COMPOUNDING VULNERABILITIES: BLACK CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL VIOLENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between race, gender, and violence in the Anglophone Caribbean. In doing so, this research examines experiences of racialised violence that target Black Caribbean women who are development professionals and experts on gender-based violence (GBV) located across the geography of the Caribbean. I argue that these women's complex identities are targeted within their work environments and their identities compound into vulnerabilities that can increase their chances of being exposed to a form of 'professional violence' that is racialised and unique to the development sector. The specific expression of racialised 'professional violence' can emerge within development work environments and organisations in the Anglophone Caribbean. This results in the violent disenfranchisement of a specific group of women who are simultaneously working to mitigate the issue of violence. This adds to my argument that racialised 'professional violence' can target Black Caribbean women differently depending on their workplace demographic - be it predominantly international, mixed, or Black.

Alongside 'professional violence' this group of women can simultaneously experience and live with two additional forms of violence: the exposure to violence experienced from working daily with survivors, perpetrators, and/or, GBV prevention infrastructure, and the experience of encountering violence in their personal lives and relationships. Interdisciplinary literature that frames this research includes critical development studies that examine the power of development discourse and the sector's ties to colonialism.

Caribbean feminist scholarship and cultural theorists' contributions to identity politics paired with theorisation on gender, power, and violence, and emerging literature on Caribbean cyberfeminism also ground this thesis. I have employed a reflexive, Caribbean feminist research methodology to further contextualise violence by conducting interviews with Black Caribbean women who are development workers, conducting discourse analysis of cyberfeminist tweets, and reflecting on my own positionality as insider/outsider to this work as a Black Caribbean feminist researcher with professional development experience. As such, this thesis broadly fits within Caribbean feminist geography, Black Caribbean feminist literature, and critical development studies.

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my parents who have always encouraged my educational journey, my love for reading, and my strong work ethic. Your sacrifices have enabled me to be in a position to take on this PhD. I appreciate you both and could not have done this without either of you.

I would also like thank to my partner who has continued to encourage, support, and prioritise me throughout my studies; my senior Yorkie-poo, Sisu, the cuddliest emotional support dog who has helped me get through the final stretch of this thesis; and to my grandparents, especially my grandfather who never stopped encouraging me to pursue a doctorate degree. And, finally, this work is dedicated to my grandmother Gertrude Elisha Commissiong, a Caribbean woman who I looked up to the most and who passed away in the middle of this research.

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List of abbreviations

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Caribbean Association for Feminist Action and Research (CAFRA)

Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Critical race theory (CRT)

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)

Gender-based violence (GBV)

Intimate partner violence (IPV)

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual+ (LGBTQ+)

Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

United Nations Women (UN Women)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

Women and Development Studies Project (WAND)

World Health Organisation (WHO)

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Introduction and significance

This thesis will examine the relationship between race, gender, and violence within the Caribbean development sector. My aim is to examine the ways that racialised violence can form within the international development sector and the impact it can generate on Black women in the Anglophone[1] Caribbean who are personally and professionally committed to mitigating the issue of gender-based violence (GBV). This research project uses a reflexive, Black Caribbean feminist geography lens[2] in combination with a digital ethnographic research approach to centre a unique group of women's voices and experiences[3].

Each of the seven chapters within this thesis work to do three things: ground the empirical evidence, answer my research questions, and set up my concluding

[1] The terms Anglophone Caribbean, English speaking Caribbean, the Caribbean, and West Indies will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis for variation to indicate the same thing: islands in the Caribbean where an official language is English. They include the following countries: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos

[2] I will refer to myself as 'I' to intentionally lay out how I navigated the relationship with my research and the particular community that I am tied to. In other words, this means the community where I simultaneously exist as an insider and outsider, an active participant and bystander, a survivor, and researcher. See more: Barriteau, 2003; Crawford and Jackson-Best, 2016; DeShong, 2013; James, 2021; Kempadoo and DeShong, 2013; Lazarus, 2013; Mohammed, 2001; Noxolo, 2009

