend time with children on account of long work hours, reinforcing the gold-collar lifestyle.

Anju further discusses the connection between materialism, or as she characterizes as it as the “bling, bling” appeal of gangs, and isolation and alienation from their families:

The question is, why are some South Asians not attracted to the bling, bling, and what does this bling, bling function for and as? It functions to somehow compensate for a lack of recognition and it goes back to the key argument that I've always built in the research that I've engaged with...and that is when youths are alienated they are more vulnerable to joining gangs. And the vulnerability is an effect of inter-cultural challenges within in their own family.

For respondents like Anju, gangs become an attractive option to fill two necessary voids: the need to perpetuate a materialistic lifestyle as well as to get a sense of belonging and acceptance, which they might not feel at home. Further, many respondents suggest that the problem of South Asian gang involvement could be reduced, if not entirely eliminated in the community, if parents would spend enough quality time with children.

Discussion and conclusion

The plethora of explanations and assumptions outlined in this chapter on the “causes” of South Asian gang offending probably raise more questions than answers. While respondents offer a multitude of different explanations, many fall under the category of “culture” by pointing to something distinct and inherently “different” in the South Asian community that contributes to the gang “problem”. Precisely, many of these perspectives point to materialism or the “gold-collar lifestyle” as a significant problem that has created a sense of entitlement in the South Asian community. This perspective would suggest that South Asian culture has distinct values and beliefs that may overlook and permit violence in the pursuit of economic and material gain.

Others have tied this cultural component to the patriarchal family structure that favours, and often affords male offspring considerable freedom. For these respondents, the notion of the “prince” has blinded or caused parents to overlook the offending of their sons while allowing their boys to take advantage of illegitimate means (i.e. the local drug trade) to reproduce the gold collar lifestyle. Further, the racialized division of labour has led to the absentee father and is imagined as contributing to the gold collar lifestyle as money and gifts serve as a proxy in lieu of spending quality time with children. Additionally, other factors identified by respondents include the role of mass media, and the role of racism among others.

When these narratives are placed under a critical lens two important issues emerge. First, the relationship between culture, particularly the orientation towards materialism, and structural factors identified by respondents, like socioeconomic status, is not fully clarified. Second, some respondents tend to pathologize South Asian culture as risky in a manner akin to how some subcultural theories (particularly Anderson (1999) and Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967)) have viewed offending by other racial minorities groups. Precisely, these accounts may actually stigmatize and negatively stereotype South Asians or South Asian “culture” as abnormal.

The ‘culture/structure’ dilemma

A common criticism of cultural deviance models is that they have difficulty situating their underlining proposition (i.e. that certain groups hold values and beliefs that are conducive to violence and offending) within the larger societal conditions of poverty and economic strain that further push individuals into offending or gangs. In other words, the relationship between ‘culture’ and structure is not well understood or articulated by subcultural theorists. However, at least amongst this discourse there appears to be the consensus that these attitudes and beliefs largely develop among the economically disadvantaged, even if they belong to a specific

racialized minority group. A similar consensus in this regard cannot be said of how South Asian gangs have been conceptualized by stakeholders as multiple socioeconomic conditions are imagined.

On the one hand, many participants argue that middle-class and even wealthy South Asians are at risk for gang involvement, an economic category of individuals not typically viewed as having a deviant set of values or beliefs. Yet, a handful of respondents suggest that South Asian gang involvement is no different than other at-risk populations as these individuals too come from working-class or poorer economic backgrounds. Finally, a smaller number of respondents suggest that both economic realities exist, essentially creating a condition where any South Asian male along the socio-economic spectrum is viewed as susceptible to gangs. These contradictory accounts pose two challenges. First, it complicates our understanding of the role structural conditions play as risk factors for gang involvement as evident by the multiple ways in which socioeconomic status is imagined. With so many divergent opinions present it is obvious that the problem of South Asian gangs is not well-understood or there is a lack of agreement by key governing stakeholders in terms of the role economic conditions play in gang involvement.

The second challenge relates to the limitation found in the broader subcultural literature, which is that relationship between “culture” and “structure” is somewhat difficult to ascertain based on these accounts. This has largely to do with the inconsistent manner in which structural factors are constructed by respondents. Intuitively, it appears logical that the pursuit of materialistic goals or the “gold-collar lifestyle” that is attributed to components of South Asian “culture” may be more prominent in higher status families, especially patriarchally structured ones where the son is viewed as the “prince” or “golden child” on account of being the preferred

sex. This could help explain why some respondents believe that a value and belief system might develop that condones gang involvement in pursuit of wealth.

This is where narratives such as Harjit's, along with others, becomes important to dissect due to the way risk is imagined and how several structural and cultural factors can be connected together. As mentioned earlier, the gold collar lifestyle that is learned in the family likely creates an expectation on children to reproduce that wealth. For sons, who are generally viewed as the preferred sex in some more patriarchal households, legitimate means to achieve that monetary success may be blocked off or of no interest for boys to pursue, allowing them to innovate by joining gangs and taking advantage of illegitimate means (i.e. the drug trade) to reproduce that lifestyle. However, respondents do not necessarily connect these key threads together which ties structure to culture.

Besides socioeconomic status, other structural factors, such as racism or the racialized division of labour, are linked to South Asian "culture". For example, former gang member Diljit discusses how certain values that promoted a hyper-masculine identity of the self, which viewed gang violence favourably, were shaped as a response to structural racism and the impact this had on disenfranchised working-class males. The absentee long-haul truck driver father, the product of the racialized division of labour in Canada, is also connected to South Asian "culture". Here, respondents argue that in lieu of spending quality time with a full-time father, youth are spoiled with material items as a substitute. From this structural family condition then, a specific value and orientation for achieving material wealth arises and paves the way for youth to get involved in gangs.

Pathologizing South Asian culture as “risky”

The respondents in this study present ‘expert knowledge’, where some of these individuals tend to pathologize South Asian culture as inherently favourable to gang violence, a line of reasoning that has a rich history among subcultural theories of crime. Upon closer examination of this expert knowledge it is important to address two fundamental questions: how are certain ideas on “South Asian” culture picked up as the dominant explanation for gang violence; and what is the outcome when these ideas become mainstream and taken-for-granted assumptions on the local gang problem?

The answer to such complex questions can be found in the manner in which problems are governed in contemporary neoliberal societies, which tie government to knowledge of human conduct derived from the social and human sciences (Burchell, 1996). This is premised on the idea that before a problem like South Asian gang involvement can be managed, it must first be known, requiring authorities to continuously think about it (Townley, 1993). Essentially, contemporary governance combines thinking with acting (Hardy, 2014). This means eliciting and fostering the support of professional experts in the community (i.e. doctors, lawyers, philanthropists, and other figures) to develop knowledge, which is integral to the self-regulatory aims of civil society (Rose, 1992; Ilcan, O’Connor, and Olier, 2003).

Therefore, expert knowledge in this case is largely grounded on the idea of South Asian culture being responsible for gang violence. Thus, on the one hand there is decades-old theory on delinquent subcultures that promotes the idea that certain groups have values and orientations that are more conducive to violence and crime, while on the other, there are some authority figures who are disseminating knowledge that South Asian culture has contributed to the gang problem in Western Canada. This suggests that somewhere along the line, mainstream ideas on

culture have become the de facto explanations used by community activists, youth workers, or educators in conceptualizing risk factors for gang involvement. Perhaps in this case, culture becomes an easy answer to pin the offending of racialized minority groups for both traditional theorists like Anderson (1999) or Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) and these experts in the community. However, as culture is the primary explanation for gang involvement, it is subject to the same criticisms attached to subcultural theories more generally.

For the most part, these assumptions do not often get rigorously challenged, except a select few who take issue with pathologizing South Asian culture as risky. Buffam's (2016) concept of the "cultural confession" resonates with this present analysis as many of the South Asian professionals in law enforcement, education and those affiliated with a community agency used the interview opportunity to similarly highlight perceived flaws in "culture" that caused the gang violence witnessed in BC. In doing so, these "cultural insiders" are able to successfully use "culture" to pathologize South Asians gang involvement as being inherently different than other groups. In this sense, aspects of South Asian "culture", like the gold-collar lifestyle, become abnormal and stand in stark contrast to the dominant western "culture". Thus, when "culture" becomes the de facto explanation to pathologize South Asian offending, it accentuates the "otherness" of South Asian individuals.

Researcher Anju makes an important observation:

There was a report that was written that somehow suggested that South Asian culture is responsible for some of the activities of gangs. Now I think it's important to illuminate here that not everyone agreed [with] that and that's something I didn't agree to because I think that this kind of report... it somehow gave an opportunity for media to easily find an explanation as to causation of gang activity. So, you're getting into an element of cultural racism here.

For Anju, these cultural explanations, which were perpetuated by the media, seemed to become the generally accepted cause of gang violence. Anju believes that these types of accounts propagate

stereotypical and racist ideas of South Asian “culture” and obscure more relevant structural factors like racism or alienation that she perceives are far more significant. Former gang member Diljit discusses one anti-gang forum he attended where the controversial Macleans essay writer Anu Bakshi was an invited speaker:

She's like "*oh well I think our community has made a lot of money*". Has it really? Give me a fucking break. You're reinforcing notions like, what's her name? Anu Bakshi, "*well our community's made all this money, so the only other hypotheses is that people are inherently violent*". Like these things feed into xenophobic tendencies, these are dangerous when they are not properly thought out. People parroting fucking nonsense.

For Diljit, these explanations fail to connect the “cultural” belief system regarding materialism to values that are conducive to violence. Consequently, Diljit recognizes the inability of most of these cultural accounts to identify the relationship between two distinct value systems; one which emphasizes the pursuit of a materialistic lifestyle and another that accepts the use of violence through gang involvement as a legitimate means to achieve it. Thus, both Diljit and Anju highlight the racial or xenophobic consequences when such cultural explanations dominant a community’s consciousness and thought processes on gang involvement, and are more critical of how culture is used to pathologize different racial groups.

Closing remarks: limitations and directives for further research

Notwithstanding the exploratory nature of this study, there are a few limitations present that need to be addressed. Most notably, when trying to understand how the problem of South Asian gangs has been conceptualized the perspectives of current or former gang members should also be included. Unfortunately, in this study, only one respondent was a former gang member. While this study focused more on the perceptions of stakeholders and how they respond to the problem, a more comprehensive account of South Asian gang offending must include the

narratives of those who are, or were, most entrenched in that lifestyle. After all, these individuals would likely know more about risk factors for gang involvement based on their personal experiences, life situations or motivations and beliefs. Further, the perspectives of more police officers, particularly South Asian ones, would strengthen some of these conclusions.

Despite this limitation, this study makes several important contributions to the research, most critically, to an area of research that is noticeably limited. Research on South Asian gang offending in Canada is markedly scarce despite the considerable attention the phenomenon has received in much of BC, particularly from the media, politicians, law enforcement and the community in general. Further, not much is known as to how stakeholders, or those who are often on the frontlines of the problem, conceptualize and problematize South Asian gangs. Mainly, research has mostly neglected the risk factors these stakeholders identify as central to South Asian gang involvement. Further, whether these risk factors are indeed empirically accurate in explaining the phenomenon matters little for present purposes. What is important to note is that as long as these stakeholders conceptualize the problem in a particular way, these beliefs have very real consequences in terms of how they respond to the problem. Therefore, this study provides some tentative observations as to how South Asian gangs have been imagined by those who hold some influence in the community through enforcement or gang intervention/prevention. Future studies may want to delve deeper into examining whether these prevention or intervention initiatives successfully target the risk factors identified by stakeholders, something that could be achieved through methods like program evaluation.

Chapter Three: Governing South Asian gang involvement in Western Canada: Community as a means for both exclusion and inclusion

Introduction

In several cities across BC, law enforcement agencies carry out the controversial BRE program (BRE). Through the voluntary participation of local businesses, the BRE program allows police to request identification from certain patrons and potentially have them removed from premises if they are deemed an ‘inadmissible patron’. Included in the category of inadmissible patrons are members of organized crime groups and gangs as well as those who associate with gang members. The BRE program is the direct result of several high-profile gang-related shootings in public establishments that garnered extensive media attention, including most notably the murder of South Asian gang leader Bindy Johal in 1998 in a crowded nightclub and the death of innocent bystander Rachel Davis in a 2005 shooting. These types of programs are promoted as essential in reducing the threat posed by gangs to public safety in places alcohol is served.

While law enforcement responds to gangs through this form of exclusionary tactic, a gang prevention and intervention agency in a highly dense South Asian community works exclusively with at-risk or gang involved South Asian youth and young adults to provide them with counselling, mentorship, training, education, skills development and other comprehensive support services. Both examples represent two markedly distinct approaches in how the problem of South Asian gangs is governed. In this chapter I argue that one approach, the BRE program, involves reviving the exclusionary logic of police regulation, while the intervention program stresses minimal state intervention through empowering community organizations to deal with the local gang problem directly. These initiatives, among others, represent a dual approach in

dealing with South Asian gangs. This chapter will show how these contradictory approaches are accommodated in the governance of gangs and gang violence in the Lower Mainland of BC despite their competing rationalities.

The academic literature on gang responses is fairly comprehensive, mostly centered on the effectiveness of such strategies. Adding to the broader literature, this analysis poses a key fundamental question: how are these gang strategies reflective of various logics of governance? In other words, how can these responses to gangs be understood in relation to key theoretical discourses on governance? To enhance our understanding of the intricacies of the many diverse gang responses, it is necessary to turn to Michel Foucault's genealogy of governmental rationality. Foucault traces the development and evolution of government reasoning from its early pastoral form, through a period of police regulation, to finally the liberal systems of governmentality that exists in contemporary Western societies (Foucault, 2007). Foucault's analysis provides a theoretical understanding of how such contradictory and multiple logics on the governance of gangs can coexist.

The governance of South Asian gangs and gang involvement in western Canada involves a complex and paradoxical assemblage of police regulation, sovereign power, and neoliberal practices that emphasize governing through the community and other logics of power. Precisely, I argue that certain programs, such as BRE, view those involved in gangs as "undesirables" and are essentially 'lost causes' that are to be *excluded* from participation in public social life. These interventions use the community, specifically private businesses, to achieve this aim. Whereas businesses are concerned with undesirable patrons, community-intervention programs delivered through gang intervention initiatives and immigrant agencies, on the other hand, constitute vulnerable South Asian youth as requiring 'saving.' The aim of these programs is to ensure that

at risk youth are to be *included* in mainstream society through various cultural, religious or social activities. Thus, exclusionary programs, such as BRE, emphasize the regulation of public spaces through more traditional and historic forms the police, or *Polizei*, as well as contemporary liberal strategies of community governance, to remove individuals from the public gaze. Conversely, inclusionary programming, such as the work done by gang intervention agencies and youth groups, emphasize governing through the community in order to responsabilize individuals into mainstream society but have very minimal, if any, direct involvement by the police. Fundamentally however, both rely on the community but the role of it is imagined differently and ultimately mobilized for contradictory intervention strategies.

In combating South Asian gangs then, a unique amalgamation of modern neoliberal strategies, combined with more historic elements of police regulation exist in what are referred to as comprehensive gang strategies. However, the logics of police regulation are not just residuals from the past when executed under programs such as BRE, but rather, are updated, transformed and realigned by contemporary neoliberal techniques of governance that nurture and mobilize the community and community members to think and act on the gang problem. For example, BRE exists based on voluntary partnerships and contractual agreements between businesses and the police. Thus, BRE is dependent on cooperation with community partners who play an active role in managing the local gang problem, a feature of modern neoliberal governance that promotes self-governance. Therefore, the responses to South Asian gangs represent the exercise of multiple logics of power and governance. The common thread that binds these initiatives however is that all of these strategies make use of the community to some degree, even if their purposes and intended outcomes and rationalities (exclusion versus inclusion) differ. Nevertheless, these conflicting practices complicates our understanding of the role of community

by the way in which both “community” and “individuals” are imagined. In other words, this illuminates how the abstraction of ‘community’ is mobilized for the dueling purposes of inclusion and exclusion.

Using the data rich narratives of 34 authorities, including representatives of community organizations, law enforcement and school officials, interviewed for this study this discussion offers some preliminary insights on the governance of South Asian gang offending and adds to the scholarship on contemporary neoliberal crime control strategies. However, this chapter aims to provide a more meaningful analysis by simply doing more than just relating current gang strategies and practices to various forms of power. I also intend to examine the results and consequences when such forms of power are exercised. For example, exclusionary practices such as BRE, which seeks the removal of undesirable people from the public domain through the regulation of space, can result in the targeting of racialized minorities, like South Asians, as well as the stigmatization of certain people. Second, this chapter also makes an important empirical contribution to the research by examining how certain authorities have governed the problem of South Asian gangs in Western Canada. There is a scarcity of research done on South Asian gangs despite the abundance of media attention and public awareness in the communities most impacted by the phenomenon. Further, there is virtually no research that examines the responses to South Asian gangs. This research aims to address this empirical oversight by adding to what will hopefully become a growing body of research on South Asian gangs in Canada.

The problem of South Asian gang involvement has received substantial local public attention from the media, policy makers, law enforcement and community activists and support workers in lower Mainland BC. As of 2006, over a hundred young South Asian males in BC were murdered in gang related violence over a ten-year period (RCMP, 2006). According to

‘Scott’, a gang unit officer interviewed for this present study, approximately 160 more Indo-Canadian individuals have been killed since then. Gang members are responsible for a wide array of criminal activities, most being drug related dial-a-dope operations. Research suggests that South Asian gangs tend to be involved in high levels of gun violence, drug use, automobile theft, money laundering, fraud and extortion (Pearce, 2009). Additionally, South Asian gang violence has often been described as extreme in nature compared to other more structured gangs in Canada (Totten, 2008).

South Asian gang violence began in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which coincided with the rise of notorious gang leader Bindy Johal. Johal is believed to be partly responsible for the increase in gang violence in the Metro Vancouver area through his lucrative criminal activities, which earned a profit of \$4 million annually (Pearce, 2009). Although it has been nearly two decades since his murder, Johal’s notoriety still resonates with some young South Asian males who view him as a legend or folk hero for his ability to deal with racism through his hyper-masculine and violent persona. ‘Aarti’, a violence prevention worker, makes this argument:

In the 90s when you think of people like Bindy Johal, they were very distinct ethnic gangs, specifically South Asian ethnic, which in my analysis I feel like rose out of the racism and discrimination that a lot of South Asians [faced]... and this was a way of retaliation and gaining the power back and showing “their manhood.”

Considering the substantial public attention and media coverage gang violence has received, few studies have examined this issue. This study aims to theorize both the governing strategies deployed to manage South Asian gang offending and how the phenomenon is constituted as governable.

This chapter begins with an overview of the BRE program, which I argue revive the logic of police regulation reinforced with sovereign power, albeit in a modified and largely liberal

manner. I argue these programs work to exclude certain individuals from public spaces, resulting in challenges such as racial profiling and stigmatization. This is followed by a discussion of inclusionary programs, including community-based programs, mentorship programs, and youth groups that are oriented towards bringing susceptible people into mainstream society. Not only do these programs reflect contemporary crime control practices of governing crime through the community, but they also highlight the need to ‘save youths’ from gang. Finally, a discussion on how both exclusionary and inclusionary strategies reflect contemporary crime control will be addressed despite having such separate purposes and some associated challenges with this arrangement. This section aims to make sense of how both exclusion and inclusion coexist together through an understanding of the scope, techniques and rationalities behind the gang programming.

***“You are unwanted here”*: Exclusionary gang strategies, NIMBYism and Banishment**

For those individuals who are actively involved in gangs, either directly or through association, some of the strategies deployed by officials work to exclude them from meaningful and prosocial participation in the public sphere. These measures and policy practices are largely premised on the ‘not in my backyard’ (NIMBY) mentality which became popular across North America in the 1980s and 1990s. The NIMBY syndrome is typically defined as a negative reaction from the public in opposition to not only needed facilities (power plants, halfway houses, prisons) but also people and behaviour patterns (sex offenders, gang offending) (Martin and Myers, 2005). At its core, laws that embody NIMBYism work to exclude potential offenders from public spaces through physical displacement by carrying the message that certain people are not welcome or wanted in those areas (Teichman, 2005). Two particular gang responses that

may target South Asian gang members include the BRE program, the focus of this analysis, as well as other types of community safety initiatives like a popular foot tour/patrol program that operates in one Vancouver suburb. These practices elevate the role of community by having community members maintain a watchful eye over the crime and gang problem in their neighbourhoods. Further, these practices often perpetuate the NIMBY mentality by excluding gang members from areas such as bars and restaurants, as well as public spaces such as street corners and plazas.

NIMBYism embodies another related idea in penal sanctioning, which is the concept of “banishment”. Beckett and Herbert (2010a) argue that the term “exclusion” might appear synonymous with “banishment”, but there remain key distinctions between the two concepts. Notably, exclusion is less formal and often includes being shunned by a group of peers or members of the community, while banishment is done more formally through a specifically designed policy or legislative directive. Due to its collaborative nature, I argue that programs like BRE reflect elements of both ‘exclusion’ and ‘banishment’ as the initiative carries a community-wide message that certain individuals are not welcome or wanted in participating businesses, which is reinforced through contractual agreements between business management and law-enforcement officials.

The BRE Program (BRE) – program overview and genealogy

Venues serving alcohol, such as bars and nightclubs, are often constituted as gang hotspots, particularly in the absence of marked gang territory. A lack of turf, according to Tyakoff et al (2004) is one feature that is typically associated with South Asian gangs. South Asian gang members are believed to have a greater influence in bars and nightclubs which

become semi-public spaces that are imagined as their turf. In a focus group study, key stakeholders identify violence and alcohol as dynamic features of South Asian gang life, where drinking serves an important social function that promotes group solidarity and cohesion as well as affirming masculinity (Tyakoff et al., 2004). Consequently, there is a perception that bars and nightclubs might increase the chances of gang violence among South Asians due to the tendency of members to consume high amounts of alcohol. This, along with some high-profile murders in and around downtown nightclubs, fueled authorities to develop the BRE program as an attractive public safety initiative to curb gang violence.

Gang unit officer 'Ranjit' explains the rationale behind the BRE program:

We call it our [BRE] program. I don't know if you've heard of it. It's like the restaurant watch program. It's where we'll go into ...we sign agreements with business and some of our popular restaurants in the community, where we go in there and if we recognize individuals that are involved in criminal activity and gangs, that they're ejected from those locations. And again, it's to ensure public safety because we have had shootings at these public venues and stuff.

BRE is a controversial policy initiative that essentially allows for the removal of certain people deemed as 'inadmissible patrons' (IP) from participating bars and restaurants. Similar programs in other jurisdictions go by a variety of other different names, such as the Inadmissible Patron Program or Barwatch, and are currently in operation across the Lower Mainland in Vancouver, Delta, Abbotsford, New Westminster, and Victoria with plans to bring it to Surrey in the near future. These ejection bylaws started in Vancouver in 2007 after several high-profile murders and shootings at nightclubs in the downtown core. Most notable among them were the deaths of Bindy Johal in 1998, the murders of two men and injuries to five others in 2004 shooting, and the killing of innocent bystander Rachel Davis in 2005 by a known gang member.

These incidents provided the push for the Vancouver Police Department to adopt the ejection program with other jurisdictions closely following suit. Although the program runs

independently of the police in many cities, the police still exercise considerable power through partnerships with businesses in the community. The Vancouver program in particular, operates in partnership with several key stakeholders including the Vancouver restaurant industry, the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, Restaurants Canada, and the Vancouver Police Department (VDP), who claim to play a less active and more supportive role. There are currently 130 establishments participating in the Vancouver-run program (Gahunia et al., 2018). These arrangements allow police services, such as the Vancouver Police Department, to extend their powers beyond criminal law and enforce provincial and local regulations pertaining to private actors. Precisely, the *BC Trespass Act, sections 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10*, is the key piece of legislation enabling police action. In addition, the police make use of other relevant governmental technologies to govern those constituted as “undesirable”, including the Inadmissible Patron Agreement, an Authorization Agreement, and an operational reference guide which is accessible only to police officials.

