

# Police and the Policed

Danielle Watson

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Language and Power Relations on the Margins of  
the Global South

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## PREFACE

In October 2016, I joined the ranks of PhD survivors. Like many before me, my intention was to publish my dissertation as a book. This intention was unaccompanied by any semblance of a plan and in my head, it would simply be a matter of selecting a publisher and sending them a copy of my dissertation, which they would then turn into something magnificent (after all, policing in Trinidad and Tobago was a buzz topic and the attention of the Western world was fixed upon us because of the escalating crime epidemic). I quickly realized writing a book was very different from writing a dissertation and it was not as simple as repackaging. The idea was shelved until 2017 when I presented at the Crime and Justice in Asia and the Global South International Conference. There, I presented a paper titled “Crime, Criminality and North-to-South Criminological Complexities”: Theoretical Implications for Policing “Hotspot” Communities in “Underdeveloped” Countries’. The paper received much attention from scholars conducting research in the Global South. For many of these individuals, my arguments about the dangers of adopted quick-fix policing solutions from the North and the shortcomings of force-to-fit borrowed crime-fighting strategies were as relevant as they were shared. This was a point being made by many of the presenters from the developing Global South. What was different was that the position I took and the fact that the geographic area being represented was not previously exemplified in Southern Criminology discourses.

The English-speaking Caribbean was not well represented in scholarly representations of the Global South. Generalizations about the Caribbean and unsubstantiated claims about crime and criminality in a region diverse

in multiple aspects, propelled my desire to commit to the improved visibility of the region in criminological literature on the Global South. More than simply a focus on Caribbean diversity, I acknowledged the need to reflect on the continued impact of northern criminological positions and policies on governance or, more specifically, policing in contexts marked by diasporic histories, problematic police/civilian relations, cultural and ethnic diversity, institutional structures and competing ideological positions. I felt obligated to commence my contribution to criminological, or more specifically policing scholarship, by writing about my country. My linguistic background allowed me to take a multidisciplinary approach to examine policing. My social position as a Caribbean national with ties to three islands and insider knowledge of areas categorized as marginalized in all of these spaces propelled me to take on the task of presenting positions not easily accessed by ‘outsiders’ and unknown to many on the ‘inside’ with no knowledge of the realities of the ‘othered’.

*Police and the Policed* symbolizes my commitment to representing the developing world in criminological literature. Here I share revelations from my dissertation and insight into the realities of two groups operating on the margins. It is demonstrative of the power haggling which takes place between police and the policed, and shows how power is navigated through language to help or hinder relations between and among individuals or groups.

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