[3] See more: chapter three Methodology

conceptual and empirical contributions. With that said, chapter one Introduction highlights the significance of pursuing this research, contextualises my research questions, outlines the subsequent chapters to help guide this discussion, and introduces myself - a Black Caribbean feminist geographer, researcher, and daughter of St. Vincent and the Grenadines - to highlight how my own positionality takes shape, interacts with the research, and inspires this thesis. Chapter two Literature review explores the relevant literature referenced throughout this thesis. Chapter three Methodology discusses my multiple methods research approach that I used to gather two types of empirical data. Chapter four A “culture of violence”? problematises and contextualises the relationship between violence and culture as an explainer of violence. Chapter five Navigating identity and power highlights how tenets of one’s identity can make an individual more prone to violence. Chapter six Violence in the workplace considers evidence to demonstrate how racialised violence can manifest in professional settings. And finally, chapter seven Conclusion discusses my empirical and conceptual contributions that specifically locate an intersection where race, gender, and violence conflate. I then close this thesis by making recommendations for future research to underscore the importance of Caribbean women’s wellbeing while immersed in a precarious professional sector.

I have pursued this research topic for several key reasons. First, it is important to discuss the possible interactions that race and GBV can have in the Caribbean from the voices and perspectives of women who work directly in the sector themselves to highlight the depth and contours of the issue from the perspective of ‘GBV expert’ who

is exposed to a niche professional sector that has an organisational focus on the topic of violence and gender. This is because recent work on the topic of violence and gender by Joseph and Jones (2023) highlights that scholarship on domestic cases of violence has minimally "investigated the determinants of domestic violence in the Caribbean and explanatory theories have so far proved inadequate in capturing the complex meld of factors involved" (p.1006). My work is an attempt to explore the complex tenets involved when violence intersects with identity, as told to me by very specific, relevant voices: Black Caribbean women professionals working within the development sector in the Caribbean with expertise on gender and violence. This is because some of the existing work on this topic has leaned towards documenting women's experiences as victims or focused on the positionality of men as victims to overcome some of the gender disparities in GBV underreporting (Cummings, 2022). This thesis is unique in its focus on contextualising violence from an understudied group of Caribbean women who are development professionals bringing highly relevant professional training and work experience as regional GBV experts. And, exploring their identities, work, and life experiences uncovers multiple locations where violence exists (or has manifested) in their lives[4].

Second, this thesis exists as evidence that considers the possibility that new meanings and forms of violence can exist in (un)likely locations. This is considering Le Franc *et al*.'s (2008) critique of existing discourse that intends to mitigate the reduction of GBV

[4] See more: section 4.3

often ignores the meanings of violence in the Anglophone Caribbean. This means that this research contributes to the emerging field of Black geography (specifically Black Caribbean feminist geography)[5] as well as the field of critical development studies that has not had a significant focus on critiquing the role of the development sector (specifically GBV-focused development) in the Anglophone Caribbean.

Third, this research considers existing academic discourse that has conceptualised the reality of racisms in the Caribbean (Law and Tate, 2015). I explore key contributing scholars such as Deborah Thomas (2004) who has theorised on the aspirational idea of 'modern Blackness' in places like Jamaica and how it can reproduce colonial-rooted social hierarchies. I have also reflected on some personal conversations with others that have attempted to dispel my research project idea based on a generalised assumption that 'everyone is already Black' in the Caribbean. Sections within my thesis' literature review chapter two highlight how there is existing Caribbean feminist GBV literature that addresses anti-Black racism in the Caribbean but fails to address how this impacts women who are Caribbean development workers specifically. The purpose of this research is to consider existing work on racism in the Caribbean and dig deeper within the development sector to understand how racialised violence may exist and impact women working to end GBV itself. The contributions that this work has brought sits uniquely within the field of Black Caribbean feminist geography and pinpoints the specific locations where racialised violence takes place: in varied types of Caribbean

[5] See more: Gahman and Collins, 2019; Noxolo, 2022

development professional environments. This is significant because it demonstrates how this specific group of Caribbean women development workers are affected by multiple layers of violence.