BRE can only be enforced when a business chooses to participate by reaching out and contacting the designated program liaison. Upon signing onto the program, business owners and management are educated and given knowledge pertaining to gang-activity in their community and the dangerousness posed by people involved in that lifestyle (Vancouver Police Department, 2016). Once enrolled, businesses share a common objective with law enforcement, which is to maintain the safety of all staff and guests by removing certain problematic patrons. Businesses must display proper program signage, which also serves as a deterrent to prevent potential ‘inadmissible patrons’ of even entering their business in the first place. As a further precaution, participating businesses must install a CCTV camera so that potential abuses by inadmissible patrons can be documented and turned over to police. The cost of implementation rests mostly

with businesses themselves who must pay annual dues of \$1,000 to cover legal and administrative fees.

Police may be called directly by businesses to deal with a potential inadmissible patron. Police are also given permission to enter these establishments proactively themselves without the request of owners or management. The criteria used by the police in Vancouver to determine who is an inadmissible patron includes: (1) organized crime and gang members; (2) associates of organized crime and/or gangs; (3) involvement in the drug trade; (4) history of serious and/or violent criminal activity; and (5) a history of firearm related offenses. Police use their intelligence and gang databases to help determine who qualifies as an inadmissible patron.

By joining the BRE, business owners and management sanction the police (Under section 1 of the *Trespass Act*) to serve as ‘authorized agents’ with the power to request ID on behalf of restaurant owners or employees. In the situation where a patron refuses to show ID or is deemed an inadmissible patron, they are asked to leave under private property and trespass laws. Subsequently, in the event that an inadmissible patron refuses to leave, they are considered to be trespassing under section 4 of the *Trespass Act*, and subject to arrest (section 10). At the time of arrest, the police officer is no longer an ‘authorized agent’, having switched their role back to that of a peace officer. Notably, some officers make arrests under the *Criminal Code* instead by laying obstruction charges instead of the *BC Trespass Act*. This suggests that the application of relevant legislation may be inconsistent.

Beckett and Herbert (2010a) note innovations police have made in trespass laws. For example, in Seattle police use “trespass admonishments” to prohibit certain people from being on public property through agreements and contracts with property owners. Like BRE, officers are sanctioned to act as authorizing agents to remove people from places like libraries, recreation

centres, public transit, school campuses, hospitals and commercial businesses (Beckett and Herbert, 2010b). However, the Seattle trespass admonishments differ from BRE in two distinct ways. First, the removal of individuals needs to be justified as authorities must demonstrate a lack of legitimate reason for the ejected person or persons to be on the property. Second, the Seattle program covers a wider net of “undesirables” including the homeless, sex workers, or drug addicts (Beckett and Herbert, 2010b). For BRE on the other hand, having a justifiable reason for being at a restaurant or bar, such as attending a social gathering or having dinner, does not shield a patron from ejection. Also, BRE specifically targets gang members and certain types of offenders as opposed to the homelessness or other marginalized groups.

Returning to the program mechanics of BRE, although the program aims to exclude those involved or associated with gangs, a process exists where inadmissible patrons can attempt to reverse their status to prevent further ejections. For example, one complainant, who was designated an inadmissible patron because of previous gang associations, was able to meet with the Vancouver Police Department’s Gang Crime Unit and a supervisor with the Professionals Standards Section to resolve his status after being able to demonstrate having severed ties with gangs for several years (Vancouver Police Department, 2018). The complainant was given a ‘Gang Desistance File’ letter which he must carry on his person and present to police officers in the event of potential future ejection. The Vancouver police department, in particular, requires complainants who wish to be removed as an inadmissible patron to meet with representatives from the Gang Crime Unit to demonstrate that they have renounced the gang lifestyle or dissociated themselves with known gang members. Police must consider the following criteria when removing an inadmissible patron status: “how prominent the inadmissible patron was in

the gang lifestyle or as an associate”); how long they were in the lifestyle; and how long have they been away or removed from the lifestyle (Vancouver Police Department, 2018).

The ejection program in its current form is the culmination of public safety initiatives over the past two decades that attempt to curb gang violence in bars and nightclubs. Most notably, the Barwatch program, which originated in Vancouver, served as a non-profit advocacy organization of key stakeholders with a mandate to ensure the safety of patrons by securing a safe environment in bars and nightclubs. In fact, by the mid-2000s, a vast majority of nightclubs were active members of the Barwatch initiative in Vancouver. The public safety measures initially adopted by Barwatch did not necessarily emphasize the ejection of ‘problem’ patrons. Instead, public safety in bars and nightclubs was achieved through the use of a controversial software that scanned the drivers’ licenses of nightclub visitors prior to their entry in a participating establishment. The scanning software allowed management to collect the personal information of patrons found in the magnetic strip of their driver’s license, including the guest’s name, gender, date of birth, postal code, and driver’s license number.

Businesses were also required to install a small camera embedded in the wall that would take a photograph of the patron upon entry as an added measure of verification to ensure that the identification matched the person who presented it. Along with personal information, other data collected included the date and time of each customer visit, the number of visits, and whether the patron had been flagged as ‘problematic’ due to a prior incident. This created a unique individual profile for each visiting patron, which was typically destroyed after six months if there were no other recorded incidents or visits by the customer. Additionally, an alert system could be set up to warn other participating Barwatch businesses of potential ‘problem’ patrons. Thus, akin to the current BRE program, certain individuals could be ejected from a business for past behaviour if

they were viewed as a threat to public safety. For all Barwatch members, it was mandatory to use this ID scanning software. However, patrons were also given the right to refuse the scanning of personal information and opt for the alternative measure of surrendering their ID for the duration of their visit. Nevertheless, in at least one formal complaint, a patron was denied entry for refusing to have their identification scanned and was not informed of the available alternative option.

In addition to preventing minors from entering premises and reducing the potential of physical altercations and sexual assaults inside, the security apparatus set up by Barwatch was justified on the grounds of reducing gang violence in bars and nightclubs. Nevertheless, these measures were deemed to violate privacy laws and authorities were unable to produce viable statistics that showed a decrease in violence at participating establishments (Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC, 2009). This ultimately resulted in much of the program being removed or scrapped and for stakeholders to develop alternative public safety initiatives, paving the way for the BRE program and its innovative use of existing municipal trespass laws to essentially remove specific individuals from bars and restaurants.

The Bar and Restaurant Program – A modern way of pursuing police regulation

The BRE program can be understood as operating according to the logic of police regulation, which according to Foucault was more dominant in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Traditionally, sovereign power was typically exercised over territorial borders, for the purpose of preserving the state or protecting it from external aggressors. Initially appearing in German law, the word *Polizei* (i.e. police) developed in relation to concerns about the regulation of internal order, and it has two relevant meanings: a condition of order in the community and as

well as the institution and maintenance of order in a community through jurisprudence (Knemeyer and Trib, 1980). However, this conception of ‘police’ deviates from our modern interpretation of the police as a law enforcement agency. According to Foucault (2007), the police apparatus represents an assemblage of various bureaucratic institutions that function to directly regulate the conduct of individuals in the pursuit of public order as well as strengthening, securing or expanding the state and its moral functioning. According to Knemeyer and Trib (1980) “it is the task of the police to maintain public peace, security and order with the appropriate institutions, and prevent the endangering of the public or its members.” (p.187)

More importantly however, the BRE program represents an exercise of multiple logics of power. First, law enforcement acts in the Foucauldian sense of ‘police’ by regulating spaces in order to reduce threats to the public safety that may jeopardize the moral functioning of society and cause disruption and chaos in a community. Second, BRE also represents an exercise of sovereignty as the police may remove or arrest inadmissible patrons through power that is hierarchically arranged and enacted through law (i.e. *BC Trespass Act* or the *Criminal Code*) with power being dispersed from top to bottom (Boyle, 1997). Third, the BRE program represents an exercise of contemporary governing practices that creates distance between state and non-state actors. Precisely, BRE allows police officers to temporarily divorce themselves as agents of the state and become ‘authorized agents’ who are given the ability, through contractual agreements, to request identification from inadmissible patrons. Indeed, BRE cannot operate if private and independent business owners do not first initiate contact with police and enroll in the program.

BRE and police regulation

The BRE program works to ensure public safety and to reduce the threat of gangs in the types of businesses that have traditionally witnessed gang violence. While historically this has been achieved through strict regulation and the policing of citizen's behaviour, the BRE program is not so much concerned with a display of behaviour but the threat posed by gang members regardless of their conduct at the time of ejection. This aligns with a significant feature of police, which works to prohibit certain acts and take power away from those that break rules of good society or pose a threat to the state (Valverde, 2017). Further, state authorities penetrate the public domain and regulate the activities of some citizens through their removal in areas where gang violence could occur. The gang problem is perceived to be such a significant threat to public safety in BC that private businesses and the general public accept the powers afforded to the police, which enables them to enter these establishments and seek the removal of gang members or their associates, essentially regulating and controlling these dangerous class of offenders. This creates a physical space where people are rendered obedient since their behaviour is regulated. As Foucault explains, this form of power is justified for the public good, highlighting the role of police as a regulator of moral functioning through maintaining order in society.

Moreover, the direct exercise of police regulation requires the collection of knowledge and the development of expertise. The police gang units are largely responsible for coordinating and administering the BRE program. Consequently, police gang units represent a form of expertise, as the structure of law enforcement is reorganized to form specialized gang units capable of collecting knowledge on their community's gang problem (Herbert, 1996). This reconstructing of policing allows law enforcement to increase their ability in regulating,

monitoring and intervening in public spaces and exercising legal power over citizens. Under the goal of security then, developing knowledge on enemies of the state, like gangs, is critical in order to justify the existence of regulatory powers under programs like BRE. Further, the knowledge of threats posed by gangs is central to the administration of the BRE program as this information is often ‘taught’ to businesses by specialized gang officers upon their enrolment.

Knowledge on gang members is seen as essential in order to inform business owners and management of the threats posed by gangs. Knowledge development also plays a critical role in the administration of the BRE program. In classical police regulations, action in the face of threats to public order is heavily dependent on the creation of detailed knowledge of such threats (Gordon, 1991). Gordon (1991) notes: “police is a science of endless lists and classifications” (p.10). Gang databases reflect the use of such list and classifications and play a crucial role in the BRE program. Indeed, the BRE program requires the collection of information on individuals who pose a gang threat. According to a report to the Vancouver Police Board, a determination of an ‘inadmissible patron’ is made using relevant police databases and information sources such as the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME), Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) and other local gang databases.

Gang unit Scott describes the type of information law enforcement collects on such gang databases:

For our purposes we look at people who have a gangster lifestyle. So that’s a person who’s a known gang member or associate of a gang member, or a person involved in organized crime, or a person who’s involved in the for-profit drug trade, or a person who’s been involved with firearm offenses, or a person who’s been convicted of a serious violent criminal offense.

Scott’s characterization of a ‘gangster like lifestyle’ is ambiguous. However, previous research indicates that police agencies use criteria such as ‘gang-style clothing,’ displaying of gang

symbols, signs and tattoos or the frequenting of gang territories as indicators of a gang lifestyle (Klein, 2009). The BRE program requires businesses to clearly inform patrons that a strict dress code is in effect, which includes a prohibition against gang dress or colours (City of Nanaimo, year unknown). Therefore, it appears the BRE program relies on knowledge generated of threats that are documented in detailed gang databases as well as the more instinctual personal knowledge an officer or business owner has as to what a gang member or gang lifestyle looks like.

When such an example of state power is exercised through police regulation, numerous challenges and problems arise. Nevertheless, the program has strong support from law enforcement. According to gang officer Scott:

In Vancouver, after we starting seeing the shootings and the violence, we started our anti-gang ejection program which gives the police the authority to remove known gang members, and you know what? We're seeing positive, generational results of this because young guys are like: "hey I don't want to get involved in the gang lifestyle because I want to be able to go out to a nice restaurant.

For Scott, police regulation is justified because it provides an important check on behaviour. Not only is the program perceived as being successful for reducing gang violence in bars, nightclubs and restaurants across the province, but has steered vulnerable youth away from gangs.

Nevertheless, Scott's assertion that the program can divert young men from gangs is questionable. Precisely, it is debatable that a potential ruined night out due to ejection works as a protective factor against gang involvement or can counter any forces or risk factors that likely push individuals into gangs in the first place. Therefore, the BRE program's intrusive nature, may not be fully justified as a rehabilitative measure. In fact, the program could work to further isolate and exclude individuals from mainstream society, only deepening feelings of isolation and alienation. Indeed, the BRE program poses significant problems when such a direct use of

state power is executed to control for and address a problem as complex as gangs. Specifically, some problems that could emerge with the BRE program include the racial targeting of minorities, including South Asian individuals, and the initiative's stigmatizing nature.

BRE as an exercise of sovereign power

Rather than simply executing one form of power, the BRE program is an example of multiple logics at work. Collier (2009) suggests that while certain powers operate according to different logics, they can function together to produce an intended result. This is most notably visible in the role-switching capabilities of officers, who can go from 'police officer', to 'authorized agent', and back to 'police officer' depending on the situation. As an agent of the state, police officers can subject an inadmissible patron to arrest if they refuse to leave the premises after being ordered to do so. This would require the direct exercise of sovereign power through the legislative directives found under the *B.C. Trespass Act* or the *Criminal Code of Canada*. According to Collier (2009) sovereign power continues to play an important role in modern governance. However, before such an exercise of sovereign power is accomplished, officers must ask patrons to first produce identification. In order to do this, police must detach themselves from their role as state actors and serve as representatives of the private business, or as the program classifies them: 'authorized agents'. Under this role, it appears that police are no longer traditional law enforcement officials, but rather, an extension of private businesses and may be perceived as private security.

This is complicated and somewhat contrary to how the Vancouver Police Board views the role of police as authorized agents. In Report to the Vancouver Police Board, officials with the Vancouver Police Department attempted to clarify the debate and answer legal questions as to whether police can act simultaneously as private security and as law enforcement officials.

According to the Board Report, despite being authorized agents, police officers act independently from owners and managers and are not under their directive. Further, the report specifies that:

While technically the officers are acting as an authorized person when they initially determine that a person is an inadmissible patron – by making that determination on behalf of the owner/occupier of the premises – and then following up by requesting the person to leave the premises, again on behalf of the occupier, this is not a legally impermissible role/function for a police officer to engage in. When doing so, the officer is not acting in some purely private capacity, solely in the interest of the owner/occupier, but in a dual role by acting in both the interests of the restaurant owner/manager and also acting in the public interest, in furtherance of the police’s duty to ensure public safety.” (Vancouver Police Department, 2016: p.4)

The Vancouver Police Department justifies the notion of ‘role switching’ by acknowledging that an officer’s duties as a police officer are never truly abandoned and always lie in the foreground when they execute their responsibilities as an authorized agent. However, public documents show that law enforcement has been reluctant to refer to themselves as private security working on behalf of private businesses, downplaying the idea that they are ‘role-switching’ (Vancouver Police Department, 2016). Nevertheless, without proper clarification on jurisdiction through formal policy (which is recommended by the Police Complaints Commissioner), this analysis maintains that police officers do indeed engage in role switching by adopting the role of private security since they are taking on responsibilities to carry out certain duties that would otherwise not fall under their legal authority. Precisely, officers cannot simply walk into bars or restaurants and remove inadmissible patrons without a program like BRE in place to gain the cooperation and contractual consent of proprietors. Also, adopting the title of ‘authorized agent’ carries an important symbolic message, which serves to accentuate the private security role of officers.

BRE as an exercise of neoliberal governance

Nevertheless, for present purposes, law enforcement's role as 'authorized agents' and their cooperation with private businesses in the community is characteristic of contemporary exercises of governmental power most often associated with neoliberal societies. In this case, bar and restaurant staff play a proactive and central role in governing the local gang problem, which is generally indictive of the principle of minimal state involvement and community governance. Also, by serving as authorized agents, further distance is created between the state and non-state actors when officers carry out duties under BRE that would otherwise not fall under their legal purview.

This falls into alignment with Collier's (2009) recommendation that analysts examine the relationships between the various logical forms of power and how they are transformed, reconfigured, or combined to address new situations and problems that arise. Collier (2009) draws an important conclusion, which is that neoliberalism be treated as a master category that transforms the logics of police regulation, discipline and sovereignty. This is evident in the BRE program which finds its foundational footing in contractual agreements which ultimately permits the deployment of multiple logics of governing. Valverde (2003) engages in a similar analysis, instead focusing on liquor licensing as a legal technology that permits the regulation of spaces and subjects in British pubs. In addition to licensing, the contractual agreements central to BRE serve a similar purpose as a legal technology that allows for such a contemporary exercise of police regulation. Therefore, BRE is a return to the logic of police regulation which is influenced by contemporary governing practices. Further, depending on the circumstances, arrests can be made through relevant legislation which is an exercise of direct sovereign power.

Challenges with the Bar and Restaurant program

An important caveat, the BRE program was not designed to exclusively respond to the problem of South Asian gangs. Nevertheless, the racial profiling of South Asian men is an inevitable consequence of the program (Smith, 2013; Quan, 2012). The BRE program operates on its ability for authorities and businesses owners to identify inadmissible patrons and exclude them from these premises based on loosely defined and abstract terms like ‘gang member’, ‘gang associate’, or ‘gang lifestyle’. These particular imaginaries are fundamentally intertwined with a broader concern over the South Asian gang problem in this region.

Many, including the Police Complaints Commissioner and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, have raised concerns that demanding government issued identification, absent of a legislative directive, constitutes a street check or carding. The police practice of carding has had a long and controversial history in Canada and has recently been suspended in Toronto over concerns that it targets Black Canadians. More importantly, the BRE program removes carding as an official police practice by transforming it into a private practice since police are now considered ‘authorized agents’ when requesting ID on behalf of business owners. The program thus permits carding, despite the fact that it has been deemed problematic and discriminatory in official police practice. Gang unit officer ‘Ranjit’ makes this salient observation:

We have had some challenges [with the program]. When you see a group of five or six South Asians walk in together, these places, unfortunately now, we do get calls: *oh, there's five, six people could they be gangsters right?* ... When it's a known individual then it's no problem for us to ask those people to leave, but the challenge we follow sometimes is exactly this scenario I'm painting. We walk in there, there's five or six people sitting there. Now it becomes a challenge for our officers, as they don't know who they are. How do you determine if they meet the criteria? ... You don't want to cross that line where now people are being stereotyped because they're from a certain demographic right?"

Officer ‘Ranjit’ is generally supportive of the BRE program but acknowledges that racial profiling does occur. In order to survive, the BRE program requires the voluntary participation of

businesses and for their employees, management and owners to be able to accurately identify inadmissible patrons in order for police, as authorized agents, to request ID and potentially eject them from the premises. For Officer ‘Ranjit’, BRE becomes problematic when employees or management at these businesses request ejections from police based solely on the race of patrons. This poses further challenges for police who are left to essentially ‘clean up’ or manage the problem created by businesses by determining if individuals are indeed inadmissible.

Officer Ranjit discusses another issue with the program that creates a dilemma for police, which is its unequal application:

One issue that makes it difficult for the police to deal with... Well the purpose [of the BRE program] is to have the onus on the police and let us act on [the business owner’s] behalf as long they abide by certain rules and aren't being selective. Well some places let certain individuals in because they're friends with them knowing that they're involved in criminal enterprise and yet they want other ones to be gone. So they have to ensure that they're being consistent and fair in regards to how they're operating here.

Thus, a program that at its core is premised on the exclusion of certain people deemed ‘undesirable’ is likely to result in racial discrimination when operating in a community that is perceived to have a significant South Asian gang problem and is inconsistent in terms of who is targeted for ejection. Also, the BRE program illuminates some problems that arise when such a form of regulatory power is exercised over citizens giving police the ability to directly remove or even arrest potential inadmissible patrons. This exercise of power is viewed as necessary in order to maintain public order and safety. However, at the same time, the BRE program perpetuates the racial targeting of South Asian populations and has the potential to frame some South Asian individuals as risky populations.

A problem related to the racial discrimination of South Asians is the stigmatizing nature of the BRE program. This is especially evident in the cases of those individuals who are no longer involved in gangs but are designated an inadmissible patron for their prior history. There

have been several complaints to the Vancouver Police Board Service and Policy Complaints Review Committee from individuals who are reformed gang members and have desisted from gang life. For example, one complainant had left the gang lifestyle behind for several years while another complainant had been ordered to leave a restaurant and referred to as a ‘criminal’ for a conviction for a minor offense that occurred over 25 years ago in the United States (Vancouver Police Department, 2018). That complainant is now a successful business owner and did not have any subsequent police interactions since the initial incident. However, this program has resulted in individuals being judged as ‘a criminal’ or ‘gangster’ first, overriding any other positive contributions or changes they may have made in their lives. This illustrates one major way an exclusionary practice such as BRE results in the stigmatization of reformed gang members. Despite the existence of a review process, the initial ejection can have severe negative consequences.

Individuals can also be deemed an inadmissible patron if they somehow have a gang association. This does not necessarily mean that these individuals are involved in gangs but the mere association with gang members could result in their ejection. This poses numerous problems. First, groups like the BC Civil Liberties Association have challenged the broadness of the term ‘associate’ and believe the police have too much discretion and not enough legislative directive to make the determination as to what constitutes a gang ‘associate’. This poses problems when people are unfairly targeted as gang associates if they have family members, friends, or even acquaintances involved in gangs. Further, it creates a ‘guilt by association’ stigma for those deemed as inadmissible based on their family or peer circles. To be removed as an inadmissible patron, individuals are required to demonstrate that they have dissociated themselves from people involved in the gang lifestyle. This too has negative repercussions, as it

can potentially isolate gang members from individuals, like family members or friends, in their lives. According to Beckett and Herbert (2010a), places people are banned from typically offer crucial opportunities for social contact and relationships. However, the BRE program sends a clear message: not only should gang members be excluded from participating in mainstream society, but also mandates the isolation of those assumed to be involved in gangs through association. Further, as Beckett and Herbert (2010a) found, excluded individuals experience status loss when being banished, amplifying feelings of unacceptance as citizens and members of society as a whole. As a form of social control, exclusionary practices, like BRE, also have a net-widening effect as they may subject many individuals to punishment who would otherwise not experience it (Beckett and Herbert, 2010a).

Besides stigmatizing individuals who are associates of gang members or previously involved in gangs, the program may also stigmatize those still actively involved in gangs. While it is understandable that business owners and law enforcement want to reduce the potential for gang violence in their communities and private establishments, the BRE program does not necessarily target gang violence per se, but rather, individuals who may actually be engaging in lawful behaviour, like going out for dinner or attending a nightclub. In a study of Seattle's exclusionary orders that banned certain populations, like the homeless, from commercial and public places, excluded individuals felt that these types of laws were too broad as they failed to differentiate between actual criminal activity and the mere presence of these individuals as being criminal (Beckett and Herbert, 2010a). In the case of BRE, patrons do not have to engage in illegal, problematic or disruptive behaviour to be ejected, and may even be behaving pro-socially yet are still deemed inadmissible based on their presence in these businesses. Consequently, it is the mere label of being a gang member or associate that is offensive to police and management

that warrants their removal, as opposed to a specific display of illicit and criminal behaviour on bar or restaurant premises.

Anju, a gang researcher who works with several South Asian gang organizations in the community, makes an important observation:

When I started researching the seduction into gang life, and what I found, and it was also supported by many of the narratives of actual gang members is number 1: a very, very strong feeling of alienation, and so the alienation and one of the sort of trajectory and history of some of the South Asian gangs is racism.

For Anju, South Asian gang involvement is the result of profound feelings of alienation, which in part is attributed to racism. This quote captures the potential relationship between racism and stigma in relation to the BRE program. Precisely, the BRE program stigmatizes gang members from the community, which could deepen their feelings of isolation and alienation from society through practices that further advance exclusion.