Finally, this research also can also bring value to the worlds of Black Caribbean women who have committed their professional and personal lives to activism and anti-violence development work. This is because this thesis discusses how racialised violence can manifest and be identifiable in locations that may be overlooked (e.g., the international development sector). And I highlight the interplay of women's complex identities as an important feature of development work and how the buried experiences within the professional field deserve more attention due to the precariousness of the work. This thesis attempts to problematise discourse that lives within the development sector and beyond that too easily links Caribbean culture to violence. My intention is to move beyond concepts that frame how we think about ourselves, our culture, and our people in deductive ways to where "domestic violence in the Caribbean is as normal as rice and peas" (Samuel, 2023, np). Instead, this thesis urges us to think deeply about the experiences of experts in the field and the meaning of said violence as it intersects with women's identities.

1.2 Contextualising the research questions

As such, this work answers two sets of research questions in light of the overarching focus on race and violence in the Anglophone Caribbean: *how do racialisation*

processes within GBV form and how are they negotiated by both Black Caribbean women who are GBV specialists working in the international development sector? I consider the nuanced ways that racialised violence can emerge in specific locations set within the wider geography of the Anglophone Caribbean. And how affected women articulate their identities and negotiate the violence. I use the term 'negotiate' because it underscores how studying identity requires the acknowledgement that it is complex, not static, and may require one to negotiate around meanings in different contexts. In exploring this question, this thesis becomes a scholarly contribution to a pre-existing field of Caribbean feminist theory as well as Caribbean feminist geography[6]. I discuss the process of creating a subject-subject relationship dynamic between myself and the interview participants in later detail in chapter three methodology.

The6econdd set of research questions is: *how do race and gender intersect to shape Black women's experiences of violence?* This immediately draws a discussion on identity forms, types, and how they may intersect to produce additional types of vulnerabilities linked to violence. In addition to the intersections of identity (specifically how they interact with Blackness), I consider how they may relate to targeted violent experiences on women and what it means for their identities, the function and form of the violence, and specific contexts of where it manifests through specific examples. In answering these questions, not only does this work highlight Black women's voices and

[6] See more: Barriteau, 2003, 2019; DeShong, 2013; DeShong and Haynes 2015; Mohammed 2000, 2002, 2011, 2015, 2017; Noxolo, 2016a, 2016b; and Tamale, 2021

experiences, there is also a key ongoing discussion within cyberfeminist spaces that have brought key examples of targeted violence on Twitter.

1.3 Chapter summary

1.3.1 Summarising the literature

The literature review covered in chapter two considers four areas of scholarship to drive this thesis' discussion on racialised violence forward. I pair work from Caribbean scholars like Barriteau (2019) that critique the sector's misalignment between realities on the ground in the region with critical development scholars Cornwall (2007) and Sachs (1992) who outline the discursive power that resides within the international development sector, how it frames articulations of violence, and the importance of historicising gender equality and women's advocacy frameworks within the sector (Cornwall and Rivas, 2015; Pargass and Clark, 2003). I use these debates to discuss how this translates in the Caribbean and the development sector in the region. In unpicking the function of development as a discourse in a Caribbean context, the way that violence prevalence data is articulated amasses a discursive power that can generalise and normalise violence as a "Caribbean experience." However, by historicising the development sector more broadly opens it to postcolonial critique such as Thomas' (2011) work on exceptional violence that unearths historical patterns of violence in the Caribbean to help us "reimagine the postcolony'' and Youseff's (2010) work on how colonial violence has functioned as the pathway to contemporary violence.

These critical development debates point to a research gap on gender and violence in the Anglophone Caribbean which means the topic is vulnerable t''becoming trivialising (Melde and Rennison, 2010; Wilding, 2014). This thesis is taking this opportunity to explore and help fill a gap in understanding on violence from a very specific perspective: from workers in the sector itself.

By highlighting the specific voices of Black Caribbean women, it is crucial to include Black Caribbean feminist debates[7] that explore how gendered social relations, experiences of (neo)colonialism, oppression, and the intersection of gender, race, class, and other tenets of identity can shape Caribbean women's experiences. Some of the recurring themes emerging within these debates (e.g., development as colonialism, identity, gender relations, and violence) reinforce the importance of this thesis. Further, debates on these themes help to inform my selected methodological framework and ontological perspective (see chapter three Methodology) that is grounded within a reflexive Caribbean feminist framework. This research framework underscores the importance of having an intentional awareness of power dynamics that live within research relationships. Specifically, the importance of fostering a subject-subject relationship rather than a subject-object relationship between the researcher and research participants and making "Caribbean women as the main subject of enquiry" (Kempadoo and DeShong, 2013, p.2). This is my thesis' main methodological approach

[7] See: Baksh-Soodeen, 1998; Barriteau, 2003; DeShong, 2013; Harnois, 2015; and Mohammed, 1998

and has deepened my consideration for how I occupy both insider and outsider positionalities to this research[8].