This exercise of exclusion is characteristic of a century-old approach of governing adopted by municipalities and local governments. Valverde (2005) suggests that municipal and quasi-municipal authorities increasingly regulate activities of persons through exercising control over the use of space, including private venues like pubs. While Valverde (2005) focuses on how such policy is used to regulate the activities of the poor, other “undesirables”, such as gang members, can similarly be targeted through non-criminal policy used to control individual activity. Beckett and Herbert (2010a) suggest that most discourses on punishment tend to focus on the administration of official legal punishment when criminal laws are violated. They suggest that research should focus on how punishment has evolved and the ways in which civil, criminal and administrative law has become blurred (Beckett and Herbert, 2010a). The BRE program represents such a blurred exercise of punishment, one where local bylaw is used to execute penal control over individuals in cases where formal criminal laws may not necessarily be violated.

Despite not having formal policy in place, BRE is heavily promoted by municipal officials, including mayors and police chiefs, and involves the regulation of private businesses in order to carry out the specific objective of exclusion. Further, BRE, as a public safety initiative, is easier to enact by municipal police forces through local bylaws, like the *BC Trespass Act*, as opposed to the Federal RCMP who would have a much harder time implementing such a program. Officer Ranjit makes several important observations regarding the use of municipal, non-criminal law and why the RCMP, who operate in Surrey, have been mostly reluctant to adopt it:

So, for perspective, the RCMP jurisdiction hasn't adopted it. So, they were a little bit concerned, I guess, about the legal authority these premises and their management had to eject people and they didn't want to get into any sort of human rights and that type of concern. But we've been confident at the municipal level that as long as it's not abused, we make sure our officers are properly trained and understand what their authority is and the scope of it and ultimately what the intent of it is. We have proper, we kind of utilized authority of the Trespass Act to be able to...because some provinces have more authority built within their liquor control and licensing regulations. We don't really have that in BC. So therefore, we have had to be a little creative and look at ways to be able to do this within the perimeters of the authority we have.

For Ranjit, municipal police forces may not run into the same constitutional dilemmas as their Federal counterparts, so using local bylaw has given them the flexibility to develop and implement public safety initiatives like BRE. Consequently, municipal authorities might have an easier time regulating the behaviour and movement of “free subjects” than their Provincial or Federal counterparts through the use of such legally hybrid forms of social regulation.

“I’m going to guide you the right way” – Inclusionary gang strategies and ‘saving’ vulnerable youth

Community gang organizations – an overview of programs

In contrast to the BRE program, which may be used to deal with gangs more generally, there are community organizations in the lower Mainland BC that work exclusively with or are

targeted to South Asians who may be at risk or currently involved in gangs. Community-based gang intervention strategies possess goals that are very different from objectives of the BRE. Precisely, these organizations are premised on the notion that these youth can be saved from gangs through *inclusionary* measures that work to increase their participation in or connection to mainstream society. Rather than remove these individuals from restaurants, bars or nightclubs, at-risk subjects are given opportunities to strengthen their bonds to school, family, the community and religious institutions.

One such agency operates in a community with a significant South Asian population. This organization offers many different services for at-risk or gang involved youth up to the age of 30 including community education and outreach, parenting sessions, as well as one-on-one case work that occurs with a youth and support worker. Services are provided to youth including recreational activities, therapy and counselling, and school or career assistance among other important services. Most importantly, program caseworkers serve as a bridge between the youth and key actors in their lives. Veer, a frontline youth worker at the agency describes this arrangement:

This organization, we usually serve gang or high at-risk South Asians. We will see them at least once to twice a week. We're connected with the police, their PO [probation] officers, the school, to see what's going on. Where the problem is?... We have a free counsellor that comes in here for them. So, we get the whole family counselling.

According to Veer, the agency works to transform gang-involved or at-risk youth through the various resources listed above. Veer expands on his role:

So, my role is: youth that are referred over to me. What I do is I connect with them and I see where these insecurities and problems are stemming from and then I try target those key areas. So, if it's regarding the family, I will try to get family counselling. If it's regarding their peer groups, we'll get them into a different school and we'll see how the grades reflect that and how their teachers reflect that. If they just have a lot of free time and they're doing nothing, we'll get them a job or we'll get them into other programs that will keep them busy. That's pretty much what I do.

Several employees interviewed with the agency stress the important advocacy role they serve for youth who may feel marginalized by institutions in their lives like family, school or law enforcement. As program supervisor Kulvir explains: “We've seen [gang violence] and just put into place so that the South Asian population could get the support that they needed as well, the youth. I mean it's really easy to kick out a kid, but to advocate for a kid does take a lot, and that's something that we have been doing for the youth that we've been working with.”

Priya, a frontline worker who works exclusively with South Asian females (a position created over the perception that female involvement in gangs was increasing in their community) clarifies her advocacy role:

I'm actually just an advocate between the school and the client. Taking them to health clinic meetings. So basically, I just become a support person, somebody that the youth can rely on, but I'm also using certain strategies and, like a framework. I come from a social work background, so I'm using some of my social work interventions, referring them to counselling, going to mental health meetings with them. Child-youth mental health for example. I kind of become like a resourceful person to them, at the same time have a mentorship relationship with them. Yeah, become like a role model in their lives, basically.

According to Priya, the youth the agency serves lack a strong support system or someone willing to fight for them when it seems that all others may have given up on them. Priya and Veer's colleague Ranbir describes how he envisions his role in the agency: “just kind of to deter kids away from involvement gang life and criminal organizations, and crime in general. So it's basically helping guide and supporting the youth to get on to the right path and sway away from the gang life.” For Ranbir, the role of advocate or support person is a crucial element in reducing gang involvement among the South Asian community.

In addition to this organization, there are several other programs facilitated by community organizations across the province. School boards operate one program in particular, known as Wraparound, across several cities in BC. While the program may vary in terms of how

it operates from community to community, it embodies one major guiding principle, which is for school officials or the police to identify at-risk youth and literally ‘wrap’ (hence the name Wraparound) services around them. Although this program is not exclusive to the South Asian community, the program does work in conjunction with community agencies, some specifically working with South Asians or immigrant populations, to assist in delivering much needed services. This is especially important in schools where there is a high percentage of South Asian students as well as a significant gang problem.

School principal Dan explains the general goal and services of Wraparound programs:

They offer classes at the district education centre. They offer a chance to go to a number of gyms and work out with wrap employees or RCMP officers and they get involved in any number of field experiences and initiatives to try to connect them to the greater community. Often the kids who are getting involved possibly in gang behaviours or gangs, often haven't really tasted life outside of their community and their community is in essence where they stay and they don't travel far. So, we find when we get kids outside of their community we can open their eyes to new perspectives and new horizons.

According to Dan, Wraparound, first and foremost, serves to get youth involved in the community. Thus, programs like Wraparound serve to *include* vulnerable youth in mainstream society through participation in normal, recreational activities, standing in opposition to gang measures like BRE that intend to *exclude* those already involved in gangs from certain social activities. Gurmeet, who is an outreach worker employed by a school board explains the purpose of Wraparound:

Wraparound does basically what the name says. It takes a unique approach to an individual and wraps them around services and support that are special to that individual. So everything is catered and curated according to what that young person needs to achieve whatever goals they set out for themselves and our goals are to help them lead a healthy lifestyle than the one they are currently engaged in... It'll vary student to student. Whether it just be that connection to a healthy adult. Someone to role model. What a healthy adult looks like or what a healthy person looks like. That or it could be extra-curricular supports, providing them with whatever needs, from basic needs all the way to extravagant needs like food in their belly to going snowboarding in the wintertime. Like I said, I really like to think that we curate for each individual whatever they need. Try to listen, meet that

young person where they are at so we can help them identify what is it that they need to change the things that aren't working well for them.

Wraparound is a plan of action that is calibrated for each student in order to meet his or her individual needs, which could include counselling and other services deemed necessary.

Consequently, it is difficult for these services to be offered by the school board alone, requiring the involvement of community agencies and other stakeholders in the action plan. Thus,

Wraparound largely works through the support of community partners, the police and school officials in order to operate. Aarti, who works for an immigrant and refugee agency, describes her agency's role in Wraparound. Aarti notes that her agency will be working with school liaison officers who will identify and refer at-risk youth for programming. Once involved, risk assessments will determine which youth pose a high-risk level and will be assigned a youth worker. Aarti outlines the supportive role her youth workers play:

Getting to know the youth and understanding what the risk factors are that have placed them at higher risk for engaging in criminal or gang activity, and then what are some of their strengths and who are some of the prosocial people and prosocial activity that they engage with in their life. Work with them to identify with their short-term long-term goals are, and then what will happen is the youth worker will engage the people that youth identify as being positive people in his or her life and those people are going to help the youth carry out those long term and short goals. So, the youth worker is going to act as a facilitator between the youth and their care plan and the team, with the care team, which is a group of people that the youth identifies that he or she would like support from. That could include family members, friends, the police officers, community workers. It could be anybody. So, the idea is that the youth is at the centre of all of this and that we wrap the youth with services to support them.

Aarti envisions the program as having a rehabilitative element, where high-risk youth are surrounded by a "basket of support" in the form of positive prosocial individuals in their lives.

This could ultimately counter feelings of isolation and alienation youth might experience in the community.

Two additional community-based initiatives are youth programs run by South Asian police officers. These programs share a common premise, which is to bring South Asian youth in the community together, to connect them with a positive role model, and engage in various recreational and charitable activities designed to steer them away from the lure of gang life. In doing so, officers hope to increase the commitment and attachment these youth have to sports, academics, their family and even religion. The first program has an emphasis on academics, sports and family. Youth who get involved are encouraged to complete their education and potentially attend post-secondary education with the goal of establishing a long-term career. Officer Gurjit, who operates the program discusses the program: “It's a non-profit that provides high quality programs free of cost to under-privileged kids who are also at high risk and the programs primarily in education and sports.” As a non-profit organization, scholarships are routinely given to participating youth. As officer Gurjit discusses the purpose of the scholarships: “As long as the child shows up [to the programing], we're giving them a financial opportunity to become successful later in life. So, the money they got goes either towards their sports or go towards their education.”

The second program is operated by Officer Krish and has more of a religious connotation. As Krish describes:

I also have a youth group that meets every Sunday and that youth group I created just to have interaction with kids and keep them away from the gang lifestyle and keep them in the straight and narrow and get them to go to school and then at the same time get them to come to the temple, because that's a lost thing that happens a lot times when kids get older, they stop going to temple and then they don't want to go anymore because they don't think it's cool. So, we try to keep them coming at the same time.

Krish's program is more loosely structured and less formal than Gurjit's but both programs have a strong community engagement component. Krish's group brings youth together to engage in seva, the religious Sikh principle of doing service in the community. This 'seva' includes work

around the Gurdwara (Sikh temple), such as preparing and distributing food in the community kitchen, as well as engaging in donation and charity drives that give back to charitable organizations in the community. Krish outlines his motivations for starting the organization:

The program started because a couple of parents came to me and they said: "you know what? Our kids, they're starting to not listen to us at home. They're not doing their homework at home. We do not know what to do. What can we do?" And I told them: "you know what? Why don't you bring them to the temple on Sundays and we'll have discussion about what they could do" and their main thing was, you know what, the kids are starting to separate from the parents, and a lot of parents, South Asian parents, they work 2, 3 jobs and so the kids are home all day long not doing anything or they're at home all day long playing videos and the parents are not there to watch them. So the parents want some kind of organization where the kid could go to and just connect and then get some kind of authority figure.

For Krish, a program such as his provides youth with an avenue to connect with a positive role model and make proper use of their time engaging in activities that are considered more productive rather than using idle time to get involved in gang activity.

Community governance of the gang problem

The gang programming offered to South Asian youth in the community is emblematic of contemporary crime control practices in neoliberal societies where the state fosters and mobilizes the community itself to tackle the local gang problem (Hannah-Moffat, 2000). Thus, when developing programs and strategies that aim to direct or shape the actions of individuals, empowering the community to govern themselves is an important feature of contemporary government (O'Connor and Ilcan, 2005). This image of liberal government is based on maintaining a boundary between the formal state apparatus (including actors and institutions) and civil society, the latter of which is considered to be exempt from administering the regulatory responsibilities associated with state power (Rose, 1999). With the shift towards neoliberal political rationalities, which emphasize devolution, these boundaries have been

transformed (Rose, 1999; Garland, 1996). This arrangement permits state authorities to govern at a distance by enlisting the support and involvement of non-state actors, allowing “civil society”, with its own set of distinct values and beliefs, to be left relatively alone and autonomous. In this case, the South Asian community, including agencies and actors within it, are allowed to function on their own and manage the gang problem, receiving support from the state through contractual agreements, funding or other forms of support to maintain peace and order in their communities through their own crime prevention techniques.

The arrangement of neoliberal strategies is clearly evident in how the South Asian gang problem in the lower Mainland has been partially handled. The community organizations discussed above have considerable power in intervening in the lives of at-risk or gang involved individuals and exercising transformative power on individuals. For example, the South Asian gang intervention program offers educational sessions, therapy, mentorship and other services that are meant to responsabilize enrolled youth. Rather than imposing these measures on youth through direct government coercion, community organizations become tasked with carrying out the responsiblization process, while being supported by state actors like the police. This allows the state to foster such alliances so that the community can react on their own behalf, protecting the autonomy of civil society. Indeed, all the community agencies discussed above have some form of partnership with ‘official’ state agents such as the police, courts, or school system who actively work to foster and mobilize the community so they can self-regulate problematic behaviour. This arrangement of power forms a very specific chain of action that hands community organizations a major stake in controlling the South Asian gang problem while official state actors lie on the periphery and can essentially govern at a distant. However, community groups must see it in their own self-interest to form such alliances (Garland, 1997).

In this case, these agencies seek to reduce gang membership and gang violence among the South Asian community so that civil society can be protected.

Kulvir, who supervises the South Asian anti-gang organization, addresses the goals of the program:

The reason that we're successful and that we're known is because we have done a lot of work in the community. We get some of the most amazing guest speakers to come in and speak to these parents. We've got, the thing is, we have to find them and they have to be South Asian, because of the language. So we've had officers, we've had doctors, we've had officers, we've had different professionals come in and talk about how to raise successful children and a lot of forums have been it takes a village to raise a youth.

According to Kulvir, raising children requires an integrated approach that involves all in the community. For Kulvir, the responsibility over steering youth away from gangs lies not just with the parents but also by everyone in the community. The desire to reduce the social harms posed by gangs is something that is in the best interest of both community and state authorities alike. With the decline of Welfarism, volunteer and non-profit agencies like Kulvir's have proliferated in recent years and are given considerable responsibility for assisting disadvantaged communities (Ilcan and Basok, 2004). Thus, community becomes a means for government itself and the state places limits on itself when necessary. As Kulvir argues, it takes a community to raise children, suggesting that community agencies such as hers have an easier time penetrating a domain like the family and eliciting the support of the broader community to play a role in the upbringing of youth. Direct intervention on the part of the state, in this regard, is much more difficult and is likely to be met with opposition and resistance (Ilcan and Basok, 2004).

The wraparound school-based initiative also provides a good representation of a crime control agenda that emphasizes community-state partnerships. Amarjit, a school district employee, describes the wraparound program as: "our most intensive program ... connecting community support and coordinating them with multiple community partnerships, the Ministry

and the RCMP being one of the biggest ones. The RCMP dedicating staff towards it too and it's an intervention program when kids have been identified as having risk factors." The organization works collaboratively with the police, government officials and several community agencies to form a network of both state and non-state actors to deliver comprehensive support to susceptible youth. Essentially, governing the gang problem is seen to require such an arrangement, which includes South Asian community organizations, in order to be impactful.

Through the community, contemporary crime control also encourages the role of expert knowledge in managing the risk posed by crime. Community organizations, as well as the police and school officials, are interested in developing and exchanging knowledge on risk factors so that intervention and prevention programs can address the underlying causes of gang involvement among South Asian youth and the problem can then be managed. This illuminates a major feature of neoliberal governance, which is the role of expert knowledge that is used to transform rationalities of crime control into specific technologies of government (Rose and Miller, 1992).

Anju, a professor and community educator who works in association with several South Asian gang organizations, is one such expert whose research on alienation is translated into specific modes of action, such as public education and awareness through forums where this knowledge is disseminated to community members. Anju clarifies this knowledge transmission component of her work:

[Name of community group omitted] also has a knowledge transition component, where we invite the community and community stakeholders, police, to educate community members that share a narrative. So, knowledge transmission is really important but also generating knowledge through key stakeholders... and what we're now looking into is policy. And that is how are certain policies making it difficult for police to actually do their work in preventing, in arresting youth, which could then protect the public or other policy issues.

For Anju, knowledge plays a critical role in two ways: 1) it allows trained experts to develop knowledge on the gang problem and to then disseminate that information to the community and state actors (i.e. the police), and 2) to aid in policy development that assists authorities in combating gangs. This illustrates a central component of governmentality as neoliberal strategies tie government to knowledge of human conduct derived from the social and human sciences (Burchell, 1996). Before a problem like South Asian gangs is to be rendered governable it must first be known. Experts like Anju highlight the manner in which non-state actors are tasked with developing and exchange knowledge and information, which is then used to facilitate strategies of crime control. Liberal government must elicit and foster the support of the community in combating gangs and cannot over-regulate crime control

Therefore, when it comes to ‘saving’ youth from the lure of gangs by drawing them back into mainstream society, community members and agencies nurtured by state agencies are deemed appropriate in carrying out such inclusionary practices as these community agencies bring their own values, beliefs and norms that are distinct from that of the state. As Anju describes, knowledge on South Asian gang offending is developed through her research and is then transmitted to the public through compressive public education and awareness forums, which is then used to develop polices used by police and other community stakeholders. The goal of these forums is to educate the public about gang crime so that it is done in a way that empowers them to govern themselves. Thus, expert knowledge is translated into specific technologies that work to manage risk, another significant feature of neoliberal governance and crime control so that ‘problem people’ can be reintroduced into civil society. It becomes vital for the community to develop their own knowledge in order to create their own strategies of

crime control, facilitating a condition of maximizing governance through the community while minimizing state involvement.

To aid in this endeavour of self-regulation through the community, tools such as risk assessments are increasingly popular ways to track risk. Community agencies such as Kulvir's that serves South Asian youth make use of a comprehensive 30-page risk assessment survey. This assessment examines several important domains including family and personal relationships, living arrangements, educational, attainment and barriers, employment, neighbourhood, lifestyle and friends, criminal history, attitudes towards offending, substance use, physical, and mental and emotional health, and perception of self and others among other important information collected. Kulvir describes the risk assessment:

For the program that we do here, we have, like I mentioned, we do an assessment. So we have about thirty domains that we look at to figure out the risk level of each client...then after six months, I do it again so that we develop a rapport with our youth. And then again, stuff like criminal history. Have they been arrested? Have any conditions? Probation officers?

Valverde (2017) highlights the relationship between knowledge and power under neoliberal governance as it aims to manage risk in a future-oriented and aggregate manner. Thus, the collection of detailed statistics and data is required so that risk factors are uncovered, tracked and used to prevent future offending (O'Malley, 2010). As Kulvir mentions, it is necessary to track changes in risk in order for her agency to then provide appropriate intervention and services.

Community as a means of inclusion

As mentioned above, contemporary crime control emphasizes the enlistment and mobilization of community, where possible, to produce a comprehensive gang reduction strategy that aims to mentor gang members or at-risk subjects, form the necessary social bonds to control

their deviance, or guide them through counselling or mentorship programming. As evident by the programs discussed above, limited state involvement in some anti-gang programming is deemed necessary and beneficial.

Jyoti, a program coordinator who works with South Asians in an immigrant-services agency describes the importance of inclusion:

I think ... being involved in something or being included. Inclusion is very, very important for everyone, everyone. Whether someone's coming from a different country or even a child in a group of 30 in a classroom. Everyone must be included. And I think giving them options at that young age and not isolated them. Isolation is a huge part of why people go into that group [gangs] because they don't fit into any other group.

For respondents like Jyoti, gangs often fill a void that is missing in a youth's life. Therefore, giving them a sense of belonging through inclusionary measures is deemed as absolutely necessary. Aarti, who coordinates a violence prevention and youth program for a community agency, advocates further on the importance of inclusion in relationship to specific types of programming:

I would say include as in being involved, like having a positive mentor. Constant mentor. Counselling or some type of therapeutic work. See the thing with the mentors, when they have positive mentor in their life, it kind of ticks off a couple of protective factors because the mentor would engage them in positive prosocial activities. Provide them with that everyday kind of mentorship, nothing very clinical and then also, and kind of decrease their sense of isolation by then introducing them to new activities and even people because often times they're very community based. So yeah, I would say those two things are important, like getting the counselling but having a mentor, but also you know, there's a lot of research that shows that when a young person feels that they have somebody in their life that gives a shit about them and cares about them, that that in itself is a huge protective factor. So with the mentorship or getting them reconnected to maybe like a family member, huge.

Aarti ultimately emphasizes the need for at-risk youth to be included in civil society in order to steer them away from the lure of gangs, which can be achieved by these mentors and the bonds they develop with youth. For Aarti, community-based programs that emphasize mentorship or counselling can serve as a protective factor against gang involvement. Further, such programming

helps alleviate some of the isolation vulnerable youth may be experiencing through their participation in recreational activities and other prosocial activities with a mentor figure.

Some of these inclusionary programs emphasize the need to ‘save’ youth from the dangers associated with gang life. This is where religion, particularly Sikhism, and religious institutions, like Gurdwaras, play a central role. Spiritual guidance and religious doctrine have become an increasingly useful tool for anti-gang organizations to incorporate into programming and exit strategies (Totten, 2012). The incorporation of Sikhism into gang programming illustrates a contemporary display of pastoral power, one that is deployed to incorporate religious institutions into broader efforts to manage South Asian gangs. Pastoral authority, independent of the state’s, becomes integral to guiding and molding productive citizens as pastoral governance is premised on the salvation of souls and relies on scripture to guide individuals who may have strayed from the flock. However, as Lippert (2004) notes, religious dogma plays a more minimal role as the defining characteristic of contemporary neoliberal governance is to mobilize Gurdwaras, as community centres, to respond to the local gang problem and create subjects capable of self-regulating.

Ajit, who started a South Asian anti-gang violence organization, organizes several youth groups and public education sessions that partner with local Gurdwaras. Ajit describes the importance of integrating Sikhism and Gurdwaras into gang programming:

Gurdwaras are sort of major centres of our community. So, if the kids get connected and they take on some responsibilities to run the programs, to get involved, those kinds of things, and also be aware a little bit of the Gurbani [Sikh scripture], I think Gurbani is great if you can get connected with Gurbani. I think that gives you entirely new perspective on life.

Ajit believes Sikh scripture, known as Gurbani, plays an integral role in steering youth away from gangs. For Ajit, scripture can have a transformative effect on youth by appealing to their

sense of morality. As Ajit describes the reverence of Sikh temples to the Sikh community, it is not surprising that Gurdwaras become actively involved in gang programming. As cultural and religious centres, with open space and a free 'soup kitchen', Gurdwaras are viewed as perfect places to host youth groups and other programs making it necessary to elicit their support in combating gangs. Even if religious scripture itself plays a minimal role, as officer Krish argues when discussing his temple-based youth program, the fact that they are held in Gurdwaras is significant and carries an important religious function as well as illustrating community governance. Officer Krish describes how coming to temple for a youth group promotes seva (service to the community) among participants. Further, Krish argues that coming to temple is something that is lost among youth, hoping that regular attendance through his group will encourage participants to become more actively involved at the Gurdwara.

Gurdwaras, as community centres, play an important role in governing the South Asian gang problem for their ability to exercise informal social control. By including youth in a prosocial activity, like attending temple, these programs are believed to responsabilize wayward youth. Officer Krish draws on the story of one participant he encountered through his youth group who is transformed in such a way:

So, I told him he should apply for the cadet program. He applied for the cadet program, he got accepted to the cadet program and now he just started his first month there and he just loves it and it was just like 360-degree turnaround for this kid now. He comes every week, he still kind of acts like the gangster kid but now you can see in his eye, he got a job in the summer time. Working, cleaning at [name of business omitted] and he does this now and he goes to school. So, he's on the up and up from what he was before, he was taking cars for joyrides without people's consent. All this kind of stuff to now he's a great volunteer. He hasn't got any problems that I've seen or I've read on the computer about him. He goes to school, he's a volunteer with me and then he's also a cadet.

As a guide with connections to religious institutions that promote Sikh doctrine, Krish believes his program has a positive and transformative effect on high-risk youth based on the example he cites above.

The exercise of pastoral power through the symbolic nature of holding these youth groups in Gurdwaras where participants are exposed to scripture and the highly-valued Sikh principle of seva, is ultimately believed to cleanse the soul and potentially save at-risk youth from the dangers posed by gang life. Yet this form of pastoral power is influenced by neoliberal governance. As Lippert (2004) suggests: “Neoliberalism, however, necessarily defers to other logics, including pastoral power, to render those currently incapable of self-regulation capable and then comes to indirectly rely on care of such entities” (p.543). Thus, Sikh temples in the community are mobilized in order to prevent gang involvement among South Asian youth, essentially creating autonomous entities capable of self-regulating conduct.

Contradictory and competing practices – The existence of both exclusionary and inclusionary programing

As a legal instrument, the BRE initiative revises the logic of police regulation through the creation and maintenance of spaces that are free from gang violence and disorder. These policies work to exclude individuals deemed ‘threats’ from particular places that have historically witnessed escalated gang violence due to the catalyst of alcohol consumption and the presence of weapons. BRE specifically emphasizes exclusion through the direct removal of gang members and their associates from participating in conventional, prosocial activities like going to a bar, drinking or dancing at a nightclub. What makes these practices modern however is that they are achieved through contractual relationships with private businesses owners and police authorities

in order to effectively exclude gang members. These arrangements provide a contractual framework that allows police to work around restraints on their power that prevent them from simply removing gang members or associates from private businesses. Instead, officers must enter into agreements at the start the year with business owners, forming a community-state partnership with the mutually beneficial purpose of reducing incidents of gang violence in their establishments. Although police can proactively enter these establishments and remove suspects, they can also be reactive and respond to calls from businesses themselves. At the same time, police officers retain the ability to exercise direct sovereign power by detaining and arresting individuals in addition to empowering business owners to self-govern by proactively calling in potential inadmissible patrons to police. This is evident in the role-switching ability of police, which allows them to alternate between the role of traditional law enforcement official and private security (i.e. authorized agent) and act accordingly. As a legal technology then, these contractual agreements expand police power by transforming them into different kinds of agents, both state and non-state alike, and exercising different forms of power.

As Valverde (2017) argues, although neoliberal crime control strategies that stress less direct coercion have proliferated, elements of police regulation, for example, have not diminished but are now subject to legal limits that stress human rights, freedom and other neoliberal ideals. In a sense, BRE is a more contemporary way of conducting police regulation that aligns with valued liberal principles. Stenson (1999) posits that governmentality serves as a framework for contemporary governance, where sovereign power or police regulation are transformed, updated and realigned by neoliberal principles. Thus, modern adaptations of sovereign or disciplinary power are sensitive to values such as individual liberty and freedom. In jurisdictions with BRE programs, these initiatives have undergone some judicial scrutiny. These

responses to the South Asian gang phenomenon reflective of centuries of development in governing styles and the deployment of multiple logics, creating a milieu where mechanisms of police regulation are not just residuals from the past, but rather, have taken on a newer form alongside and influenced by neoliberal principles.

Consequently, neoliberal principles of governance have had a major influence in how police regulation is practiced today. The BRE program for example, cannot be initiated without the prior contractual consent of individual business owners. Further, as a form of police regulation, BRE must be compatible with individual rights and freedoms. According to Valverde (2003), police regulation has not entirely gone unchecked and unchallenged. Officer Ranjit acknowledges some of the judicial oversight the program went through: “[the BRE] got challenged a few times in the courts of what authority [we had] and stuff and so we had to tweak a little bit but we're comfortable where we are in regards to authority around it.” This could suggest two things: first, that a system of checks and balances are in place to ensure that when police regulation is exercised, it respects values such as individual freedom and liberty. If not, these programs must be amended so that power is rendered compatible with liberal principles. Second, and possibly more logical is that the BRE program channels powers associated with private property and non-criminal sanctions around the use of space, neither of which derive from criminal law, allowing the program to essentially fly under the radar.

These exclusionary practices ultimately coexist with anti-gang programming that takes a markedly different approach and is generally antithetical to exclusion. Specifically, these differing measures are intrinsically inclusionary in nature and encourage at-risk or gang involved subjects to participate in conventional activities and social life. For example, a community agency and its frontline gang workers offer mentorship, extra-curricular activities, therapy and

other resources for youth, the wraparound school program that wraps services around at-risk students, and finally youth groups in the community launched by off duty police officers that give youth a chance to connect with role models and engage in community leadership. These inclusionary initiatives are characteristic of contemporary crime practices that stress minimal direct state intervention through governing in the community.

In communities that have both inclusionary and exclusionary gang strategies in operation there are bound to be some significant dilemmas that arise. For example, there is likely going to be a cross-section of individuals who are subject to both exclusion and inclusion. In the city of Vancouver, for instance, the BRE program operates alongside community-based gang initiatives, like the school wraparound or a frontline gang agency. The dilemma arises when some gang-involved individuals who are subject to exclusion by their direct removal from a bar or restaurant are also eligible or currently enrolled in programming that has the dueling purpose of making them feel accepted and included in society. This could suggest that attempts to integrate these individuals into society through counselling, mentorship or increasing their involvement in recreational or prosocial activities is counterproductive or counterintuitive as these individuals are simultaneously being rejected from participating in mainstream society. This is especially problematic when at-risk or gang involved individuals are already feeling discriminated against or alienated from their communities.

Despite these challenges there is an important question that needs to be addressed: how do we make sense of the exercise of various logics of power to understand how these seemingly contradictory initiatives, (exclusionary versus inclusionary) can coexist together?

Making sense of the exclusion/inclusion divide

Understanding the techniques, rationalities and scope of both exclusionary and inclusionary practices

To provide some clarity as to how BRE can operate simultaneously and independently from programming done by community agencies that have different outcomes (i.e. inclusion) but ultimately tackle the same problem (i.e. South Asian gang offending), it is necessary to apply a methodological framework for understanding security projects put forward by Valverde (2010). Valverde's (2010) analysis centres on security, a mechanism of power that is exercised over populations to minimize risks and dangers that threatens the safety of society. Despite being characterized as separate from police regulation, the BRE program can also be fundamentally considered a security project with the goal of reducing threats posed by gangs and gang violence to the population at large.

Thus, BRE deploys a fourth foundational logic of power alongside police regulation, sovereign power, and contemporary neoliberal governance. As Valverde (2010) notes, the term "security" should be treated as an umbrella term since "security projects are fraught with contradictions" as multiple governance processes may exist. While Valverde's (2010) analysis can be used to understand the contradictions that exist within a given program internally due to the multiple logics of governing present, comparisons can also be made between different projects that address the same problem. Therefore, to understand how such a program can exist in an area that occupies the same space as more inclusionary gang responses, it is necessary to examine the techniques, rationalities and the scope of the BRE program compared to inclusionary programming operated by the community.

Political rationalities concern the moral justifications for exercising power, which in the case of the BRE program would primarily be for public safety, deterrence or to maintain public

order. Community agencies may differ in their rationalities, emphasizing instead issues relating to rehabilitation or reintegration while undervaluing elements of deterrence or public safety as justifications for programing. Governmental technologies represent the specific mechanics on the programmes, techniques, apparatuses, documents or procedures that are used in the operation of a program, such as BRE, and would include a variety of different components such as the educational training on gangs provided to bar and restaurant owners, the signed agreement, the police in structural manual, or the *B.C. Trespass Act* used in its administration. Technologies used by community agencies may be less formal but include specific operational goals, mandates, risk assessments, or agency policy and procedural manuals.

What makes Valverde's (2010) analysis so significant is her call to examine a third and often neglected dimension of security projects, which is scope. Scope includes the temporal and spatial scale as well as the jurisdiction of a program. In this regard, BRE appears to be more locally confined, where authorities like the police govern the problem of gangs in the bars and restaurants in their designated municipalities, while the power of owners and managers is limited solely to their individual businesses. Contrasted with community mentorships or gang intervention programs, these initiatives are not necessarily restricted to specifically designed territory or space, providing them more flexibility in terms of where influence is exerted. Related to territory are the jurisdictional powers each actor possesses and the rules and procedures that governs their authority. For example, the police have certain powers to carry out a specific crime control agenda. When such an exercise of power is carried out through a program like BRE, it is likely to viewed as coercive given its intrusive nature, especially when it is carried out by uniformed authority figures. Community agencies that conduct mentorship or provide recreational activities as a part of their mandate are likely to be perceived as more welcoming or

inclusive of gang members or at-risk populations due to the more reintegrative approach to programing. The scope of each program can also be assessed temporarily, where despite what some respondents suggest, the BRE program could mostly be considered a short-term solution to remove perceived threats to public safety more immediately. Community programs that work more intimately with at-risk youth, on the other hand, are framed as rehabilitative and aim of addressing the underlying or root causes of gang involvement in what could ultimately be considered a more long-term solution and gang-reduction plan. These programs also emphasize early intervention by targeting at-risk youth populations, whereas BRE likely singles out adults and drinking-age populations.

Thus, as Valverde (2010) argues “in analyzing the scope of security projects, then, temporal scale, spatial scope and jurisdiction all need to be dealt with separately. Such a three-step analysis will reveal how certain way of governing have come to be taken for granted as appropriate for certain problems or across certain spaces” (p. 16). When making sense of how exclusionary practices like BRE can exist with inclusionary programs operated by community agencies, examining their political rationalities, techniques, and more importantly the scope of each program type offers some important insights. Precisely, both exclusionary and inclusionary practices will have a seat at the table when it comes to dealing with South Asian gangs as these programs represent the diverse rationalities on how best to respond to gangs, but are ultimately confided to specific jurisdictional powers and spatial and temporal restrictions in their operation.

How “community” is differently conceptualized

One can delve deeper into political rationalities behind the influence of gang programing by examining the importance placed on “community”. Community plays a critical role in both

the BRE program (BRE) and programming done by private non-profit groups. However, in one instance community is used as a means of exclusion and banishment from public spaces and participation in legitimate social activity. Here, gang members and their associates are to be rejected from decent and law-abiding people and their businesses. In the second instance, community is used for a markedly different purpose, which is to increase the involvement of at-risk or gang involved subjects in meaningful participation in public life, whether that be through mentorship programs, involvement in temple, providing increased recreational activities, or other types of initiatives that keep them engaged in the community. Nevertheless, these dueling approaches present another important dilemma: how do both exclusion and inclusion complicate notions of “community”? Additionally, how are both community and individuals being imagined to achieve different goals?

There is no clear consensus as to how “community” is defined, which carries different meanings for different people. One characteristic of “community” is that it is functional with a capacity to increase people’s ability to work together and solve problems (Paveglio et al., 2017). For Sjöberg (2003), community provides a context for people to navigate risks that might arise. Further, community also involves the transmission of social values and beliefs (Fernback, 2007). Thus, community is a powerful concept where commonly shared values and beliefs are learnt and members work together to solve internal problems that arise.

The conflicting approaches of inclusion and exclusion represent two distinct value systems and political rationalities at play. On the one hand there is an approach that emphasizes a “get tough on crime”, conservative and punitive position, and on the other, a more liberal, rehabilitative orientation. In both cases then, community is seen as an essential vessel for not only conveying and upholding these competing value orientations, but to also serve the necessary

and accompanying functional purpose for risk management. Precisely, the methods of inclusion and exclusion where two competing beliefs of “doing justice” coexist and community is used for different purposes to tackle the same problem as envisioned through competing rationalities. Thus, under exclusion, gang members are imagined as ‘lost causes’ who should be rejected from the community, explaining the conditions that allow a program like BRE to exist, while inclusion imagines gang members and at-risk South Asian youth as ‘savable’, which is achieved through appropriate programming that increases their involvement in the community by the community itself.

Conclusion

As Valverde (2005) notes, municipal governments have increasingly exercised power over space to regulate the behaviour of socially undesirable people. Beckett and Herbert (2010b) build on this analysis by suggesting contemporary punishment, through innovated use of municipal trespass laws, has resulted in a type of banishment of marginalized or “problem” groups. This chapter builds on these studies by examining a specific public safety initiative launched across the province of BC to deal with the problem of gangs. Not without controversy, the BRE program has run relatively successfully with calls for it to expand into municipalities like Surrey. Through agreements with bar and restaurant owners and management, police officers act as authorization agents, having the capacity to ask for identification of patrons and require them to leave if they are deemed an “inadmissible patron”. These inadmissible patrons are mostly gang members, gang associates, or someone involved in serious crime and weapons offenses. If an inadmissible patron refuses to leave he or she may be subject to arrest under the *BC Trespass Act*.

Although law enforcement, businesses and the general community appear supportive of the initiative, and believe it has reduced gang violence in and around bars and restaurants, the program exists as a means to exclude “undesirables” from meaningful participation in social life. These exclusionary practices reflect an exercise of regulatory police power, where law enforcement is given the ability to remove threats to public order and ensure the moral functioning of society. This is achieved by regulating the activities of citizens through spatial governance. Nevertheless, BRE does not represent a historic exercise of direct police power as private businesses in the community must first sign-on to the program before giving law enforcement such authorizing power. Therefore, BRE represents a configuration of police regulation backed by sovereign power that is influenced by principles of neoliberal governance that stresses community crime control. This arrangement empowers business owners to enact their private privacy rights through municipal trespass laws and permits the police to act at the behest of civil society.

Rather than just be limited to exclusionary practices however, this chapter looks at gang responses that appear to be diametrically the opposite in terms of objectives and intended outcomes. Specifically, those gang initiatives that promote the notion of *inclusion* so that at-risk or gang involved individuals are brought into mainstream society. These practices reflect a more neoliberal form of governance that places limits on direct state intervention by providing community agencies the ability to govern the problem of gangs. These inclusionary practices diverge quite significantly from BRE for two reasons. First, these programs aim to integrated South Asian youth and young adults into their communities through increased opportunities for mentorship, sports and recreation, and counselling. Exclusion, on the other hand, works to place limits an individual’s social activities. Mainly, going out for a dinner, drinks or dancing at a bar,

restaurant or nightclub. Second, many of these inclusionary practices integrate culture, or at the very least are sensitive to racial and cultural differences of South Asian gang members or at-risk individuals. In the case of BRE as an exclusionary measure, the issue of race has been a point of contention as it has been suggested that discrimination and stereotyping has become an unfortunate by-product of such a policy initiative operating in ethnically diverse communities.

Despite these differences, inclusionary and exclusionary practices both share one important characteristic, which is eliciting the support of the community when dealing with the problem of gangs. Community serves a different function for each type of practice. Under inclusion, community has a truly rehabilitative and corrective function first and foremost. Here, community is used to help lift South Asian youth or adults out of gang life by keeping them engaged through activity, counselling, mentorship or other support services. Additionally, solving a problem like South Asian gang involvement requires eliciting the support of the South Asian community itself and South Asian professionals. On the other hand, aligned with more a more “tough on crime” agenda, policy makers and law enforcement elicit the support of businesses owners in the community for BRE to achieve the opposite of inclusion. Here, community becomes a means for exclusion, where business owners can help rid police of gang violence in their neighbourhood by banishing individuals perceived to be a threat to public safety. In summary, both inclusion and exclusion represent distinct political ideologies at work and is reflected in a gang strategy where the community plays an important role.

This chapter makes an important contribution to the literature. First, it expands on existing theory on contemporary punishment and governance. In their piece, Beckett and Herbert (2010a) suggest future study examine how punishment has evolved into newly innovative and legally hybrid techniques that make use of banishment to remove undesirable people from social

spaces. The BRE program represents such a legally hybrid technique in penal technology through its ability to exclude gang members and their associates from public spaces. This chapter also makes an important discovery through the admission of Officer Ranjit, which is that the BRE program allows the police to carry out the controversial practice of carding. This essentially means that practices viewed as racially discriminatory continue to operate under the radar through a security project that elicits the support of the community as opposed to being exercised through formal police procedure and practice.

Chapter Four: Bindy Johal and the duelling legacies of folk “devil” and sympathetic “hero”

Introduction

“When we sit down and think about race relations in this country and our community, shit we look at people like fucking Bindy and say: *“hey. Did he do something for our community?”* Did he? Like moralism aside, put the ethical, moral shit [aside], let's just deal with power relations. And so, when you look at South Asian young men today, this guy becomes fucking icon. He becomes a fucking God in the imagination of the emasculated South Asian male. All of a sudden, they're like *“oh right. We can fucking do this”*. – Diljit (*former gang member*)

“Every grade 8 kid is talking about [Bindy] as he is some hero who defied the police and got killed and his interviews are online and people are looking it up and these grade 6,7 kids are always searching them up and bringing him up. So, one thing I decided is never ever to use his name or react to his name” – Simran (*secondary school teacher*)

In the lower Mainland of BC, one name evokes a wide-range of emotions and stirs a community’s social anxieties. Bhupinder Singh Johal, commonly referred to as Bindy Johal, was the notorious leader of a predominately South Asian gang in the 1990s. Johal operated one of the most dangerous and deadly organized crime groups around Metropolitan Vancouver before being killed in a crowded nightclub on December 20, 1998. Although 20 years have passed since his death, Johal’s influence resonates with some in the community in a variety of different ways. The quotes cited above represent two distinct narratives as to how Bindy Johal’s legacy is typically constructed. On the one hand, former gang member Diljit equates Bindy as an iconic figure to youth for his ability to counter pervasive stereotypes of South Asian men and breaking through a formidable power structure in society. Others, such as educator Simran, believe Johal’s legacy has tarnished the South Asian community and endangers youth today by drawing them to gangs. Nevertheless, these perspectives are connected on the premise that Bindy Johal remains an influential, albeit controversial figure in the local South Asian community in BC.

Drawing on the narratives of key authorities, including community gang intervention workers, school officials and law enforcement representatives, this chapter offers preliminary insights into the creation of this local legend. Central to this analysis are the following questions: how do moral entrepreneurs and agents of social control imagine Johal as a social figure? How have these conceptualizations influenced practices of governance as a reaction to his legacy? I argue that Johal has largely been conceptualized in two conflicting ways: first, as a contemporary folk devil who has corrupted South Asian youth by glamourizing the gang lifestyle, and second, as a sympathetic or even heroic figure who fought against a system of racism and threats to South Asian masculinity that plagued working-class South Asian males in the 80s and 90s. Further, by examining how Bindy has been imagined by prominent officials as a folk devil, we are able to understand the community-wide reaction to Bindy through specific interventions that attempt to deglamorize his appeal among youth while introducing new socially acceptable heroes and mentor figures to take his place. Nevertheless, tying the two competing perceptions together it is evident that the moral panic that has erupted these past three decades over Johal might actually mask a greater and deep-rooted crisis surrounding South Asian masculinity and class that is much harder to tackle by moral entrepreneurs.

To understand the duelling legacies Johal seems to produce, it is necessary to turn to the literature on moral panics and folk devils, as well as the theorizing on masculinities and crime. The moral panic literature highlights how social problems, and more importantly for present purposes ‘problem people’, are constructed, perceived and reacted upon (Hall et al., 1978; Cohen, 2011). To further enrich this analysis, some of the literature on hegemonic masculinities and crime will also be examined, as this body of theorizing provides important context as to the conditions that have cemented Johal’s status as a heroic figure in the community. Further, this chapter makes an important epistemological contribution to the broader literature by examining

an issue that has received limited scholarly attention, which is the issue of South Asian gang offending. This study adds to what I hope will be a growing body of research on South Asian gang involvement in Canada by focusing on arguably the most infamous South Asian gangster in Canadian history. In this regard, this study examines the significance a single individual might play in the collective consciousness of entire community and the fears, anxiety and even reverence some might have for a figure who has reached ‘mythical’ status.

This analysis begins with a history of Bindy Johal’s life, chronicling his early beginnings, his life as a notorious gang leader, and his eventual demise. This is followed by a review of key debates among the literature on moral panics and masculinities and crime. The literature review leads to the heart of this analysis, which is to understand how a local legend was created. In these subsequent sections, I examine two widespread yet contradictory narratives of Johal: the anxiety-inducing folk devil and the lauded folk hero, who is credited for having done some “good” for the South Asian community. I argue that the emphasis on Johal as a morally repugnant boogeyman subsequently conceals the structural factors that more significantly influence gang involvement among South Asian men, namely a crisis of racialized masculinity. Nevertheless, understanding these diverse perspectives sheds light on how the community has reacted to him either through countermeasures that aim to reduce his appeal, such as educational school-based programming. This analysis concludes with some closing thoughts and direction for future research.

The rise and fall of Bindy Johal

Bindy Johal’s storied history is both sensational and captivating and has drawn the attention of a generation of South Asian boys, some of whom were not even born when he was killed. In fact, Johal’s story served as the loose inspiration for the main protagonist/antagonist in

Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta's movie *Beeba Boys* (Good Boys), bolstering his position as a cultural 'legend' or 'hero' for some in the South Asian community. Where most gang and organized crime leaders would be hesitant to appear on media and draw attention to their illicit activities over fear of jeopardizing their financial interests, Johal became a fixture on the nightly news openly threatening his enemies. Having this visibility worked to legitimize Johal's status as a folk hero for his ability to directly threaten harm onto his enemies, disparage police and challenge authority.

Born Bhupinder "Bindy" Singh Johal in Punjab, India, Johal immigrated to Vancouver as a small child in the early 1970s (Langton, 2013). As a youth, Bindy was labelled a "problem child", being particularly defiant to authority figures. Ajit, a South Asian youth gang advocate, discusses a major source of Johal's early problems: "people like Bindy Johal, he had a learning problem. He was a failure at school." According to Ajit, Bindy's apparent learning disability caused him to be bullied, which in turn, motivated him to get involved in gangs. Secondary school teacher Simran offers further insight into his troubled early years and what may have pushed him into gangs:

Why did Bindy Johal get into gangs? Same story. Single mother, never home, worked at a hospital with my mother-in-law and basically wasn't accepted, had physical [issues], he was a small kid who basically wanted to gain some weight and people used to pick on him. He didn't have very good language, English language skills... mom was a hardworking, single-parent mother. Working in the kitchen in Vancouver General Hospital.

Simran paints a bleak picture of Johal's early life being raised by a single, working-class mother, which was compounded by learning disabilities, academic challenges, and a physical appearance that likely served as the catalyst for Johal's involvement in gangs due to bullying.

Johal's earliest brush with police was at the age of 18 in 1989 when he kicked his vice-principal in the groin, an offense for which he was expelled and convicted of assault, spending

60 days in jail (Hall and Kines, 1998a). The co-accused in that incident was Faizal Dean, a member of the Los Diablos street gang who was believed to have introduced Johal to gangs. The Los Diablos originated as a largely Hispanic gang, but was eventually dubbed the “East Indian Mafia” since 80 percent of its members were South Asian by the late 1980s. South Asian gangsters, including Bindy Johal, overtook Los Diablos as older Hispanic leaders were incarcerated or killed, taking advantage of a void left in their presence (Journalist unknown, 1998). As a member of Los Diablos, Bindy and his fellow gang members primarily focused on car theft, home break-ins and eventually petty cocaine trafficking (Hall and Kines, 1998b).

It was in this gang that Bindy met the Dosanjh brothers, Jimmy and Ron, who would become high level underworld kingpins after the Los Diablos disbanded in the early 1990s (Middleton, 2002). Having been a teenager, Bindy admired gang leader Jimmy Dosanjh and was quoted saying: “[Jimmy] *was a big shot...people feared him...what he wanted he got.*” (Middleton, 2002). This likely drew Bindy into the Dosanjhs’ gang and he would go on to sell cocaine for the brothers. However, after murdering a local representative of the Columbian cocaine cartel in a dispute, Jimmy Dosanjh was incarcerated and awaiting trial. This provided Bindy an opportunity to take over the Dosanjh enterprise and grow his own reputation as a mafia boss (Middleton, 2002). During this time, Bindy drove expensive cars, built his physique at the gym, and earned considerable wealth from the group’s illicit activities.