Ultimately, Caribbean feminist perspectives have been vital to this work as they have helped me think through my approach to this research in addition to theories on violence, gender, race, and (digital) identities in the Caribbean. And my use of digital spaces to conduct this research is important because it can foster unique feminist communities that practise identity building across the digitally connected geography of the Caribbean where key issues and debates related to women's identities live. In reflecting on the nuances of Caribbean identity, I drew on Frömming *et al.* (2017) and Leid's (2017) work on digital identities to ground the empirical evidence gathered from Twitter and LinkedIn (see chapter three Methodology) to understand how these social engagement forms (Polletta *et al.*, 2004) actually produce types of Caribbean diasporic sociality and exchanges that surpass physical borders. The current literature demonstrates an opportunity to think differently about GBV in three ways. First, to contextualise violence from the perspective of individuals with expert knowledge on the topic that are often not made visible within the international development sector: Black Caribbean women professionals. Second, to contextualise violence by way of identifying the function or interplay of women's complex identities. And third, to think through the possibility of a form of violence against a very specific group of women within a very

[8] See subheading *Positionality within the research* in this chapter and methodology chapter three

specific environment (the international development sector) that projects its own commitment to eradicating the issue.

1.3.2 Summarising the methodology – Chapter three

In light of my intentional digital integration of this research, chapter three discusses how I applied this as a primary methodological approach. This started by using LinkedIn as a social networking platform to connect with Black Caribbean women professionals based in the Anglophone region who are specialised in GBV work from a keyword search to create a roster of willing interview participants in this research. Throughout I aimed to maintain my research's feminist reflexive framework that fostered dialogue between myself and thirteen interview participants (DeJonckheere and Vaughn, 2019). One base of evidence in my success in this area of intention is that throughout many participants attempted to draw commonalities between us (e.g., asking if my cousin was so and so or took an interest in the inspiration of my work). This discussion on the impact of the researcher acting from a position of both insider/outsider is discussed in further detail in methodology chapter three. And, upon reflecting on the secondary empirical evidence, I used another social networking platform (Twitter data) to connect with digital feminist discussions held online and conduct discourse analysis of user profiles and conversations. In reflexively engaging with research participants, I noted a few things that strengthened my ability to draw nuanced conclusions in this work – for instance, keeping my camera on during Zoom interviews built immediate familiarity, rapport, and trust where women could see me as somewhat of a colleague (of the same race, similar

background, and generations/age) rather than removed or extractive researcher. I would argue this was successful given the amount of unsolicited information shared with me on many personal encounters with violence.

1.3.3 Summary of the empirical work – Chapters four, five and six

Upon summarising my post-fieldwork auto-ethnographic reflections with interviewees there were several key themes that emerged and informed the following three empirical chapters: chapter four A ‘’culture of violence’’?, chapter five, Navigating identity and power, and chapter six Compounding vulnerabilities and professional violence. The data collected importantly provides the basis to answer my research questions on how Black Caribbean women professional activists and GBV development practitioners[9] can experience their complex identities (discussed in the conclusion chapter as ‘compounding vulnerabilities’) and oftentimes position them as both insider and outsider to violence. And racialised forms of violence particularly emerge in their professional environment (the Caribbean development and GBV activist sector itself), a professional space that is intimately tied to the broader international development sector.

[9] In reference to the term “GBV development practitioner and activist” that will be used throughout the rest of this thesis, it is important to acknowledge that I am using this phrase in a specific way. For the purposes of this thesis, this professional catchment includes women who bring work experience in the following areas: international / Caribbean development sector focused specifically on gender issues, violence, women and girls, activism (digital activism and in person). This term also includes the professional women who work in the public sector focused on these same gender/women’s related topics who approach the issue of GBV/VAWG from a law and policy enforcement perspective.