Johal may have been reluctant to hand back the lucrative business and relinquish his position when Jimmy Dosanjh was eventually released from jail, which quickly soured their relationship, resulting in the brothers taking out a contract hit on Bindy (Middleton, 2002). Luckily for Bindy, the hired hitman double-crossed the Dosanjhs’ and sold the information back to Johal who in turn arranged the killing of the brothers. During this time, both Ron and Bindy appeared on television openly threatening each other (Middleton, 2002). Nevertheless, it was

Bindy who would succeed in the conflict as Jimmy was murdered in February of 1994 and Ron less than two months later. The killings escalated the war between Bindy and his followers with those of the late brothers. In an unfortunate incident, Johal's neighbour, Glen Olson, was shot to death by Dosanjh associates when he was mistaken for Bindy while out walking his dog.

Olson's death signalled a turning point as police officers launched what would be the city's largest criminal investigation at the time (Middleton, 2002). This investigation resulted in Bindy, and several of his associates, including high-ranking South Asian gang member Peter Gill, being arrested and tried in the murders of the Dosanjh brothers in 1995. At the time, the criminal trial was Canada's longest and one of its costliest at \$2 million but resulted in their acquittals (Middleton, 2002). In another twist more so fitting a movie, juror Gillian Guess was subsequently charged and convicted of obstruction of justice after she admitted to having an affair with Johal's co-accused Peter Gill (Hall and Kines, 1998a). Guess was the only juror to acquit Johal and was likely swayed by Gill to produce an outcome favourable to Bindy. This case also served the dubious distinction of being the first and only known incident in Canadian legal history of a juror having a sexual relationship with a defendant.

Having walked out of the courtroom scot free, Johal was emboldened in his position as gang leader. Still in his twenties, Johal continued building his empire, earning about \$4 million annually (Pearce, 2009). Among other activities, Johal's most troubling was a murder for hire businesses referred to as the "Elite". As head of the 'Elite', Bindy's hit squad would earn between \$15,000 to \$20,000 per contract killing (Bolan, 2004). Johal was suspected of a number of killings, assaults, extortions and kidnappings in the years that followed. Having tried to break his ties to crime, Johal's mother convinced him to go stay with relatives in India and some believe that Johal seriously contemplated leaving gangs altogether at this time (Hall and Kines, 1998a). Nevertheless, the draw of fast money generated by gangs did not sway Johal. Bindy's

luck appeared to be running out as a number of his associates were killed and the police were finally able to apprehend him on more serious extortion and kidnapping charges stemming from an incident with a rival Asian gang (Hall and Kines, 1998a). After being released from prison in 1998 for a separate assault and weapons charge, but prior to the start of the trial for extortion and kidnapping, Bindy Johal was shot with a single bullet in the back of the ear at a nightclub as he stepped away from his bodyguards to dance. Johal died later that morning in hospital at the age of 27.

For years police had no solid leads, despite the fact that Johal was murdered in front of 300 witnesses. In fact, at the time of his death there were multiple suspects and rival gangs with a grudge to bear against him. This included the local chapter of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang, who had been involved in a violent dispute with Johal just days earlier, and the Lotus gang, a rival Asian gang who were believed to have killed him in retaliation since it was one of their members that was kidnapped in Johal's pending criminal trial. Ultimately, it was one of Bindy's own associates, the late Bal Buttar, who came forward six years later. Having claimed to have found God, and now crippled and completely blind due to a separate shooting, Buttar acknowledged ordering the murder in response to Johal increasingly irrational and violent behaviour. The turning point according to Buttar was Bindy allegedly murdering friend and associate Derek Shankar over what was perceived to be a minor dispute with Johal (Bolan, 2004).

The salacious story of Bindy Johal and his compelling rise and ultimate downfall captured the attention of a generation of people in the lower Mainland of BC. Despite being dead for twenty years, Johal has the ability to evoke a wide range of emotions and imagery among individuals. From the more mythic and heroic figure who overcame racism and other systemic barriers to the dangerous boogeyman who continues to corrupt and lure young South Asian boys

to gangs, these perspectives contribute to the creation of a local legend. Further, his story helps explain the various reactionary measures that are deployed to diminish his appeal.

Examining the literature on moral panics, folk devils and heroes, and hegemonic masculinities and crime

This literature review is split into two thematic sections. The first theme centres on key debates within the moral panic literature, which enriches the subsequent analysis by underscoring the significance of Johal's legacy as a folk devil and responded to him as a boogeyman figure. The second section examines the theorizing on masculinities and crime with emphasis on the experiences of racialized men. This cross-section of work legitimizes the differing perspectives that exist and view Johal as either a folk devil or more of a sympathetic folk hero or even anti-hero.

Part I: Moral panics and folk devils

The literature on moral panics and folk devils provides valuable insights into how a figure like Bindy Johal might stir a community's fears over gang violence. More importantly, this body of work sheds light on the diverse nature of contemporary moral panics, which has moved to an analysis of a generalized moral stance; how gang members become labelled as folk devils; and the complicated and blurred distinction between the folk hero and folk devil.

Tapping into society's fear: Moral panics and the construction of problematized people

The manner in which certain people become defined as problematic and the societal reaction to them was the focus of Stanley Cohen's seminal text *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. At the heart of Cohen's analysis is the concept of a moral panic, which he classifies as occurring

when “*a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests*” (Cohen 2011: 1). For Cohen (2011), a moral panic requires the selection of a suitable target and a consensus that this target is not a single, insulated entity but a part of the dark side of society which requires immediate action. This is the folk devil, a group of people or *a specific individual* (i.e. Bindy Johal) who represents evil personified (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). These individuals serve as vital reminders to the public of what we should not be and are easily blamed when problems, such as crimes, arise and dominate the media narrative (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Further, the folk devil is easy to identify and viewed as an existential threat to the morality of a decent society (Cohen, 2011).

Hall et al., (1978) provides an additional analysis of moral panics by focusing on what may cause them. In his analysis of muggings, Hall et al., (1978) suggests that law enforcement and the media likely amplified the threat posed by muggings in 1960s and 70s Britain as a way to conceal some of the economic insecurities felt by the public. Thus, it became easier to pathologize British-Black youth as being responsible for the perceived rise in muggings and increase the presence of police as a way to distract the public from poor economic conditions, while creating recognizable folk devils to pin crime on (Hall et al., 1978).

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) advanced moral panic analysis by establishing a set of criteria of which they can be evaluated. This includes *concern* over a potential or imagined threat; *hostility* in the form of moral outrage directed at the perceived threat or folk devils; a *consensus* that something must be done to address that threat; *disproportionality* in the sense that the subsequent public reaction or concern is not proportional to the actual harm or threat posed by the folk devils; and finally *volatility* which signals that a moral panic can just as easily disappear as it appears (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994: p157-159).

Cohen's (2011) theory is based on the reaction to series of riots and related incidents between 1964 and 1966 in a British coastal town associated with the Mods and the Rockers (M&Rs), two rival subcultures comprised of white, working-class youth. For Cohen (2011), the M&Rs were perceived as a threat by society at large and their anxiety that juvenile delinquency and youth rioting was getting out of hand. The fashion, styles, and fads these subcultures adopted, and their very public feuds and conflicts meant that the M&Rs would occupy the position of folk devil and garner a very specific reaction from authority figures (Cohen, 2011). Cohen (2011) suggests that immediately after the riots, the media played an important role in exaggerating and distorting the threat posed by the M&Rs, predicting that such events would continue to occur, and communicate stereotypes about the groups that lead to a process of symbolization. This meant that the word 'Mod' or 'Rocker' would become symbolic of a certain status (i.e. delinquent), and specific objects, such as hairstyle or clothing, would transform into a badge of delinquency. Thus, through the process of exaggeration and symbolization, the media plays an important role in making the image of the delinquent sharper than reality leading to an overexaggerated reaction by agents of social control who passed policy and legislation that was disproportionate to the actual threat the M&Rs posed to the public (Cohen, 2011).

The diverse, fragmented and more predictable nature of the modern moral panic

Contemporary moral panics are different than the way Cohen originally imagined. Garland (2008) cautions against holding moral panics to such rigid parameters such as those advocated by Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994), noting that they come in a variety of shapes and sizes and can vary in intensity, duration and the impact they have on society. Gardner (2008) makes an important observation of moral panics today, which is that the societal reaction is far from uniform. Further, Hier (2008) suggests that Cohen (2011) erroneously characterizes moral

panics as the result of a threat to universally agreed upon moral boundaries and that individuals react in some consensual fashion. Thus, contemporary moral panics are hindered by counter-reactions where some individuals challenge the claims made by alarmists (Gardner, 2008). In some cases, these counter-experts may speak on behalf of targeted folk devils, resulting in contemporary moral panics resembling “culture wars” or a struggle between diverse groups. For example, victims’ rights groups are often met with counter-claim makers who may be more supportive of prisoner or offenders’ rights. Therefore, panics over certain people and behaviours could potentially yield multiple divergent viewpoints, some that are more traditional and hostile towards these targets and others that are more sympathetic. For Hier (2008), as soon as a moral panic develops, led by a particular set of individuals and interest groups, other dissenting voices emerge that provide counter claims and may challenge their validity.

Cohen (2011) himself recognizes the need to adjust his original theory to reflect contemporary changes, suggesting the replacement of the concept of ‘moral panic’ with that of a ‘generalized moral stance’. For many, moral panics are no longer considered to be so volatile and temporary with a generalized moral stance being more predictable and born from a seamless web of social anxieties that exist in society (Cohen, 2011). These generalized moral stances are reproduced and sustained by the media that promote what values need to be protected. An example of such a generalized moral stance relates to the anxieties around radical Islam in a post-911 America. For nearly twenty years since the World Trade Center attacks, the fear of radical Islam has been a source of public anxiety that is particularly spurred on by the media when a suspected terrorist incident occurs. This suggests that contemporary moral panics, and the folk devils that emerge from them, can have a more long-lasting influence on the public and remain a part of the public consciousness for prolonged periods of time.

Measuring irrationality and the move to risk and governance

One of the fundamental assumptions of moral panic discourse is that the believed harm posed by folk devils is actually disproportionate to the actual harm they produce (Cohen, 2011). This was further explored by Hall et al., (1978) who noted that the reaction to muggings in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s was disproportionate to the actual threat based on the number of incidents captured in police statistics. Similarly, Cohen (2011) argues that the genuine threat posed by the Mods or Rockers was far less significant than what the media and moral entrepreneurs originally conceptualized when lobbying for social control measures. However, Hier (2008) directs researchers to shift from an analysis that centers on the ‘disproportionality’ of moral panics, and to refrain from measuring related concepts like ‘irrationality’ since many of these assessments require scholars to rely on their own normative judgements and value systems. Instead, Hier (2008) suggests a more substantive moral panic analysis which focus on the responses or reactions elicited when such folk devils or moral panics are developed.

As ‘social constructionism’ literature proliferated, essentially claiming a stake over discourse that was typically dominated by moral panic theorizing, scholars became interested in understanding how people respond to problems and problem people that arise. According to Hier (2008), governance studies has increasingly become a popular area to examine the relationship between politics, moralization, risk and responsibility and how these elements impact responses to folk devils through technologies of risk management. This is something Cohen himself acknowledges in the most recent updated edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* where he notes the move from moral panic analysis to one that focuses on a risk society. For Cohen (2011), the social space in which moral panics live are now filled with general social anxieties, fears and insecurities that are more characteristic of a risk society. This suggests that contemporary analysis need not focus on classifying situations as indicative or moral panics or of

people as folk devils, but instead how these risk situations (i.e. gang involvement) and risky people (i.e. gang members) are reacted to or acted upon. For Ungar (2001), contemporary moral panics in a risk society do not necessarily have to have a visible and identifiable folk devil, but stem from general anxieties that exist from our hypersensitivity to perceived hazardous and risky situations, relating to the “generalized moral stance”. Nevertheless, when it comes to the fear of crime, specifically gang violence, a clear example of a ‘folk devil’ or ‘devils’ is much easier to identify. The next section examines how gangsters are often imagined as folk devils by certain authorities or the general public.

The creation of an “enemy”: Gangs and the moral panic literature

The framing of gang violence and individual gang members as moral panics and folk devils respectively has received extensive empirical attention. According to Cohen’s process of symbolization, gangs have the ability to raise people’s anxieties on the basis of being a threat to public safety, leading to a call of action against them (Meehan, 2000). Others have suggested that the fear of gangs should be differentiated from the more general fear of crime, as gangs can often produce more intense moral panics and evoke stricter action than ordinary offending (Lane and Meeker, 2000).

Using Goode and Ben-Yehuda’s (1994) five characteristics, Cyr (2003) outlines the moral panic gangs can produce. There is public concern that gang violence threatens public safety which is typically disproportionate to the actual level of threat gangs pose to the general public. This is often fueled by sensational media coverage, causing criminal justice actors to mobilize and respond more stringently to gangs, which is largely supported by the public. Further, gang members as folk devils are often depicted as boogeymen and are easily identifiable for their dress, gang signs and other relevant symbols, and are subject to hostility from the

public. The fear of gangs is also considered volatile and can be replaced with a new type of fear that enters the public consciousness.

Zatz (1987) examines the actions of police in 1970s Phoenix towards Chicano youth gang members as indicative of a moral panic. For Zatz (1987) the police largely manufactured the problem in order to initiate oppressive action against these minority gang members, which was viewed as disproportionate to the actual threat posed by these gangs. Further, police largely exaggerated the number and size of gangs in their community, a key feature of moral panics, in order to initiate oppressive gang suppression operations (Zatz, 1989). McCorkle and Miethe (1998) conduct a similar analysis in Las Vegas where a hysteria over gangs in the late 1980s caused a moral panic despite any upward trends in gang violence. These studies provide a valuable look into how gangs generally are understood as moral panics. However, they negate an important feature, which is if an entire moral panic is centred on a single figure, a boogeyman of sorts that evokes fear and anxiety amongst a community. In this sense, the central moral panic around South Asian gang involvement focuses on one particularly notorious gang leader that has become an identifiable name and face to attach to the moral panic surrounding gang violence that exists in a community.

The Folk hero/Folk devil distinction

If the folk devil stirs society's fears, anxiety and disdain then, a folk hero or heroes would elicit emotions that are antithetical to their 'devilish' counterparts. For instance, folk devils are often characterized as being a threat to societal morality, of which moral panics ensue. Folk heroes, on the other hand, may uphold principles of morality or may act in a morally justified way, garnering respect and admiration. Klapp (1954) was one of the earliest sociologists to theorize on how heroes and villains are conceptualized, suggesting that once one of these labels

is applied to a person, it will impact their status and influence how they are treated. For Klapp (1954), heroes tend to be considered leaders, champions, protectors, and other positive qualities, while villains tend to be viewed as criminals, cheats, or traitors. However, Klapp's (1954) typologies are quite outdated and overtly racist towards racialized minorities, and his tendency to develop rigid categories of hero and villain fails to account for much complexity and ambiguity that exists in how certain people are perceived. This is essentially true when one person's 'hero' may be on the receiving end of another person's scorn.

The scholarship related to deviance admiration remedies this to a degree by focusing on how criminals or deviants become admired or even considered heroic. Kooistra (1989) examines how criminals may be converted into heroes. In some cases, these criminals include thieves and killers, who while clearly breaking the law, are sometimes later viewed as social heroes, with their exploits captured in the media for decades thereafter (Kooistra, 1989). When trying to explain the source of admiration, Kooistra (1989) posits that cultural group values, such as loyalty and courage, may be transfixed to these figures. However, sociological perspectives point to structural factors, with folk hero-criminals often exemplifying a symbolic resistance to perceived social and economic injustices (i.e. the archetypal Robin Hood figure). Often, the injustice precedes the criminal acts and serves as a motivator for their actions (Duncan, 1991).

Similar to folk devils, several scholars note the impact of the media in creating and promoting heroic figures (Drucker and Cathcart, 1994). However, while the concept of "folk devils" has received extensive sociological consideration, the concept of a "folk hero" has not enjoyed as much attention among the moral panic literature. Flinders and Wood (2015) argue that from current research on heroism that "it is difficult to discern any theoretical consistency, and attempts at developing conceptual or analytical frameworks for analyzing folk heroes or societal "euphoria" in the vein of moral panics and folk devils literature are virtually non-

existent” (Flinders and Wood, 2015: p.643). Flinders and Wood (2015) attempt to remedy this by adopting Cohen’s theoretical framework to examine how individuals transition from hero to villain (and vice versa). They examine “crowd joy”, a condition that stands in contrast to moral panics, where intense positive emotions, such as happiness and felicity become dispersed among people attending a shared event or experiencing a similar condition. Folk heroes play an important role in eliciting this euphoric experience, and are often ascribed qualities such as remarkable or expectational, and generally admired. Drawing on former US President Barack Obama, Flinders and Wood (2015) suggest that the initial euphoria generated from his historic election win ultimately dwindled in subsequent years through a process of demonization that led to him being framed as a folk devil by some.

Despite Flinders and Wood’s (2015) attempt to analyze folk heroes under the framework of moral panic analysis, further research is needed that is sensitive to the fragmented and complicated nature of more contemporary moral panics. As discussed above, for every individual or group of individuals classified as a folk devil, there are other counter-claim makers who may be sympathetic to these labelled people. In this case, the line between hero and villain may not be so easily established. Flinders and Wood’s (2015) analysis does not recognize this morally ambiguous gray area, where one person’s villain may have more heroic qualities to another. For these theorists, heroes and villains have a clear set of distinct characteristics, where folk devils are reminders of what we should not be and heroes “*are the embodiment of our values and aspirations*” (Flinders and Wood, 2015). Nevertheless, figures like Bindy Johal may not clearly fall into a clear category, blurring the line between hero and villain based on an individual’s perception.

Part II: Masculinities and crime

In addition to the literature on moral panics and folk devils, theorizing on masculinities and crime assists in understanding how a notorious gangster may be conceptualized in more positive terms. Indeed, if Johal is considered a ‘hero’ by some, the literature on hegemonic masculinity and crime, particularly when it relates to racialized men, is especially important to review.

Violence as an outcome of masculinity

Police data supports the fact that men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of violence (Hall, 2002). This has led to an abundance of theorizing on male violent offending with most focusing on violence as a tool to respond to traditional threats and challenges to manhood and maintaining masculine dominance. Theorists like Connell (1995) draw on the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ to explain men’s monopoly over physical violence. For Connell (1995), the ‘threatened male’, who is quite vulnerable, is juxtaposed with the more domineering and oppressive alter ego. In other words, man has a diverse set of subordinated masculinities that lie in the shadows of a more dominating one. The oppressive personality is considered ‘hegemonic’ since dominant culture and ideology dictate its institutional supremacy over women and some subordinate men (Connell, 1995). Precisely, hegemonic masculinities ensure that men reproduce a power structure in society that keeps those who do not meet this masculine ideal subjugated, with violence being one tool that can achieve this. Yet violence is not always necessary, as culture and institutions often assist in maintaining this hegemonic male power structure and keeping non-hegemonic masculinities subordinated through cultural consent. However, ‘legal’ and ‘street’ violence, along with economic discrimination, are important features of maintaining the dominating status quo (Connell, 1995). Violence may serve as a

counter measure when men feel wronged as a way to reclaim a sense of justice they feel they are owed (Chodorow, 2002).

Thus, hegemonic masculinity provides some men a pattern of practices that allow them to maintain control and dominance (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Men who fit the hegemonic masculine ideal essentially assert their dominance and superiority over others and secure their legitimacy (Haywood and Mac An Ghail, 2003). Carrigan et al., (1985) clarify that hegemonic masculinity is not just about power relations among men and women, but also the relations among different classifications of men (i.e. heterosexual versus homosexual, Caucasian versus racialized men, or upper-class versus working-class men). Consequently, hegemonic masculinity has been used to understand the violence men commit against other men and not just women (Harris, 1999). Consequently, not all men will be able to embody this masculine ideal as only a small minority can successfully enact it (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity sets forward a set of culturally established ideals of what it is to be a man, and requires all men to position themselves in relation to it (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Morrell (1998) best describes this position: “the concept of hegemonic masculinity provides a way of explaining that though a number of masculinities coexist, a particular version of masculinity holds sway, bestowing power and privilege on men who espouse it and claim it as their own.” (Morrell 1998: p.608).

Hegemonic masculinity has been used to understand certain types of criminal behaviours, including gang offending. Gangs are often perceived as the easiest way to achieve manhood for disenfranchised males (Bloch and Niederhoffer, 1958). In this sense, working class males, who represent a large number of gang-involved persons, are expected to live up to hegemonic societal expectations while dealing with their lived reality (Hooks, 1995). Failing to measure up to this masculine ideal because of their social position, they rely on alternate behaviour that matches the

values promoted by hegemonic masculinity as a way of achieving their ‘manliness’ (Hagedron, 1998). In this sense, these alternative sets of behaviours (like displays of toughness) allow disfranchised working-class males an opportunity to stake a claim and renegotiate their position in the pursuit of manhood (Luyt and Foster, 2001). Messerschmidt (1997) suggests that gangs provide working-class boys a vehicle to deal with experiences of structural powerlessness, which encourages hypermasculinity as an antidote to threats against self-esteem. Thus, gangs are an important expression of marginalized masculinity (Vigil, 1982).

Some research examines the experiences of racialized males and marginalized masculinity. Blocked from access to resources that allow them to perform the dominant role of breadwinner, Chicano men in particular may rely on physical force or control over women in order to assert masculinity (Baca Zinn, 1982). The streets are often where poor urban racialized men are able to claim a stake on the masculine hierarchy and reclaim lost status through the use of hypermasculine behaviour and gang symbols, dress and language (Rios, 2011). For some researchers, certain Latino gang members have their own variation of masculinity that is influenced by a cultural machismo orientation (Guttman, 1996). This form of masculinity is tied to a man’s social status, respect, money, violence and sexual prowess (Baird, 2012). Connell (1995) argues that this exercise of counter-masculinity is a form of protest for marginalized men who rework the hegemonic system and do masculinity in accordance to their station in life. In sum, the manner in which masculinity is exercised by some men of colour is due to their social and economic exclusion and subject to their own cultural interpretations (i.e. Latin American machismo). This suggests that there is no single version of masculinity and the way it is exercised is dependent on different contexts and adjustments (Frost, 2010). A related concept, subordinate masculinity, also captures a way of doing masculinity that includes behaving in criminal and deviant ways (McFarlane, 2013). According to Connell (2002), subordinate

masculinity includes a set of behaviours and masculine identities that poses a threat to the supremacy of hegemonic masculinity.

Racialized men and masculinity: How South Asian men do masculinity

Connell's (2005) contributions on hegemonic masculinity have been criticized for failing to explain how class and gender intersect (Hall, 2002). More importantly, theorizing on masculinity in this regard neglects an analysis on race and how it interacts with both social class and gender. Yim and Mahalingam (2006) argue that the field of cultural studies has largely studied masculinity from a Euro-centric male biased position. For present purposes, theorizing on South Asian male masculinity has been largely ignored in the broader literature or relegated to the general umbrella of Asian identity. Unfortunately, this negates key differences that might exist between the experiences of various racial groups within the Asian category.

Much of the research on South Asian men and masculinity centres on their emasculation. In a study on British Muslim men, Kalra (2009) notes the two discourses that apply to these individuals, one that emphasizes patriarchy and aggression, and another that focuses on effeminacy and academicism. George and Rashidi's (2014) research with domestic violence service providers and activists in the Greater Toronto Area is notable for their findings regarding the emasculated South Asian male. They suggest an emasculation process occurs for men who immigrate to Canada from India or Pakistan, where women have an easier time finding menial jobs and become primary breadwinners, causing the ego of some South Asian men to take a beating (George and Rashidi, 2014). Further, cultural studies that focus on men in India find that masculinity for South Asian men embodies the ability of men to protect family, as well as preserve the honour and purity of women and caste identity (Gilmore, 1990; Malhotra, 2002; Dube, 2001). In a series of documentaries, filmmaker and visual anthropologist Harjant Gill lists

heteronormative attributes necessary in the performance of masculinity for Punjabi men. These attributes include aggression, power, and an authoritative figure who protects and provides for his family and is given full control over their lives (Public Service Broadcasting Trust, 2011). Further, in a study on how masculinity is constructed in Punjabi cinema, Gill (2012) notes that the Punjabi male is typically expected to conform to idealized standards of the Jatt man. One such standard is the mobility of the male body and the transition from rural to urban spaces, or in other words, the move from rural Punjabi to urban cities abroad like Toronto or Vancouver, which is often interpreted as a rite of passage. In a study of rural men from Punjab India, a region that many gang-involved youth from BC descend from, Young Yim and Mahalingam (2006) found support that these men endorsed machismo or traditional masculinity beliefs. However, few studies have examined how South Asian masculinity may relate to gang offending since the research on South Asian gangs has been generally limited to how diasporic challenges South Asians face in host countries impact the performance of masculinity.

In one of the few studies on the way in which masculinity is exercised by some young South Asian men in BC, Frost (2010) highlights the concept of a “Surrey Jack”, a category of males that live and do masculinity differently. For these young men, who are more likely to get involved in gangs, masculinity acts as a form of counter-protest to the dominant hegemonic standard and is set apart based on their readiness to use violence, the manner in which females are treated as sexual conquests, and their dress and style. The ‘Surrey Jack’ stands in contrast to the ‘Brown boys’ who are more likely to align their masculinity to the hegemonic standard established by their white peers (Frost, 2010). Masculinity, as done by the “Brown boys” is displayed through sport (as opposed to physical violence) and will only act aggressive when they interpret being disrespected. (Frost, 2010). Frost (2010) concludes:

These boys' conceptions of their ethno-racial identities are bound up with their understandings of masculinity, how brown has evolved as an alternative way of "doing male" which not only contests a white hegemonic masculinity but confronts versions of Punjabi masculinity embodied by their fathers as well as the media's representation of the typical Indo-Canadian man or "Surrey Jack" which has emerged in Surrey as a form of subordinate protest masculinity" (p. 213).

This literature helps illuminate the manner in which Bindy Johal's legacy is framed in a more positive light for his form protest masculinity. In the proceeding sections it will become clear that two narratives seem to dominant the Bindy Johal legacy, one where he is perceived as a corrupting force, and another where he can be admired for breaking racial barriers on South Asian masculinity.

Creating a legend in Johal: hero or villain?

"One thing I decided is never ever to use his name or react to his name" – Johal as the contemporary folk devil

The way Bindy Johal is generally understood by some is best captured in this quote by retired gang enforcement officer John:

In the day [gangs] were very organized and there was a sense of, they kind of all got along, it was good for business not to fight and war and they were making lots of money. But when you get people like Bindy Johal and Raj Cheema and some of these guys come into the game, they're just complete killers. There was no honour among thieves as there was. It just turned into murder and mayhem.

Having joined the gang unit around the time of Bindy's criminal trial, Officer John witnessed first-hand the height of Johal's influence and power as gang leader. For Officer John, Bindy, along with his associates, were not 'ordinary' gang members, but something far worse and sinister. Johal is the type of individual who lacks any honour and is simply a murderer.

As a result of his behaviour, Johal becomes the centre of a moral crusade launched by moral entrepreneurs like Officer John, who problematize Johal as a 'new breed' of gangster. This new

breed is far more nefarious, with Johal taking centre stage and representing a threat to young boys who will similarly follow in his footsteps. This tendency to frame a threat as “new” or different and hence more dangerous by agents of social control is a common element of moral panics around crime (Hall et al., 1978). Further, Hall et al., (1978) notes how the police tend to amplify moral panics, something Officer John appears to do in his analysis of Johal. Thus, Bindy becomes the folk devil associated with the moral panic over South Asian gangs, lacking any positive attributes that other gang members from other groups might be afforded. Without any redeeming qualities, Johal is something to fear far after his death for the hold he has on boys who idealize him and want to be him.

Simran, a high school teacher who co-developed a Punjabi languages curriculum, perfectly captures the community’s sentiments towards Bindy Johal:

I also think that a lot of gang activity is glamorized online. Like I know our kids, like we're trying not to use the name Bindy Johal in our area. Every grade 8 kid is talking about him as he is some hero who defied the police and got killed and his interviews are online and people are looking it up and these grade 6,7 kids are always searching them up and bringing him up. So, one thing I decided is never ever to use his name or react to his name.

Simran’s comments highlight two important elements in how Bindy is considered a folk devil.

First, the media plays an important role in glorifying and glamorizing gangs and Bindy Johal in particular. Indeed, there is a general fear that the media, including “South Asian gangsta rap” and movies loosely based on Bindy Johal’s life (i.e. *Beeba Boys*), are glamorizing gangs and drawing youth to them (CBC, 2015). Thus, when placing culpability for why Bindy is admired and emulated by youth, the media often shares a heavy load of blame for glamorizing him.

Former gang member turned youth worker Paul elaborates on Simran’s concerns that Johal’s influence is reflected in the local culture, likening to the gangsta rap culture in the United States:

Well here in the West coast, we've had so many high-profile South Asians killed. So it's Tupac and Biggie Smalls analogy right? So, you know, everybody always wanted to follow in the footsteps of Tupac or Biggie, so you kind of have that mindset that mentality with Bindy Johal, and it didn't get any better when Bindy was killed.

“Gangsta rap” originated in Los Angeles in the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting gang violence in communities like Compton (Ludeke, 2006). In essence, this music captured the Black experience growing up in more volatile neighbourhoods and their relationship with police. Thus, “Gangsta rap” often becomes a scapegoat when explaining the violence in a community, even though the primary consumers of this music are White, middle-class boys (Ludeke, 2006). Drawing on the infamous murders of two rap superstars, and the generation of young boys who grew up listening to their music and adopting the culture, people like Paul try to make sense of why Bindy Johal is so appealing to boys in BC. Additionally, Paul argues that this “gangster rap” culture is reproduced in Western Canada by the Punjabi community and is largely responsible for the gang violence. Thus, Bindy Johal is a mythical figure akin to Biggie Smalls or Tupac Shakur (albeit without the musical talent) who is the figurehead of South Asian gang violence in the Greater Vancouver Area.

A second element to draw out of Simran’s comments is the symbolic significance of the name ‘Bindy Johal’ itself. For Simran, it is important his name is not uttered in her classroom and that if it is, she does not have a reaction to it. This is relevant because by naming the ‘folk devil’, Simran recognizes it may somehow give Bindy power and legitimacy in the eyes of the susceptible youth she sees in her classroom. Further, it is important for Simran to not display the apprehension she has when the name “Bindy” is evoked through a negative reaction. Symbolic interactionists have argued that names convey meaning and that people react to certain names in different names based on the meaning it has for them (Charmaz, 2006). As folk devils are meant to evoke a reaction and stir the anxieties of decent, law-abiding citizens, Simran believes it

necessary to adjust her behaviour to minimize the harm that Johal has already inflicted on the community. Thus, the name 'Bindy Johal' has a negative connotation and induces anxiety among people like Simran, who consciously tries to avoid using it.

Simran avoids talking about Bindy or even saying his name in her class. Yet others are not so reluctant, choosing to warn youth about the risks associated with admiring such a polarizing figure. In this sense, these authorities believe that Bindy's activities must be exposed and his legacy challenged. Harjit, a community activist, discusses how he deals with Bindy Johal when interacting with high school students he comes across in his advocacy work:

Bindy Johal, his name keeps coming up, and rightfully so, because a lot of youth that contact me are still aware of him. Like, I'll go to high schools, twenty years after the fucking guy has been dead, and they're like: *Hey, Bindy Johal, he's the man. He's the man. He put us on the map.* Bro, he didn't put you on the map, he put you on the pavement. You're going to live a lifestyle that's going to get you shot or killed.

According to Harjit, Bindy serves as an important cautionary tale for youth. Here, Harjit aims to deglamorize Johal's activities and folk hero status by relying on the fear of death or bodily injury in order to prevent youth from following in his footsteps. Harjit also differs from Simran in that he somewhat recognizes the relevancy of Bindy Johal's name, who he points out, should rightfully come up in any discourse related to the South Asian gang problem. For Harjit, it seems that saying the 'devil's name' and identifying him is an important step in delegitimizing him and countering the hold he may have on a generation of young boys.

Similarly, Officer Ranjit believes it is crucial to counter Bindy Johal's folk hero status by sending youth the message that following in his footsteps may lead to death:

We went through that initial iteration of these groups going back to the Dhosanj's and Bindy's and they became like cult like figures to these people. Like a lot of these kids want to emulate them and think that: *"oh yeah it's the girls. It's the power, it's the money."* And then we're always hammering the other aspect: *"where are they? They're all dead before they're 25. So if that's the lifestyle you choose, you know, it's great for a little bit to think your king, but where are you going to end up long term?"*

Officer Ranjit notes the influence Binda Johal has on boys today and the direct threat his legacy poses in terms of pushing South Asian youth into gangs and continuing the cycle of violence. Officer Ranjit counters Johal's status by appealing to the rationality of youth by deconstructing Johal's folk hero status and whether an early death is worth the short-term benefits. In other words, Johal's ability to achieve money, power, respect and women, ultimately comes at a cost, something that youth need to be fearful of prior to emulating Johal. In a program called the "Truth About Gangs" police officers use shock pictures of Binda Johal himself, naked but covered from the waist down, dead on a morgue table with the imagery of tubes and bloodstains as a strategic method to scare youth away from gangs (Bailey, 2008). Presenting pictures of Johal in schools across the Vancouver area is often met with some harsh reactions by some teachers but is justified as necessary by police as to not "sugar-coat" the costs of the lifestyle to students and where Johal ultimately ended up. This form of scare tactic becomes one method to dismantle the glamorous lifestyle Johal's legacy might produce.

Some respondents had personal stories and anecdotes about Binda Johal himself, noting how members of their family could have gone down the same troubling path. Simran makes this personal connection to Binda apparent:

Binda Johal went to the same high school my husband graduated from. He tried to recruit my husband in grade 12 and that's a story he has shared with me...back in the 80s and my husband went to the same school and he invited him, my husband, a lot of times to come to his house and [say]: *"I'm going to introduce to these people and you can make money."* And my husband didn't make those choices. He didn't really go.

For Simran, being able to draw on the experience of a family member gives her the ability to speak with some authority about the damaging impact Johal could have had on her husband. Had her husband made the "wrong" choices, Simran likely believes that his life, and by extension hers, would have likely unfolded quite differently. This ability to personalize the dangers posed by Binda and connect a recognizable face to him, cements Johal's 'folk devil' status. In this

sense, no one is safe from the harm that the folk devil can inflict. Anita, who runs a community safety program, also shares a personal connection Johal has with her family:

It's really interesting from what I've seen. My husband's family, three boys grew up. They're all professionals...yeah, a South Asian family. Three boys grew up. They're all professionals. They all went to University and my husband played football with Bindy Johal. Bindy's one of the most notorious South Asian gangsters and my husband was on the force and arrested Bindy and the Dhosanj brothers. Was on the SWAT team for [name of police service omitted]. Was involved heavily with the gangs and it was really interesting when Bindy Johal was taken out, these police officers were relieved because he was killing a lot of people.

Like Simran, Anita's husband grew up with Johal and could have likely ended up in a similar situation. However, Anita stresses how her husband's life as a law enforcement official stood diametrically opposed to Johal's life as a gangster. Here, Anita frames her husband as a hero, one who was able to respond through coercive force and deal with the menace posed by the folk devil. Further, Anita makes another important observation, which is that she speculates that Johal's death may have actually been positively received by police and something to be morbidly celebrated. In this circumstance, the slaying of the folk devil was seemingly believed to have ended gang violence. Nevertheless, as many respondents suggest, Bindy Johal is still someone to fear long after his death. Both Simran and Anita use personal examples to illustrate the scope of Johal's power. In this sense, respondents have first-hand knowledge of the threat Johal posed through the lived experiences of loved ones.

Others try to further solidify Johal's folk devil status by associating him, or others around him, with some of society's other evils. For example, community activist Harjit links Johal, along with his rivals the Dhosanj brothers, to terrorist organizations:

You might not know this but a lot of the original gangsters, like Bindy Johal and these guys, their fathers were involved at a certain level, or supporters of things like Babar Khalsa, the Khalistani movement...They were all for the 1984 retaliation attacks and stuff like that. We're talking about a lot of the original gangsters, the Dhosanj brothers were part of the United Sikh Federation or sorry the Sikh Youth Federation. So, these guys have

backgrounds in separatist kind of mentalities or their families at least did, or they're involved at a cultural or even a religious level.

Consequently, the folk devil becomes something far more dangerous and fearful when the scope of their deviance is broadened in such a manner or connected to a secondary criminal activity besides gang offending (i.e. terrorism). Indeed, the Khalistani movement, which advocates for a separate Sikh state in northern India, has had a long history in Canada (Razavy, 2006). The bombing of Air India Flight 182, which was alleged to have been planned and carried out in the Vancouver area by known Sikh separatists, claimed the lives of many Canadians. Thus, by associating gang violence and Bindy Johal with the general anxiety the community might have towards the Khalistani movement, Harjit works to amplifying the moral panic and truly solidify Johal's status as the folk devil. Johal is not just responsible for gang violence but in some ways, is now somewhat indirectly responsible for the problem the community has within its own dangerous religious and political movements.

These narratives paint a picture of Johal's legacy that is steeped in violence and has the capacity to serve as a corrupting force on a generation of boys who may be lured into gangs. The community's anxiety over Johal is evident in people like Simran who consciously avoids naming him for the power his name still holds. Nevertheless, despite framing Johal as a folk devil, one that the current cycle of gang violence the community is experiencing is somewhat responsible for, a counter-perception exists that is somewhat more positive and even more sympathetic.

*“[Bindy] becomes a f**king god in the imagination of the emasculated South Asian male” –*

Johal as a contemporary folk hero

The dominant narrative in the Lower Mainland of BC seems to be that Bindy Johal is a boogeyman-type figure that has a strong hold on boys in their community even after 20 years

since his passing. Yet despite Johal's legacy being framed in this way, there are a few people who view Bindy more positively or at the very least, more sympathetically. This includes a group of respondents who acknowledge the challenges Bindy had to overcome as a racialized minority male, as well as a generation of young men who view him as a 'heroic' figure. Former gang unit officer John, highlights the Bindy Johal effect:

I was a police officer in South East Vancouver, which is the South Slope, it's predominately a South East Asian community down there. So, for five years in uniform I worked in that area. I got to know a lot of the young kids I met as teenagers, evolved into unfortunately, that lifestyle. They kind of followed in the footsteps of Bindy. Bindy was actually famous, somewhat of a role model for a lot of the young South Asian kids unfortunately. They didn't go after positive role models. They saw him in the news every night and they saw him as some type of cult superstar or something, I don't know.

Officer John notes Johal's celebrity status as being a primary motivator for youth to get involved in gangs. As most youth like to emulate their favourite athletes, movie stars or pop singers, Johal has influenced a number of boys to join gangs. Like officer John, fellow gang officer Scott provides some more detail on Bindy Johal's folk hero status. Officer Scott describes Bindy Johal's entrance into the gang scene in the early 1990s:

We see this almost mythical evil figure in Bindy Johal. And Bindy Johal is engaged in the drug trafficking field and he's up against the Dhosanj brothers and there's this video clip that I have of Bindy challenging the Dhosanj brothers on the six o'clock news and the Dhosanj brothers getting back at him and then there's violence. So, what happens within the Indo-Canadian community, and this is still to the day to a certain extent, that Johal's got this sort of mythical following among young people, because he's this guy who basically he's not playing the typical if you will, traditional quiet, studious, law abiding Indo-Canadian young guy. He's breaking the mould and he's going to be the bad ass gangster. And so, kids really look at that and the glamorization and he got away with a murder.

For people like Officer John, Bindy Johal has developed a cult hero status and is a role model for a generation of young South Asian males. Johal has become a local cultural icon appearing in the mass media and has drawn their admiration. John imagines the "typical" South Asian male as quiet and studious, representing the traditional way South Asian males might be constructed by

dominant White narratives. This image ultimately serves to subordinate their masculinity and becomes a baseline for which South Asian men are judged and compared. Thus, Johal largely broke free from these stereotypical notions of the submissive South Asian male who is expected to study hard and be quiet, instead, choosing the gangster life. As Officer John notes: “even in the time of Bindy and such, every day in the paper they were kind of defaming South Asian males as being the bad boy.” Therefore, it seems Bindy Johal was able to transform the way South Asian males would be seen by the community in general or through media representations. South Asians now became “risky”, “dangerous” or “bad”, a narrative that some may have embraced as it is more reaffirming of their masculinity.

What makes Johal be appealing to youth today? Former gang member Diljit, who knew Bindy Johal personally, explains his appeal to young men today:

So Bindy comes along and he's fucking ripped with fucking muscles. He's got 40 fucking pounds of gold around his fucking neck. He's just shot three fucking people and he's laughing about it on fucking TV...It's an emasculated male driving around in a Corvette.... Forty chicks lining up at a bar to suck his [redacted]. "*Hey take a number. Take a number, girls*". Guy turns into a fucking legend. In terms of race, it's really interesting in terms of race relations how these things...how does this work? And it fucking made a difference. Fucking white folks stopped fucking around with fucking East Indians after that. They we're like "okay maybe I'll just keep my mouth shut next time I'm thinking of calling you a Hindoo". When we sit down and think about race relations in this country and our community, shit we look at people like fucking Bindy and say "*hey. Did he do something for our community?*" Did he? Like moralism aside, put the ethical, moral shit, let's just deal with power relations. And so, when you look at South Asian young men today, this guy becomes fucking icon. He becomes a fucking god in the imagination of the emasculated South Asian male. All of a sudden, they're like "*oh right. We can fucking do this.*"

There is a lot to unpack with Diljit's observations but there are two major elements to draw out.

First, Diljit points to a larger problem associated with masculinity for racialized men. Indeed, Asian and South Asian men in particular have been constructed as less masculine under a hegemonic system where White males are considered dominant (Shek, 2007). However, Asian male sexuality research is mostly derived from the experiences of gay and bisexual men and

racist sexual partner preferences (Callander et al., 2015). Nevertheless, Bindy Johal was able to adopt a hyper-masculine personality and use violence in order to benefit from and claim a stake among the masculine hierarchy that would typically put him, and others like him, in a subordinate position. Bindy Johal's masculinity is affirmed by not only how he acts but through significant changes to the body and appearance. Respondents note how Bindy transformed his body from his thinner beginnings as a young man to one that was considerably more muscular and had a particular dress and style that is admired by others.

Thus, as the folk devil has a set of symbols associated with him in dress and style, Johal's muscular physique and gold jewelry become symbols for a generation of young South Asian men who view him as a hero, representing what South Asian masculinity should look like. Further, while quite crude in his language, Diljit comments about Johal's sexual exploits, and his ability to attract a large number of female sexual partners, stands in contrast to another way South Asian men might be emasculated. Precisely, some note how South Asian men might be desexualised, considered less sexually desirable or even feminine (see Balaji, 2012). Thus, as an ideal type, a hypermasculine personality requires an overly sexualized component where women are treated as sexual conquests, allowing subordinated South Asian males to break free from damaging stereotypes typically attached to their sexuality.

This could explain Johal's massive appeal to young South Asian men who may struggle with their masculine identity and aligns with Frost's ideas (2010) that South Asian males in Canada have to do masculinity differently. For Bindy, masculinity was a form of counter-protest to the dominant hegemonic standard that he could not meet due to his working-class, minority background. Masculinity for Johal included a readiness to use violence, a hyper sexual personality through numerous sexual partners, and a particular dress and style that would be imitated by young South Asian males for decades to come.

A second element to draw from Diljit's observation is that Bindy Johal's appeal may largely stem for his ability to challenge a society perceived as racist. Diljit and Johal were raised during the same time period and under similar social and economic conditions, having both experienced challenges associated with racism. Diljit notes how Johal would shut down racists who had bullied boys like them and called them racial slurs, such as "Hindoo" a regional derogatory term. The term "Hindoo" was used to characterize a large number of mostly Sikh and Pakistani men who migrated to North America for work in the 19th and 20th centuries. As Thangaraj (2012) notes: "anti-miscegenation laws and public codes forced these men to form bachelor communities; these 'Hindoos' were read as perverse, licentious subjects unsuitable for citizenship." Thus, the slur "Hindoo" was carried decades over to continue the tradition of demasculinizing South Asian men. Johal's folk hero image was predicated on his ability to fight back against the domineering racism at the time.

Anju, who volunteers with several South Asian communities makes a similar connection between Johal and his response against bullying and racism:

So, I think there's a big history of that and Bindy Johal, you know, was often excluded in clubs, while White people were allowed in. And so, he felt he needed, or others also of his caliber needed the bling, bling to gain more recognition. So, there is the racism that is manifested through bullying. There is the lack of recognition because of race, the exclusion and then the need to have this bling, bling compensates for that inferiority that's socially constructed around South Asian.

Anju elaborates on much of what Diljit discusses as to how racism may have contributed to Johal's gang lifestyle. For Anju, being excluded from the community constitutes a form of bullying, which likely pushed South Asian men like Bindy Johal to gangs as a collective response in the first place and subsequently led to their involvement in the drug trade.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that South Asians still experience exclusion from businesses in the Vancouver area and that this "bullying" likely persists. Most notably, B.C.

Human Rights Tribunal awarded three South Asians \$10,000 each for successfully being able to show they had been denied service on the basis of race, colour, and ancestry (Smith, 2013).

These complainants noted the differential treatment between Caucasian customers and themselves. Based on Anju and Diljit's remarks, it seems Johal's legacy is cemented in his ability to overcome some racial barriers that remain a common part of the South Asian experience today. Further, like Diljit, Anju mentions how gold and jewellery became symbols of status for Johal and solidified his position, yet she believes that the jewellery (characterized as bling, bling) worked to compensate for the social exclusion he experienced. Nevertheless, Johal's continuing appeal for some likely stems for his ability in penetrating spaces that South Asians are typically excluded from.

Some respondents suggest that Johal was the victim of bullying. Ajit, who represents a South Asian gang awareness organization, comments on what motivates young people, including Johal himself, to join a gang:

Some of them don't apply themselves very well. Some of them have learning problems. People like Bindy Johal, he had a learning problem. He was a failure at school. Kids were teasing him. So that's why he became a gangster.

For Ajit, Johal's learning problems and the bullying it produced is the reason he became a gangster. Therefore, bullying, discrimination and social exclusion are described as major motivators behind Johal's turn to crime according to respondents. Simran notes other challenges Bindy experienced:

As I talked about, why Bindy Johal got into gangs, same story. Single mother, never home, worked at a hospital with my mother in law and basically wasn't accepted. He had physical [challenges]...he was a small kid who basically wanted to gain some weight since people used to pick on him. He didn't have very good language, English language skills.

Thus, youth who may be subject to similar bullying, exclusion or feel racially discriminated against might view Johal's legacy more favourably or at the very least, be sympathetic to him.

Lena, a secondary school teacher also elaborates on Bindy's appeal to the school boys she comes into contact with and ties several ideas together:

They want to be known as somebody. They want to be seen as someone that is important right? ... So that sense of racism, they want to escape that and just be known, and wow Bindy Johal is important. And I bring out the name Bindy Johal is one of these lions, right? Legends in the 80s that kids know. They all know that person and they might not like what he did but they point to the fact that everybody knows his name. That he's still considered, right? He put the South Asian population on the map in a different way and I think some of the things Bindy Johal said was about racism, it was about this idea of taking back the power. I completely disagree. I usually tear apart that argument in class but it's interesting to note that that does matter to some of our students. That they do want to be known as something other than just what the larger society sees them as.

The rise of Bindy appears to parallel the experiences of African Americans and the growth of oppositional "gangster rap" where disenfranchised young men learned the message of "taking back the power" and standing up to racist institutions like the police (Lusane, 1993). Lena mentions how the city of Surrey is typically viewed negatively by others and that South Asian students have expressed how they feel discriminated against or treated differently because of the community they live in. Lena recognizes that Johal's criminality is not lost among his admirers, but suggests that people are willing to overlook his behaviour because he became a part of the local cultural zeitgeist.