In light of these three key themes that emerged in the empirical chapters, my literature review is set up to outline the gaps in current literature that discuss the interplay of race, gender, and violence in the Caribbean as it ties to scholarship that is critical of the development sector at large and its contentious relationship with race and gender (Wilson, 2012). It became evident throughout writing this thesis that the data examined in the next few chapters is critically relevant and important to examine. This is because in the lead up to preparing for my fieldwork phase of the research, GBV was already identified as a pressing, pre-existing issue faced by people in the Anglophone Caribbean (and wider region). When the 2020 pandemic hit there was a spike in cases globally and in the Caribbean, making UN Women (2020) coin the term the 'shadow pandemic' to describe skyrocketing rates of domestic violence. This means that in the wake of developing this research, understanding GBV in the Caribbean became even more of a key issue to research and topic to understand. And one effect of the increase in GBV that also was considered is the impact it has had on GBV development practitioners (women under examination in this thesis) who have dedicated their careers to tackling violence in their specific geographies. The 'shadow pandemic' has made my research highly relevant to underscore the importance of problematising ideas on cultural violence in the Caribbean and navigating complex identities but also highlight the way surges in violence on victims also create new victims of violence: professional women experts on GBV.

As such, this thesis sets out to consider how race manifests within the identities of Black Caribbean women professionals working in the development sector. I argue that the

environment in which this group of women work is racialised with inherent white power dynamics that highlights Blackness in unique ways. This thesis will demonstrate a nuanced approach to understanding the dynamics of racialised violence that take shape within a specific sector: international development. And the data I have collected demonstrates how Blackness for this particular group of women emerges when power dynamics are at play.

1.4 Positionality within the research

In alignment with my research methodology (see chapter three Methodology), it is necessary to ground myself within the selected Caribbean feminist framework that I have applied throughout this thesis to demonstrate the relevance of my unique positionality and inspiration behind the specific topic. My own understanding of Caribbean feminism and GBV is aligned with DeShong's (2013) use of reflexivity and discourse analysis as key research methods and Tamale's (2021) decolonial feminist approach to understanding GBV. I have also prioritised the stances of Tanya Haynes in a panel discussion on knowledge production (black Women Radicals, 2020) that highlights how identity markers that occur in and outside of feminism can be markers that address inequalities. I also acknowledge Crawford and Jackson-Best's (2016) argument that emphasise the use of feminist pedagogy in an accountable way through self-reflexivity and taking responsibility for how my privileges manifest. Ultimately, in researching this topic I consider my insider/outsider position, my influence in knowledge production, the theoretical frameworks that I have adopted, the choice of this research

topic, and my influence in power relations in data collection methods and findings (Tamale, 2021).

My individual identity as it relates to this work begins and ends with a long list of identifiers (and in no particular order of priority): Black/Caribbean/West Indian, Vincentian-Finnish Canadian, mixed-race woman, (intersectional) Black Caribbean feminist geographer, academic, and non-profit fundraising professional. My ties to the Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora are the result of me being a daughter of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. My father was born in Kingstown, St. Vincent and I hold this geography and my family (who are scattered across the West Indies and its diaspora) very deeply to me. As an avid traveller I have also spent a good amount of time in various Caribbean islands. And my identity holds many layers because I am also half Finnish and a Canadian-born immigrant to the United States. As such, I can say that I am a Vincentian (by way of blood, citizenship/passport, and heritage) and a Caribbean diasporan. However, by way of growing up in diverse mixed-environments (some of which have predominantly white North American) I have also spent all of my adult life living abroad in the UK/Europe/West Africa. And my skin colour and socio-economic background has presented me with a unique set of experiences that have been heavily racialised and tied to my Black identity in conjunction with my body that quite obviously presents as mixed-race. And, on occasion my gender identity has come into play, particularly working in different African contexts[10].