"looking at our past, looking at positive role models" – The reaction to and combating the folk devil

Cohen would assume that the reaction to folk devils like Bindy Johal is as important as the threat they pose, and that this reaction is often disproportionate to the actual level of harm they inflict. If the underlying fear is that youth are going to emulate him by joining gangs, the reaction must be to essentially dismantle Johal's legacy and perceived heroic status among youth. Indeed, two educational school-based programs, in part, achieve the very purpose of

deglamourizing Bindy Johal. Safe Schools representative Jaspal provides some context behind the justification for such programing:

You come out to Surrey and every kid will know who Bindy Johal is, even though the young fellow died in 98. He died in 98, the Dhosanj brothers died shortly before him. So, every brown cat knows more about Bindy Johal than they do about Ujjal Dosanjh, federal health minister. Ujjal Dosanjh, for a short time was a Premier. How about Tara Singh Har, does anybody know him? Harjit Sajjan, how come you guys don't know these cats?

According to Jaspal, all youth in his community know Bindy Johal, but few can identify other predominate South Asian figures who have made more positive contributions in their community. These figures include former and current politicians and Sikh activists and others in the areas of journalism, sports, and the arts. Two school-based initiatives are used to counter the negative “Bindy effect”, a condition where he is viewed as a hero to some youth, and replace him with more positive “heroes” and mentor figures to admire instead. These school-based initiatives include a Punjabi languages course and a mentorship program with an emphasis on learning about Sikh and South Asian pioneers from fellow youth mentor. The Punjabi language course is offered in one school district and was initially launched in a “problem” inner-city school, and has many different components to its curriculum. Most notably, the course brings in guest speakers from a variety of professional backgrounds who should fill the role as mentor due to their positive contributions in the community.

The purpose of the course is simple: teacher Simran believes that many students have lost something that can be found in the classroom, which is a connection to their heritage and culture. Simran helped launch this course because she felt there was a need to address the problematic path she felt boys in her school, in particular, were headed. Simran envisions the course as an opportunity to connect youth with influential South Asians in the community, as opposed to them clinging onto the legacy of a dead gangster. Rather than becoming the next Bindy Johals, Simran brings in positive South Asian role models, like athletes, media personnel,

political figures, law enforcement, and other individuals she refers to as pioneers in the community. These guests do workshops and other activities with students to try to motivate them towards a positive and gang-free path among other course objectives. Further, these role models may help alleviate some of the alienation or isolation some youth might have by serving as positive role models and resources for youth to turn to. Here Simran explains the justification for the program:

So, these programs are basically the people on the other side that are trying to pull these kids backwards in our direction and I'm seeing that they are effective because these kids now have a different perspective. They can ask questions... They only look at the lifestyle of the gangster, Bindy Johal, he made this much money. He drove a nice car. Well we bring in the dialogue from, okay where is he now? What happened? Consequential, what happens when you make these choices? What happens to the family? What happens to, you know, some gangsters have kids that are never going to see their fathers? So, we bring that aspect through these programs and we also present that there's other ways of making money and still be a good character person and be a good contributor to the community.

For Simran, these Sikh or South Asian pioneers play an important role in potentially pushing youth in a particular direction by encouraging them to make a positive contribution in their community. These people become the ones to emulate as they embody success and other prosocial features that Bindy Johal could never offer. Further, Simran believes it is important to counter the materialistic appeal gangs might have on some youth by pointing to Johal's murder and whether pursuing wealth as he did is ultimately worth an early death. For Simran, if these youth want to be successful, there is no need to emulate Johal as wealth can be acquired through more traditional ways South Asians have achieved success as immigrants (i.e. studying and working hard), thus conforming to their 'model minority' status. According to Simran, Johal's legacy is typically associated with wealth and the course could offer solutions on better ways to earn money while leaving a positive legacy behind. Nevertheless, this perspective does not capture the appeal Johal has as a heroic figure by some for his perceived ability to stand up to a racist society and the barriers he may have broken on South Asian masculinity. That aspect of

Johal's appeal may be hard to erase. Therefore, the reaction to Bindy Johal in this case may not address one of the core components of his legacy that youth might find quite appealing.

The Punjabi languages course is not the only way the community has reacted to Bindy Johal's legacy; mentorship programs also achieve the purpose of erasing his 'heroic' appeal to some degree. Simran and her colleague Lena have also been influential in developing and implementing a mentorship program through schools.

It's usually like a two-month program like in April, May...basically the classes that are selected are the kids that have been identified by the [removed] School district, by the teachers, we have RCMP liaisons as well, that identified the kids that they want to work with. So it's not just the kids themselves, it's the class...and there's a physical component but then there's also a learning component very much about identity, respect and last year it was focused on the South Asian component through a book called the *Hundred Year Journey*, which talked about South Asian pioneers ...So same idea but looking at our past, looking at positive role models, especially through a cultural lens and seeing how the kids can kind of see that and building of community. So, it's all about community, it's all about identity, it's all about culture, kind of all wrapped up to one, but it's not just a leadership initiative. The backbone of it is to target these at-risk youth that we don't want them to see go down that path.

This mentorship programs adopts a Sikh-centred curriculum which focuses on the contribution of Sikh pioneers in Canada over the last century. In some ways, this program complements the languages course. Indeed, these pioneers are the opposite of Johal and are meant to instil cultural pride among youth and connect them with older youth who adopt a leadership role. The program is delivered to a selection of students in grades 11 and 12 who are taught and trained under this Sikh pioneer curriculum, based on a book that details the contributions of Sikh Pioneers in Canada. These students in turn teach this material to younger students in feeder elementary schools.

For Cohen's (2011) initial theory, the reaction to the folk devil is just as important as the actual source of the anxiety but is often disproportionate to the genuine threat posed by the source of the panic. In this case, one could assume that any programing that is aimed at

deglamorizing Bindy Johal would constitute an overreaction or be classified as excessive. Indeed, this is certainly the case with police-school partnerships that results in programing where pictures of Bindy Johal's dead body are used to scare students away from gangs. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, Cohen adjusts his theory by replacing the concept of "moral panic" with that of a "generalized moral stance", a position that is less volatile, more predictable and stems from a seamless web of social anxieties in society (Cohen, 2011). However, what is not fully understood is the relationship between a "generalized moral stance" and that of the "folk devil".

This leaves several important questions unanswered, most notably: if a generalized moral stance is no longer temporary but more of a subtle fixture that plays on the general anxieties of the public, are the reactions to folk devils then also somewhat less exaggerated or amplified? This would explain why a figure like Bindy Johal, who has been dead for over twenty years, remains on the public's consciousness for as long as he has, stirring their fears that young men are following in his footsteps and joining gangs. The negative generalized moral stance that Bindy tends to evoke among some would mean that any reaction to him, in an attempt to deglamorize his legacy, does not necessarily have to be considered disproportionate to the actual harm Johal presents. In other words, since moral panics today are not as volatile, presumably any responses to them could also not be necessarily considered an overreaction because these threats no longer require an immediate response. Instead, reactions to folk devils today may be more thought out and have more long-term goals designed to ease the prolonged anxieties they produce.

This seems to be the case with the mentorship and Punjabi languages course, which are hard to classify as an overreaction to a fear that Johal is seducing young South Asian boys into gangs. In fact, it is difficult to determine if these programs are created solely in response to Bindy, or if it is just a small motivator behind a complicated strategy to reduce gang involvement

in general. Since I argue that the reaction to a generalized moral panic no longer needs to be considered an exaggeration since the very nature of panics have changed, becoming more generalized and steeped in society's on-going anxieties over issues such as crime and gang violence, the educational programs are viewed as reasonable, long-term solutions in reducing South Asian gang involvement. Nevertheless, these programs are inspired by a need to reduce Johal's heroic status, elevate his "devilish" identity, and encourage youth to adopt more positive role models to idolize, and to do so in what are accepted as reasonable practices like mentorship or through classroom learning.

Bindy Johal: A complicated legacy

From the interview participants it seems Bindy Johal's legacy is framed in two distinct ways. On the one hand he is viewed by some as a contemporary folk devil, a figure that has inflicted great harm in his criminal activities and has sullied the reputation of the South Asian community in Western Canada. For these individuals, Johal's legacy remains harmful long after his death as his gangster status has been glamorized by the media and seduced a generation of young South Asian males to follow in his footsteps. This perception stands in contrast to one that is a bit more sympathetic to Johal, which does not ignore his criminal activity, but finds a way to draw out any "good" that he has done for the South Asian community. Precisely, these individuals believe Johal was able to overcome racial barriers that plagued working-class South Asian males in the Metro Vancouver area during the 1980s. By exerting an exaggerated hypermasculine personality, one where displays of aggression and hypersexuality, along with developing a muscular physique, driving nice cars and wearing gold, became symbols of the newly emancipated South Asian male, free from his subordinate position among the masculine hierarchy. Consequently, some young men view Bindy as a hero for this very reason.

Thus, the way in which Johal's legacy is framed appears to be clearly divided by the category of respondent and contingent on the professional background of the research subject. For example, individuals who would be classified as agents of social control, those want youth to conform to societal pro-social norms and represent the interests of the state (which in this study includes police officers and school officials) tend to view Johal as a contemporary folk devil figure. However, those who are involved in more community-based programming adopt a more liberal and sympathetic view towards Johal. Therefore, a clear pattern emerges among the category of respondents.

As a folk devil, Johal conforms to Cohen's definition of what constitutes a moral panic, since he represents a person who is defined as a threat to societal values and interests, which in this case is the seductive threat he poses to South Asian youth who join gangs because of him. Johal serves as that targeted enemy who represents the dark part of society, of whom Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) classify as evil personified. Thus, Johal, who has dominated the local media, from news reports, to movies and local "gangsta rap", has developed a level of notoriety in the community, making him an easy and suitable target to pin gang violence on and deemed an existential threat to the community's moral functioning. However, even Cohen recognized that contemporary moral panics have changed but did not explain how our reactions to folk devils might also differ under this newly conceptualized "generalized moral stance". This could explain why the anxiety Johal evokes among some has not dissipated long after his death as the fear over gang violence has persisted for the past twenty years.

Additionally, traditional moral panic analyses suggest that a consensus exists as to who or what constitutes a threat. This would mean that the general belief in the lower Mainland of BC is that Johal's legacy is one of great harm. However, as this analysis shows, no such consensus exists according to how Johal's legacy should be framed. As Gardner (2008) notes, a societal

reaction to individuals and situations is no longer uniform and that contemporary moral panics are somewhat counterbalanced by alternative and competing reactions. Here, some authorities might challenge claims made by those alarmists who view Johal as a threat to young men. People like former gang member Diljit note the positive aspects of Bindy Johal's legacy which is farmed in relation to challenges on race and masculinity South Asian males are commonly burdened with.

Therefore, Johal's legacy is complicated because he does not fall perfectly into the category of hero or villain. As noted by Klapp (1954), heroes are often characterized as leaders, champions, and protectors, while villains tend to be viewed as criminals, cheats or traitors. In some ways, Johal is able to penetrate both categories depending on an individual's perception of him. Views of Johal as a more sympathetic or even as a heroic figure relates to the body of literature that concentrates on the idolization of criminals or deviants in society. Related to Duncan's (1991) analysis, Bindy Johal has achieved a cult or folk hero status for his symbolic resistance to perceived racial injustices that have befallen countless South Asian men before and after him. Thus, Johal's gang crimes are often framed as the results of an injustice predating his involvement in gangs. This idea is suggested by Anju:

Well it starts off with the bullying. Many of the South Asians gangs started because of racism. That they were beaten up, young Sikh boys that had their patkas [Sikh turban for young males], a 13-year-old would be kicked by a 17-year-old. Total humiliation and so Sikhs wanted to, or South Asians primarily Sikhs, wanted to actually defend themselves and they got together. Initially they were gangs to protect themselves and then you get into illegal drugs. So, I think there's a big history of that and Bindy Johal.

According to Anju, Johal's involvement in gangs was the result of racial bullying that he, and many other South Asians (with Sikhs in particular) experienced and used gangs as a means to defend themselves. Anju believes that the criminal components of the gangs, such as drug offenses, came after, suggesting the need for gangs would not exist if bullying was not a factor in

the first place. Anju's account sheds light as to how a criminal could still be admired. When Johal's actions are viewed as being born out of racial injustices, it becomes easier to romanticize his actions as being somewhat noble or even heroic and for the "greater good" of a racialized community. However, for some, Johal's actions are deemed too damaging and harmful to ever view positively. This aligns with the general argument that morally ambiguous gray area exists as to which criminals might be perceived.

While it appears that these two competing narratives exist independent of one and another, they might actually share an important relationship. Essentially, the construction of Johal as the "villain" or folk devil associated with South Asian gang violence overlooks what could likely be a more complicated crisis involving masculinity. In this sense, reacting to Johal, a specific face to pin South Asian gang violence on, is much easier than tackling a more pervasive problem that South Asian young boys and men might be experiencing as racialized minorities. As Johal is perceived by some to reaffirm South Asian masculinity, which is typically relegated to a subordinate status, this aspect of his appeal is much harder to diminish to a generation of boys who might be experiencing similar racial discrimination and other perceived threats to their masculinity on account of their minority status. Further, it is difficult to ascertain whether current programming, as a reaction to Johal, tackles this very crisis of masculinity.

This connection between a "manufactured crisis" trumping a very real and more systemic one forms the basis of Hall et al., (1978) analysis. For Hall et al., (1978), a moral panic surrounding a new wave of muggings was manufactured by elites and agents of social control to maintain the hegemonic economic and social order at a more turbulent time. Precisely, rather than the public focusing on the recession, a successful campaign was launched that targeted Black youth as the folk devils associated with a perceived wave of violent muggings that gripped

Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. This “crisis” ultimately worked to divert the public’s attention away from the economic problems of the time.

Under a more nuanced interpretation of Hall’s et al., (1978) main arguments, it is evident that Johal similarly serves as a scapegoat that can easily be blamed for young South Asian men joining gangs. However, authorities who frame Johal as a folk devil might be doing so less purposefully than what Hall et al., (1978) suggests occurs in his analysis of muggings. In other words, the moral panic surrounding Johal’s long-lasting appeal might not be a manufactured crisis used to divert the public’s attention, but an organically developed crisis that misplaces blame for gang involvement on the so-called head of the South Asian gang problem. Nevertheless, the perception that Johal is responsible for luring South Asian youth to gangs inadvertently conceals a much a greater crisis surrounding masculinity, something Johal ultimately stood to reclaim when it was threatened. Thus, in this case, South Asian masculinity serves as the overarching crisis that is being unnoticed by some authorities in favour of an explanation for gang involvement that squarely lands at the feet of a dead gangster, albeit done in a much less malicious and calculated way by authorities than how Hall et al., (1978) originally envisioned it.

Conclusion

The Bindy Johal story is remarkable for its Hollywood-like plot twists and intrigue, which chronicles the rise of a working-class Punjabi boy in BC to the upper echelons of the Vancouver drug trade. Consequently, it is not surprising that Johal’s legacy still resonates in Western Canada where two discourses have shaped his legacy. One perspective recognizes the moral ambiguity that surrounds Johal but frames his legacy as some sympathetic hero, or more adeptly an “anti-hero”, who stood up to a racist system that subordinated the masculinity of

South Asian males. The other perspective has a more negative reaction to Johal, viewing him as a folk devil in the classic sense established by theorists like Cohen. These individuals believe Johal continues to corrupt young South Asian males, who have largely romanticized his legacy and adopted his lifestyle, continuing the cycle of gang violence they are witnessing in their communities. The reaction to Johal's legacy then is to deglamorizing his image by using positive South Asian role models and "pioneers" to stir youth towards admiring heroes that have legacies not steeped in gang violence and criminality. The Punjabi languages courses and mentorship programs achieve this very purpose and are offered to students in schools where South Asian gang involvement is deemed a 'problem'.

While it appears that Bindy Johal is suitable actor to fill the role of the 'folk devil', one that can easily be associated with South Asian gang involvement, any contemporary moral panic analysis must be cognizant of the manner in which such panics manifest themselves today. This explains why there is no consensus on his legacy and a moral gray area exists. Precisely, alarmists, who argue that children are being led down the same dark path as Johal through the glamorization of his life, are met with counter-claim makers who attempt to recognize this appeal as the result of systemic challenges facing young brown males who can relate to Johal's struggles. Further, the fear over Johal as some boogeyman is characteristic of a generalized moral stance towards gang violence and offending. As the fear is not generated by erratic and volatile bursts of panic that call for immediate action, which are often characterized as an overreaction, but rather, the fear remains a part of the community's conscious and general anxiety over gang crime for a more sustained period of time.

This study makes an important contribution to the moral panic literature. While research on folk devils is plentiful, few studies have examined how one particular person can serve that role, especially someone like Bindy Johal who has emerged a key figure in the history of South

Asian gang offending in Canada. In fact, despite his reputation in local media or the community in general, Johal has received very little attention in the rest of Canada and has not been the focus of much research. This study attempts to remedy this gap by understanding the various ways in which he might be perceived, and thus reacted upon. In this sense, programing that attempts to remove Johal's appeal to vulnerable youth are often best understood in the context of general anxieties a community has over crimes such as gang violence.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Summary of Chapters

This dissertation is a collection of three interrelated articles on the issue of South Asian gang involvement in western Canada. Below is a breakdown of each article including the main research question(s), key arguments, and some noteworthy findings.

Chapter 2 - Re-examining the issue of “culture” as a risk factor for South Asian gang involvement in Western Canada

Chapter one explores how community stakeholders, including the police, gang support workers, educators and other authority figures, conceptualize risk and risk factors for South Asian gang involvement. The emphasis here is not to explain *why* South Asian youth join gangs, but rather to focus on how respondents imagine and problematize this demographic and their involvement in gangs more generally. In drawing attention to this phenomenon, the discussion illuminates how respondents, as experts and governing agents, produce the problem they are enlisted to govern. Central to how they understand South Asian gangs is the notion of ‘culture.’ My interviewees frequently relied on culture as an explanation for why South Asian boys and men felt the need to participate in gangs.

A number of my respondents pathologized South Asian “culture” as risky. This aligns with a common criticism levied against subcultural theories for their tendency to further marginalize racialized minorities and rely on racist tropes of some groups as being culturally prone to deviance. Second, these accounts conflate the relationship between “culture” and “structure”. Yet this narrative relating to South Asian “culture” as being naturally criminal appears to be regional in the sense that it is largely confined to BC.

South Asian gang involvement has largely been understood under the umbrella of materialism and a particular “gold collar lifestyle”. This perspective suggests that South Asian

boys, who are typically bestowed the title of “prince” on account of being the preferred sex in some more patriarchally structured South Asian and Punjabi households, are socialized at an early age by their parents to pursue a materialistic lifestyle. With their deviance overlooked or even supported, boys are often showered with expensive clothes, shoes, electronics, and cars and are then expected to continue this lifestyle. This is problematic as legitimate means to achieve that wealth, such as education and hard work, are often not emphasized by parents to sons. Gang involvement then is conceptualized a delinquent solution to achieving that desired wealth that is pushed. In essence, respondents understand South Asian “culture” as inherently criminal or deviant on account of its highly materialistic orientation.

Along with the cultural explanation of South Asian gang involvement are structural factors that are also imagined as influential. Racism and masculinity, a theme later examined in further detail in the fourth chapter of this volume, are constructed as legitimate risk factors for gang involvement. Particularly, some attribute gang involvement as a response to racism experienced by marginalized boys. This racism is believed to be more influential in the past in Vancouver during the 1980s and 1990s, but is also considered relevant by some today in more racially divided communities. Racism as a risk factor relates to the idea that South Asian gang violence is the response to feelings of emasculation and subordination some racialized men experience. Another structural factor that is commonly addressed stems from the racialized division of labour and how South Asian men have largely adopted careers in the long-haul trucking industry. In this case, fathers working long-hours on the road are believed to fail at parenting on account of not being able to spend quality time or monitoring the behaviour of sons. These structural factors share an important relationship with cultural factors that needs to be further examined, a common criticism of the subcultural perspective found in the literature.

Chapter 3 - Governing South Asian gang involvement in Western Canada: Community as a means for both exclusion and inclusion

South Asian gang involvement, and gangs in general, appears to be conceptualized as a significant problem in Lower Mainland BC. Consequently, a comprehensive approach in response has been initiated by community actors with the support of officials such as the police. Two examples of responses are provided that illustrate how ‘community’ is mobilized as a mechanism for inclusion and exclusion. While the first relies on a racialized image of an ‘ideal’ patron to justify the exclusion of suspected gang members and other socially undesirable people, the other emphasizes their inclusion through ethno-specific initiatives and programs designed to encourage feelings of belonging. The specific exclusionary and inclusionary practices reflect the multiple and contradictory logics of governance deployed to manage South Asian gangs in B.C.

First, a controversial bar ejection program (BRE) allows police to remove gang members, their associates, and other types of offenders, from bars, restaurants, and nightclubs that have signed contractual agreements with the police to participate. This program has been deemed discriminatory for racially profiling South Asian patrons. Premised on the objective to reduce gang violence in places that serve alcohol, BRE is a public safety initiative that makes use of local municipal bylaws and informal policy and agreements to eliminate certain undesirable people from participating in meaningful social activity. Thus, at its core, the BRE reflects an exclusionary measure that isolates “bad people” from the public sphere.

These exclusionary practices operate in tandem with measures that have contradictory objectives and outcomes. Precisely, certain community-based initiatives advocate for the inclusion of gang members or at-risk populations through programming that brings them back mainstream society. For example, several community organizations and agencies work exclusively with South Asian populations to provide programming such as mentorship,

recreational opportunities, and counselling. These practices are meant to integrate these individuals and turn them into responsible citizens, which is only achieved if they feel included and given opportunities to participate in meaningful social activity. Thus, at its core, inclusionary practices such as these stand diametrically opposed to practices like BRE that intend to exclude these very people from society. Under programs like BRE, those involved or affiliated with gangs are “undesirables” or “lost causes”, that are to be excluded from social space, while under inclusionary gang strategies, these individuals might need “saving” and are to be included in society.

To better understand these contradictory governing logics, I rely on Foucauldian analysis of power and governance to shed light on their co-existence. Mainly, the governance of South Asian gang involvement involves a complex assemblage of various forms of power, from more historic forms of police regulation and pastoral power, to contemporary neoliberal practices that emphasize governing through the community. While inclusionary practices that are operated in the community reflect contemporary neoliberal governance through the community, exclusionary practices under BRE do so also. Indeed, the BRE program appears to be an exercise of police regulation, where public space (i.e. private businesses) is managed to maintain the moral functioning of society. However, rather than be a true reflection of an antiquated form of power, contemporary police regulation at its core still adheres to neoliberal principles of self-government. Precisely, through agreements, business owners play a significant role in managing the gang problem on their own. The state, which limits direct intervention here, mobilizes and fosters the community itself so that civil society remains autonomous, reinvigorating police regulation to support neoliberal aims. Therefore, these multiple logics of governance allow both exclusion and inclusion to occur as long as they are mobilized through neoliberal imaginings of community.

Chapter 4 – The Creation of a local legend: Bindy Johal and the duelling legacies of folk devil and sympathetic hero

This article examines the social construction of a legacy, in particular the creation of a folk devil, and the effects of this legend on the phenomenon of South Asian gang involvement. The story of Bindy Johal lies at the heart of this analysis. Johal is a controversial figure in BC's South Asian community due to his legendary status derived from his rise as a troubled teenager to one of the most notorious and deadly gangsters in Vancouver history. Nearly twenty years since his death, Johal's name still evokes a wide range of reactions from the public. The research questions central to this analysis are: how has Johal been conceptualized by authorities and how have these conceptualizations influenced practices of governing others?