[10]Anecdotal note on identity in African contexts: Having spent a good amount of time working on long term projects in various African countries and most recently was based in The Gambia, West Africa while

Despite these largely racialised personal experiences that help inform my understanding of 'Blackness' within this research, I also have a very specific set of privileges. These privileges are tied to my ability to be shielded by certain levels of discrimination and physically presenting (and being) mixed-race with a medium/lighter skin tone which problematically shields me from certain layers of discrimination that many of my darker skinned family, friends, colleagues, and others experience daily. I also have a set of privileges that reside in my ability to have access to certain things by way of being a Caribbean diasporan with multiple passports (I hold four including St. Vincent and the Grenadines). Additionally, I could also be labelled as middle class living in the Global North with a set of academic privileges as my mother is a long time academic. In St. Vincent and Trinidad specifically, my family *(Commissiong and Joshua*) has a strong history that has broken generational cycles of poverty and held influential titles including: police commissioners, beauty queens, lawyers and judges, post-colonial freedom fighters, prime ministers, and more. Due to these privileges, the sacrifices my family has made for me, and the ancestral journey that has led me to this position, I have had access to travel, higher education at leading institutions, scholarships, and professional work experiences that have informed my journey to this doctoral research project.

writing a significant portion of this thesis, I experienced my gender, my foreignness, and predominantly my whiteness to come into play quite frequently. Majority of my time in Africa, specifically The Gambia I have experienced life and been identified by a host of terms but most often it is white/Swedish person. I have also been identified as an Arab, a Jamaican woman, and a Caribbean woman.

I also bring a professional relationship to the identity explored in this thesis: the Caribbean development worker. In this sense, it means I am not entirely looking at research participants from the outside either. I have fused together my academic interests with my professional world that have pushed this research into the direction that it has landed. I began working in the international development sector as a part time unpaid intern at the NGO called Relief International as an Executive Grant Research Intern whilst completing my B.A. from the University of Southern California majoring in International Relations. Without a connection from my academic department, the support of my parents, hefty scholarships, and my other part time (paid) job as a tutor in an underserved charter school, my unpaid work introduction to the 'development sector' would have been impossible and it would continue to be left only to the select dominant elite that is known to privilege (Silva, 2021). During this time, I took on a particularly strong passion for my minor, American Studies and Ethnicity, largely encouraged by conversations and coursework on Black identity politics and culture with my favourite undergraduate professor and mentor Dr. Anthony Sparks. My interest on Black women's identities and Caribbean diaspora culture grew as I completed an MSc in Anthropology and Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science. My degree focused on Afro-Brazilian women's empowerment activist work and racism (specifically colourism in the predominantly Black Northeast parts of Brazil).

Ultimately, my inspiration for this work arose when I was sixteen years old as I distinctly remember visiting Barbados with my family. We took a trip to the University of the West

Indies bookstore and when I laid my eyes on the shelf and saw the book *Women in Caribbean History* by Shepherd, Bailey, and Brereton (1995) I immediately *had* to beg my mom for this book. I believe it was here when I began the journey to this doctoral research. And, upon slowly building up my professional resume working specifically in non-profit and university research fundraising projects on topics related to women and girls, it became clear to me (and in the literature see chapter two Literature review and work by Pargass and Clarke, 2003; Stuart, 2017) that the development sector struggles to visualise issues related to violence beyond troubling statistics, channels funding for solutions without influence, and applies non-contextually considerate solutions to very nuanced settings. Ultimately, this niche gap in development practice that I have attempted to study in this thesis and my own personal growing academic passion has helped to transform my personal interest into this larger doctoral research project. The development of this thesis is a culmination of: my master's degree focused on Black women's activism and racism in a different Caribbean context (North-eastern Brazil), extensive conversations with my expert supervisory team, and my personal professional fatigue (and professional violence that I experienced[11]) developed from working in international development settings as a Black Caribbean woman. Finally, the importance of this work became even clearer whilst researching during the COVID-19 pandemic when instances of GBV skyrocketed worldwide, and especially in the Caribbean.

[11] See chapter six Compounding vulnerabilities and professional violence.