The manner in which Johal's legacy has been constructed points to two divergent narratives. First, Johal's name is anxiety inducing to many for his ability to still draw young South Asian men to gangs. This legacy views Johal as a bogeyman and someone to fear whose memory should be erased from susceptible boys who want to emulate him and his lifestyle to this day. Thus, Johal is linked to the traditional concept of a folk devil, one that stirs a community's anxiety over the moral panic surrounding gang violence. This image of Johal has produced several different reactions, including the reluctance over using his name or blaming him for some other problems that exist in the South Asian community other than gangs. Further, the local Punjabi media, such as music videos, are perceived to glamorize Johal's gang lifestyle. More importantly however, the reaction to Johal specifically has resulted in two school-based programs that aim to diminish his appeal among youth by introducing mentor figures and other role models that should replace Johal.

However, this legacy competes with a second one that does not necessarily view him as a monster, but rather views Johal as a sympathetic anti-hero. This construction of his legend is

based on the notion that Johal was able to reclaim a position on a hegemonic masculine hierarchy that typically eluded South Asian males due to factors such as racism. This battle to overcome a subordinate masculine status was achieved through the use of violence, overt sexual prowess, and a physical appearance, dress and style that allowed Johal, as well as other South Asian men who idealized him, to do masculinity differently. This romanticised version of Johal earns a level of admiration even long after his death.

I argue that these dueling legacies do not operate in isolation but share an important relationship. The moral panic over Bindy Johal as the folk devil associated with the gang violence in BC obscures a far greater crisis captured in the second perspective Johal seems to evoke. Precisely, a crisis over South Asian masculinity seems to be replaced in favour of a panic that is far easier to react to. Mainly, by viewing Johal as a boogeyman, and initiating programming accordingly, the crisis young South Asian men might be experiencing relating to masculinity is overlooked. This line of thinking is similar to the analysis presented by Hall et al., (1978) on the policing of crises.

Synthesis of arguments

This dissertation examines the involvement of South Asian youth and young adults, primarily males, who are getting involved in gang violence in many parts of the Lower Mainland BC. These three standalone articles advance the argument that South Asian gang involvement in Western Canada is largely perceived and responded through the lens of culture. In other words, a cultural milieu that exists that is distinct to this region and contains its own set of explanations, collection of folk devils/heroes, and responses to gang involvement that is unique. Police officer Surjit discusses how this problem appears to be a local one:

I was chatting about the exact thing with a friend of mine and I'm like why is that I don't hear the same issue in anywhere else? Like gangs yes, Toronto gangs, we all know what's

going on. But the South Asian community, why don't I hear the same stories from Brampton or Toronto or anywhere else? Why is it concentrated in lower Mainland?

For Officer Surjit, the problem does not seem to be replicated elsewhere in communities that have large South Asian populations. Thus, the gang phenomenon examined is unique to BC or at least perceived that way by stakeholders. For example, while culture has been used to explain gang offending for decades, issues like the “gold collar lifestyle”, to my knowledge, have not been used to explain the gang offending of other racialized minority groups, particularly African Americans. Indeed, Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) use culture to explain violence in African American communities and suggest that child rearing and social conditioning produces values and orientations that are favourable to violent crime. Anderson (1999) provides a more contemporary cultural analysis by arguing that gang violence amongst African American men in urban communities is the by-product of economic strain as well as a failure to adopt “middle-class values”. Instead, middle-class values are replaced with the “code of the street”, a distinct value set that is conducive to the interpersonal use of violence. To date, the culture of violence thesis has not been extended to analyze gang violence within South Asian communities.

Yet amongst my research participants, ‘culture’ is not only used as an explanatory risk factor for South Asian gang offending, but is also used as a descriptor to characterize a distinct “gang culture” that has emerged in that region, one that has a rich history in the BC. For example, notorious gangsters like Bindy Johal or the Dosanjh brothers remain these distinctly local legends that evoke a wide range of emotions among the local population. Beyond that region however, many are not familiar with these names or do not elicit as much anxiety or admiration as it does within BC. Finally, some gang responses, such as those involving community organizations that work exclusively with South Asian youth or even the school-based mentorship and Punjabi languages course, incorporate culture or employ South Asian workers to

deliver programming that is sensitive to the racial and cultural needs of youth. Again, these types of services appear to be exclusive to BC, where there is a perception that South Asian gang involvement is a significant problem. Each chapter of this dissertation examined one aspect of this distinctly Western Canada phenomenon.

This leaves an important question: how have these ideas on South Asian “culture”, the creation of multiple legacies around cultural icons like Bindy Johal, or the subsequent responses to South Asian gang involvement developed and transformed into a distinctly local phenomenon? While these questions are beyond the scope of this analysis, there are some tentative explanations that could point to some answers. First, respondents assert that within the South Asian community in B.C., racism is a far more significant problem than elsewhere in the South Asian diaspora. High school law teacher Inder makes this point:

Indo-Canadian gangs developed, like this is in the 90s, the primary reason back then was racism. There was this idea that people were getting treated differently because they were brown, right? I don't know why it's different here than other areas but I can say based on what I just said, there has been a history of gangs that were originally, when they were created were created for reasons for: *"hey you know, we're facing racism. Let's band together and lets kind of help each other out."* And that's always been there since the early 90s. And then we also had high profile gangsters, South Asian gangster that were here that were in the media, that people saw on TV that were idolized by a lot of young kids because they're like: "oh that guy's, these people are so cool." So, you have that whole aspect of it.

Inder's arguments are a recurring theme throughout this dissertation that situates gangs within a context of racism and discrimination South Asians experienced in the Vancouver area, with figures like Bindy Johal serving an example of such an outcome. Some suggest that BC has a greater problem with racism than other areas of Canada. Ironically, many of my interviewees invoked this racism by perpetuating the idea that a distinct South Asian ‘culture’ produces violent males like Johal. Johal serves the personification of the “gold-collar lifestyle” and allows culture to be used to pathologize South Asian men as inherently violent or prone to gangs.

Subsequently, programming reflects some of these local concerns. For example, Officer Ranjit explains how a certain demographic of South Asian men, with gold chains and steroid bodies, are often targeted by business owners seeking their removal by police under the bar and restaurant rejection program. In this sense, a generation of Bindy Johal doppelgangers, who want to live the gold collar lifestyle that he embodied, are targeted and removed simply for “looking the part” of a gangster.

These ideas suggest that there is the perception by some that the South Asian community in Lower Mainland may have developed its own “culture” of gang offending, with Bindy Johal serving as a key cultural figure. Officer Ranjit discusses the gang culture that he believes has been created in BC:

There’s almost this culture and the tradition that started here with the Bindy's and the Dhosanj’s. It created this subculture of gangs and they made movies about it. You know Indo-gangs, all this kind of stuff, that's where a lot of these young guys start. Intertwine that with the African American experience and it's created this cultural phenomenon here.

Officer Ranjit relates this unique South Asian gangster culture to African American gangster culture in the United States, believing South Asian gang culture is similarly pushed on youth through the media (i.e. gangster rap).

This might explain how South Asian gang involvement became viewed as a uniquely Western Canadian phenomenon, but how do these ideas get transmitted and adopted in the community? The local Punjabi media appears to play a significant role in continuing the dialogue and advancing the very narratives captured in this study. Buffam (2016) notes the influence of local Punjabi media, through newspapers and magazine editorials, as being a confessional space for the South Asian community to air their grievances and denounce the sins of culture. Similarly, some respondents note the powerful influence of the South Asian media in their

community. School teacher Simran notes the importance of the local media in carrying out the message:

Gangs are a big problem. It's a huge problem. We have talk shows every day on radio. Parents going on air and saying hey my son, he's going to be killed. And there was one gangster last week who was killed and his father was on Red FM talking and asking and pleading with the police to save him. Someone do something. And he got killed, he got murdered.

Punjabi radio has become an important vessel for South Asians in the community to air their grievances against “culture”, the police, and the community itself for failing to address the gang problem. This could suggest that some of the very narratives captured in this study are debated, discussed, and further advanced through the media. For example, through the media, “culture” is used to explain South Asian gang offending, or it is used to spread the cautionary tale of Bindy Johal.

However, the media also plays an important role in not only advancing these discourses but shaping and influencing community responses, particularly those that are involved in inclusionary practices discussed under chapter 3. Anti- South Asian gang violence advocate Ajit discusses his organizations involvement with the media:

So, we approached the media, Indo-Canadian media is very strong here, and we approached them and they were very cooperative, and they started bringing in parenting programs, they started bringing in resource people for parenting skills, spend time with the child, spend time with your kid, with youth, and take interest in their schooling. Take interest in his sports, all those kinds of things. And we were, most of us, were on the radio, TV conveying this message.

Ajit’s organization depends on the media to get its message out as well as play an important role in influencing parenting practices. As argued in chapter 2, to maintain the autonomy of civil society, the state mobilizes and empowers the community to govern itself (Rose, 1992). Rather than appear coercive by eliciting parental authority directly, community actors like Ajit are

supported by the state to mobilize families to parent better. Thus, the media plays a central role in reaching parents and aid in responding to the problem.

In summary, there is the perception by some respondents that BC has a distinct “gangster culture”. This might explain why themes around South Asian “culture” like the gold-collar lifestyle, seem to be regional explanations for gang offending. Further, predominate gangsters like Bindy Johal are also a part of this local “gangster culture”, where their legacies are not well understood outside the region. Finally, the media plays an important role in two ways: 1) through music or other forms of media the gangster culture is believed to push youth to gangs, and 2) the Punjabi media, through the radio or television, allows the community to engage in dialogue, including denouncing culture, and also influencing the community to govern the problem itself.

One limitation in this study that is worth noting is that it could have explored the broader historical context around the Khalistani movement as it was identified by one respondent as an important element of the South Asian “gang problem”. Future research would benefit by engaging in a deeper analysis of the history of that region tied to the controversial Sikh separatist movement and the lasting impact of the related Air India bombing, which likely stirs similar social anxieties in British Columbia. This could clue us in to why problems centred on masculinity and gang violence might be the product of a local geographic condition that is unique to that region.

This project makes several important contributions. The lack of scholarly work on South Asian gang involvement has resulted in a deficiency of academic analysis of the issue. My dissertation remedies this oversight by examining the insights of stakeholders who perform central roles in governing the problem. This study adopts a reflexive approach by trying to understand the phenomenon through the meaning it has on these authorities, rather than trying to explain the problem through a process of grand theorizing. This means that some of the

conclusions drawn from the narratives are not meant to be definite explanations on South Asian gang involvement but rather a discussion of *how* authorities interpret various dimensions of the problem. The results of this study could be used for introspective purposes by stakeholders so that these assumptions are challenged, debated or adjusted so that they are able to effectively respond to the problem. Further, this study also contributes to the burgeoning literature examining the role of community in the governance of crime. In so doing, the analysis will add to the body of literature on contemporary neoliberal crime control strategies where the state fosters and mobilizes community agencies and actors to deliver programming.

Further research may want to expand the scope of this analysis to include other South Asian communities outside of the province of BC to examine how or whether similar tropes about South Asian culture are deployed to explain violence and crime in other geographic contexts. This includes Brampton, Ontario, South Hall, England, or even Punjab, India. For example, some believe Punjab has a major youth drug problem, a crisis that has received extensive media and political attention (Kaur, 2017; Kumar et al., 2017; Sharma et al., 2017). It would be interesting to note if parallels exist in how local authorities in Punjab, including law enforcement, drug treatment providers, or advocates, frame risk for drug addiction. For example, if drug use is tied to materialism or a particular lifestyle that is identified as a distinct part of South Asian ‘culture,’ this would suggest that BC may not be as unique in terms of how risk is imagined. Precisely, culture may be a *de facto* explanation for authorities who are faced with tackling a perceived social problem that exists in their communities. There is much utility in exploring this line of inquiry and expanding to other South Asian communities where social problems are attributed to amorphous constructs like culture at the expense of any attention to structural variables.

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APPENDIX A. Research participants and their organizational backgrounds

| Name | ORGANIZATION |
|---------|---------------------------------------|
| Diljit | Former gang member/community advocacy |
| Priya | Community agency |
| Raman | Community agency |
| Veer | Community agency |
| Ranbir | Community agency |
| Jyoti | Community agency |
| Anita | Community agency |
| Raj | Community agency |
| Taran | Community agency |
| Ajit | Community agency |
| Ash | Community agency |
| Harjit | Community activist |
| Kulvir | Community agency |
| Aarti | Community agency |
| Anju | Community agency/advocacy |
| Paul | Community agency |
| Gurjit | Law enforcement |
| John | Law enforcement |
| Surjit | Law enforcement |
| Scott | Law enforcement |
| Krish | Law enforcement |
| Ranjit | Law enforcement |
| Navdeep | School district employee |
| Sony | Vice Principal |
| Jessie | Principal |
| Jaspal | School district employee |
| David | Principal |
| Dan | Principal |
| Amarjit | School district employee |
| Gurmeet | School district employee |
| Simran | Teacher |
| Jass | Guidance counsellor |
| Lena | Teacher |
| Inder | Teacher |

APPENDIX B. Interview Guides

Community Organizations

Interview #:

Date of Interview:

Start:

End:

Duration:

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. What is your organization's name?
 - b. What is your position here?
 - c. How long have you worked in this type of position?
 - d. Describe the clientele this organization serves?
 - e. Describe the scope of what you do with these clients?
 - f. Do you identify yourself as belonging to any community?
 - g. What type of training did you go through to do this kind of work?
2. Lets talk about South Asian gangs.
 - a. How would you define a South Asian gang?
 - b. What part of South Asia specifically do these youth, or their families, come from?
 - c. Are South Asian gangs prevalent in your community?
 - d. If so, how big of a problem are South Asian gangs in your community?
 - e. What type of illegal activities do these gangs engage in?
 - f. What is the age range and gender of a majority of these gang members?
3. The following questions focus on risk factors associated with gang delinquency.
 - a. What type of youth do you believe are at the most at-risk for joining a gang?
 - b. If you could pick the top three factors you believe increase the risk for gang involvement, what would they be?
 - c. If these three risk factors increase the likelihood a South Asian youth is going to join a gang, what are three protective factors you believe may prevent youth from getting involved in gangs?
 - d. What are some of the problems facing South Asians today?
 - e. Is there a relationship between these problems and gang involvement?
4. Lets talk a bit more about the personal lives of at-risk South Asian youth or adults who might join a gang.
 - a. How would you characterize the family life of South Asians who might get involved in gangs?
 - b. Do you believe there is a relationship between the family lives of at-risk South Asians individuals and gang involvement?
 - c. What type of neighborhoods or communities do these gang members live in?

- d. What type of friends do these gang members have?
 - e. What type of influence do you believe peers might have in gang involvement?
5. The following questions focus on anti-gang initiatives
- a. What is your role in anti-gang programming?
 - b. What are some strategies used to prevent youth from joining gangs?
 - c. What are some of the programs used to deal with youth already involved in gangs?
 - d. Describe some of the needs of the South Asian community?
 - e. Describe some of the needs of South Asian gang members?
 - f. How are these needs addressed through the programming you offer?
 - g. How are anti-gang strategies sensitive to racial or cultural needs of gang members?
 - h. Do you believe current programming meets the needs of South Asians gang members?
 - i. In your opinion, what are some of the best ways to respond to South Asian gangs?
 - j. Do you believe the current strategies used are effective in addressing risk factors?
 - k. Do you work with other community organizations, police, citizens, and government, in anti-gang programming?

Educational Officials

Interview #:

Date of Interview:

Start:

End:

Duration:

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. What is your position at this school?
 - b. How long have you worked in this type of position?
 - c. Describe the student body in this school? What is the ethnic composition of this school?
 - d. What motivated you to become an educator?
2. Lets talk about South Asian gangs.
 - a. How would you define a South Asian gang?
 - b. What part of South Asia specifically do these youth, or their families, come from?
 - c. Are South Asian gangs prevalent in school?
 - d. If so, how big of a problem are South Asian gangs in your school and the broader community?
 - e. What are some of the problems facing South Asians today?
 - f. Is there a relationship between these problems and gang involvement?
3. The following questions focus on risk factors associated with gang delinquency.
 - a. What type of individuals do you believe are at the most at-risk for joining a gang?
 - b. If you could pick the top three factors you believe increase the risk for gang involvement, what would they be?
 - c. If these three risk factors increase the likelihood a South Asian is going to join a gang, what are three protective factors you believe may prevent them from getting involved in gangs?
4. Lets talk a bit more about the personal lives of at-risk South Asian youth or adults who might join a gang.
 - a. How would you characterize their family life?
 - b. Do you believe there is a relationship between the family lives of at-risk South Asians individuals and gang involvement?
 - c. What type of neighborhoods or communities do these gang members live in?
 - d. What type of friends do these youth have?
 - e. What type of influence do you believe peers might have in gang involvement?
5. The following questions focus on anti-gang initiatives
 - a. Does your school offer any kind of programing related to gangs?
 - b. Do you have any training in dealing with gangs and gang members?

- c. What are some strategies used to prevent individuals from joining gangs that are currently used in school?
- d. What are some of the school programs used to deal with youth already involved in gangs?
- e. Describe some of the needs of the South Asian community?
- f. Describe some of the needs of South Asian gang members?
- g. How are these needs addressed through the programing offered?
- h. How are anti-gang strategies sensitive to racial or cultural needs of gang members?
- i. Do you believe current programing meets the needs of South Asians gang members?
- j. Describe the Wraparound program.
- k. In your opinion, what are some of the best ways to respond to South Asian youth gangs?
- l. Do you believe the current strategies used are effective in addressing risk factors?
- m. Do you work with other community organizations, police, citizens, and government, in anti-gang programing?

Law Enforcement

Interview #:

Date of Interview:

Start:

End:

Duration:

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. What is the police organization you work for?
 - b. What is your position here?
 - c. How long have you worked in this type of position?
 - d. Describe the scope of what you do?
 - e. What motivated you to work as an officer?

2. Lets talk about South Asian gangs.
 - a. How would you define a South Asian gang?
 - b. What part of South Asia specifically do these youth, or their families, come from?
 - c. Are South Asian gangs prevalent in your community?
 - d. If so, how big of a problem are South Asian gangs in your community?
 - e. What type of illegal activities do these gangs engage in?
 - f. What are some of the ages of the youth who get involved with these gangs?
 - g. Are South Asian gang members predominately male?

3. The following questions focus on risk factors associated with gang delinquency.
 - a. What type of youth do you believe are at the most at-risk for joining a gang?
 - b. If you could pick the top three factors you believe increase the risk for gang involvement, what would they be?
 - c. If these three risk factors increase the likelihood a South Asian youth is going to join a gang, what are three protective factors you believe may prevent youth from getting involved in gangs?
 - d. What are some of the problems facing male South Asian youth today?

4. Lets talk a bit more about the personal lives of at-risk South Asian youth.
 - a. How would you characterize the family life of gang members?
 - b. Do you believe there is a relationship between the family lives of at-risk South Asians individuals and gang involvement?
 - c. What type of neighborhoods or communities do these youth live in?
 - d. What type of neighborhoods or communities do these gang members live in?
 - e. What type of friends do these youth have?
 - f. What type of influence do you believe peers might have in gang involvement?

5. The following questions focus on anti-gang initiatives
 - a. What is your role in combating gangs?

- b. Did you receive any specialized training to deal with gangs and gang youth?
- c. What are some strategies used to prevent youth from joining gangs used by police?
- d. What are some of the programs used to deal with youth already involved in gangs by police?
- e. Describe some of the needs of South Asian youth?
- f. How are these needs addressed through the programing you offer?
- g. How are anti-gang strategies sensitive to racial or cultural needs of youth?
- h. In your opinion, what are some of the best ways to respond to South Asian youth gangs?
- i. Do you believe the current strategies used are effective in addressing risk factors?
- j. Do you work with other community organizations, citizens, and government, in anti-gang programing?
- k. If so, describe the type of relationship you have with these other stakeholders?

Former Gang Members

Interview #:

Date of Interview:

Start:

End:

Duration:

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself and your experiences in a gang
 - a. How old are you?
 - b. How old were you when you joined the gang?
 - c. When did you exist the gang?
 - d. Since leaving the gang what do you do?
 - e. Why did you join a gang?
 - f. What was your criminal history like when you belonged to a gang?
 - g. What was your family life prior to you joining a gang?

2. Lets talk about South Asian gangs.
 - a. How would you define a South Asian gang?
 - b. What part of South Asia specifically do these youth, or their families, come from?
 - c. Are South Asian gangs prevalent in your community?
 - d. If so, how big of a problem are South Asian gangs in your community?
 - e. What type of illegal activities do these gangs engage in?
 - f. What are some of the ages of the youth who get involved with these gangs?
 - g. Are South Asian gang members predominately male?

3. The following questions focus on risk factors associated with gang delinquency.
 - a. What type of youth do you believe are at the most at-risk for joining a gang?
 - b. If you could pick the top three factors you believe increase the risk for gang involvement, what would they be?
 - c. If these three risk factors increase the likelihood a South Asian youth is going to join a gang, what are three protective factors you believe may prevent youth from getting involved in gangs?
 - d. What are some of the problems facing male South Asian youth today?

4. Lets talk a bit more about the personal lives of at-risk South Asian youth generally.
 - a. How would you characterize the family life of an at risk youth?
 - b. What do you think is the relationship between the family lives of these youth and gang involvement?
 - c. What type of neighborhoods or communities do these youth live in?
 - d. What type of friends do these youth have?

5. The following questions focus on anti-gang initiatives

- a. Since existing gangs have you been involved in any outreach or anti-gang programing?
- b. What are some strategies used to prevent youth from joining gangs?
- c. What are some of the programs used to deal with youth already involved in gangs?
- d. Describe some of the needs of South Asian youth?
- e. How are anti-gang strategies sensitive to racial or cultural needs of youth?
- f. In your opinion, what are some of the best ways to respond to South Asian youth gangs?
- g. Do you believe the current strategies used are effective in addressing risk factors?
- h. Do you work with other community organizations, police, citizens, and government, in anti-gang programing?

APPENDIX C. Introductory Script for Interviews

Hello, my name is Manjit Pabla and I am Ph.D. candidate at the University of Waterloo in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies. Under the supervision of Professors Peter Carrington and Rashmee Singh, I am conducting interviews to understand community responses to South Asian gangs in the Greater Vancouver Area for my dissertation research.

If you agree to participate, I will ask you questions about what you think of the South Asian gang phenomenon and your experiences and expertise related to the services you provide for gang members. I believe the interview should approximately one hour of your time.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. All information you provide in the interview will be completely confidential. Your name and any information that could identify you will not be used in the final project and any publications from it. The following interview will be tape-recorded and with your permission, I may use any quotations you provide verbatim. You may refuse to answer or skip any question you choose to or withdraw participation at any time without consequence. Should you wish to stop the tape at any time please indicate so.

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

APPENDIX D. Information Letter

JUNE 2016

Dear potential participant:

My name is Manjit Pabla and I am a Doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Drs. Peter Carrington and Rashmee Singh. This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my degree. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Over the last fifteen years, there has been considerable attention placed on the problem of South Asian gangs in the Greater Vancouver Area by law enforcement officials, politicians, anti-gang organizations and the South Asian community itself. Despite the concern over South Asian gangs, there have not been very many academic studies on the subject matter. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand how the problem of South Asian gangs has been understood by key stakeholders and subsequently managed through anti-gang initiatives and programming.

This study will focus on how certain stakeholders understand the problem of South Asian gangs by identifying risk factors for gang involvement. This is achieved by interviewing those who work on the frontlines of anti-gang programming. Therefore, I would like to include your organization as one of several to be involved in my study because of your work in delivering such programming.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately one hour in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis. If you request, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any dissertation or publication from this study, however, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for 5 years in a locked drawer in my office. Only the two professors supervising this research and I will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 416-995-4380 or by email at m49singh@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisors, Dr. Peter Carington at 519-888-4567 ext. 2029 or email pjc@uwaterloo.ca and Dr. Rashmee Singh at 519-888-4567 ext. 3020 or email r78singh@uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those organizations directly involved in the study as well as to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this research project.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manjit Pabla', written in a cursive style.

Manjit Pabla

Student Investigator

Appendix E. Consent form

CONSENT FORM

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Manjit Pabla of the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. Participants who have concerns or questions about their involvement in the project may contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Chief Ethics Officer at 519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or Maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca."

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any dissertation or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____