1.5 Conclusion

In reflection on this work, this research lives closely to me. It also lives closely to the lives of Caribbean women who have been impacted by violence by way of their ties to the international development sector in the Anglophone Caribbean. This first introductory chapter has introduced the thesis by contextualising my two sets of research questions and highlighted the importance of the intersection of race and violence in the Caribbean to the sector of development and discipline of Caribbean feminist geography. I have also introduced my research praxis and positionality within the work and provided a brief overview of each preceding chapter to outline this thesis. In order to explore the possibility of racialised violence in the West Indies, the next chapter will situate this research within existing scholarship that weaves together four key theoretical and conceptual frameworks including: colonialism and development, Black Caribbean feminism and identity politics, theorising gender and violence, and emerging digital identities taking shape through cyberfeminism.

Chapter Two Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two Literature review will discuss four interdisciplinary areas of scholarship that are central to my research questions focused on the relationship between race, gender, and violence in the Anglophone Caribbean. The function of this chapter in relation to my overall thesis is to present a focused discussion that includes key works from critical development scholars, Caribbean feminists, geography feminists, identity scholars, and theories on gendered violence. This will be accomplished to relate important cross-disciplinary arguments that are relevant to this research and frame the empirical experiences of violence voiced by a specific group of Black Caribbean women (discussed in chapters four, five and six). This literature review is organised into four sections (2.2., 2.3, 2.4, 2.5) and builds narrative around the historical ties that the region has had to violence to later problematise the notion of a Caribbean "culture of violence"[12]. Section 2.2 explores contributions from critical development scholars and considers the intimate ties between colonialism, international development as a discourse, and histories of violence in the Anglophone Caribbean. Section 2.3 discusses the way identity politics are conceptualised by Black Caribbean feminists, feminist geographers, postcolonial scholars, and cultural theorists. This section also discusses some of the specific forms of race-based politics in the Anglophone

[12] See section 4.2 for discussion on the concept ‘a Caribbean culture of violence’

Caribbean including creolisation and colourism. Section 2.4 discusses theories on types of violence with special consideration for structural violence, the blurred boundaries between victim and perpetrator identities, and case studies on intimate partner violence (IPV) in the region. Finally, section 2.5 discusses contributions on the digital mobility of violence and the emergence of Caribbean cyberfeminisms as a newer area of study.

2.2 Development discourse, colonialism, and a "culture of violence"

A starting point of this research considers critical development scholarship, how the development sector frames violence through its own discourse, and the participatory role that colonialism has played in the Anglophone Caribbean. Barriteau (2019) highlighted findings from a gender equality study of six Commonwealth Caribbean islands and concluded that “the elimination of gender inequities is not yet a part of the core values and policy developments, programme action and administrative systems” in the Caribbean region (p.314). Although several individual Caribbean countries “have signed on to various international instruments, there is no regionally agreed system for measuring progress towards the achievement of gender justice” (Barriteau, 2019, p.314). However, development publications disseminated by regional and international development organisations (see appendix 1) opt to use their own discourse (i.e., carefully crafted definitions and narrations) of GBV do so with a particular concentration on high prevalence rates and statistics. While I will not be conducting discourse analysis

on key examples of development publications that narrate violence in the Caribbean set out in appendix 1, I have included them because it is important to acknowledge the power embedded within development discourse and how it can frame GBV in peculiar ways. For example, critical development anthropologist Andrea Cornwall (2007) importantly highlighted the way development discourse can powerfully animate and justify development interventions with “fulsome promises of the possible” (p.471). Adding to this, in Wolfgang Sachs’ (1992) book, *A Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power,* he argues that through discourse the concept of development becomes a “perception which moulds reality, a myth which comforts societies and a fantasy which unleashes passions” (p.1). Both Cornwall (2007) and Sachs (1992) similarly consider the consequences of the development sector’s ability to activate a power that can manufacture mythical yet comforting ideals of how societies should be and how people should behave.

Because development as a discourse makes it function as a “real historical formation” that has been “articulated around a fictitious construct (underdevelopment) and upon a certain materiality (the conditions baptised as underdevelopment)”, it is critical to displace and challenge the power that lives within it (Escobar, 2012, pp.53 and 216 cited in Ziai, 2015, p.213). This critique of the development sector suggests that this type of discourse activates its own power to define and place meaning on things (e.g., people, places, systems, things) such as ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’. If we are to unpick what the sector is/not articulating when it comes to conversations on gender, race, and identity, the embedded power of development discourse itself must be

challenged. Ziai (2015) also argues that the focus of development is "concerned with a desirable state of society" and "has Eurocentric, depoliticising and authoritarian implications" (pp.229 and 55). The role of discourse in the Caribbean as articulated by Morgan and Youseff (2006) suggests that it "constitutes a very real social practice" that importantly constructs the subject (p.3). In other words, the origins of development discourse within the Caribbean are rooted in Eurocentric, authoritarian paradigms that construct subjects within a larger development project. Throughout the construction of this research project (see chapter three Methodology) it becomes evident how the development sector can position 'subjects' within it (i.e., the process of the subjectification of Black Caribbean women who are development professionals, feminists, and/or activists), displace them, challenge their power, depoliticise them, and inflict violence upon them in their effort to mitigate GBV itself[13].

When examining the formation of development discourse itself there are three components: "discourse components" and rules of formation (e.g., concepts, terms, and meanings found within a specific development vocabulary[14]); actors or institutions including governments, multilateral organisations or scholars who create knowledge; and the force of disseminating the discourse itself including publishing development reports or circulating findings in an academic journal (Madrueño and Tezanos, 2018, p.344). In light of these three components, particularly the circulation of reports, it is

[13] See section 7.3 for more on the consequences of the development sector on Black Caribbean women professionals
[14] See section 2.3

worth briefly discussing one highlighted example in appendix one of a development report on GBV published in collaboration by three organisations that have strong development presence in the region: UN Women, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and CARICOM. Their report titled *Caribbean Experiences with Collecting Data on Violence Against Women and Girls* (UN Women *et al.*, 2020) is a publication on the prevalence of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in five Caribbean countries based on data gathered from survey questionnaires with the underlying aim of capturing the experiences of Caribbean women. I selected this specific development report because the title suggests that the research focus runs parallel to my own doctoral thesis: highlighting the experiences of GBV from Caribbean women in the Anglophone region. While there are key differences between this piece of research and the sampled report (UN Women *et al.*, 2020) that I do not have the space to discuss, one key thing to note is that in trying to understand the experiences of a very select group of women, the development organisation applied largely generalist population studies development model from the World Health Organisation (WHO). The report (UN Women *et al.*, 2020) justifies the use of this development model to distil the context of violence across five Caribbean countries to create a "resource" for Caribbean governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), enabling them to "draw good practices" through "planning and implementation activities to improve what we know about VAWG in the Caribbean" (UN Women *et al.*, 2020, p.8). It is worth highlighting that the WHO development model includes a survey questionnaire that I argue to be incredibly intimate as it questions interviewee's (Caribbean women) consideration of suicide, contemplation of ending her own life, levels of alcohol consumption, ability to access

sleep medication, and more. In addition, there was significant coded discourse throughout the report's findings on causes of violence:

> "The prevalence of VAWG in the Caribbean, one of the **highest in the world**, has a **long history.** This violence is **so entrenched** and **normalised** that both men and women have a **high tolerance** for its manifestations…. Data from a variety of sources confirm that **young people also hold these views**, **raising concerns** about the intergenerational transmission of VAWG and pointing to the **gaps** that remain in transforming attitudes and practices in this area" (UN Women *et al.*, 2020, p.8)

> "The **data helps** to **challenge entrenched views of women's silence** and **acceptance of violence**…**Without this data,** it is **difficult to effectively** target interventions that respond to the **actual reality** of **women's experiences** rather than **perceptions of this reality**" (UN Women *et al.*, 2020, p.8).

I argue that there is heavily coded discourse (see bolded phrases in the excerpts above) that attempts to position this data as defining the 'actual reality' of 'Caribbean women's experiences' as one that is entrenched and normalised by violence, and women who tolerate violence can be saved if institutions apply this development data to improve their programming and implementation. I also argue that these types of development narratives position GBV as a cultural attribute of the region. This exemplification points to the concept of a "culture of violence"[15] is something that this thesis discusses later in the empirical work (see chapter four A culture of violence?). Rupesinghe (1994) argues that scholars attempting to conceptualise a "culture of violence" have confronted difficulties in grounding discussions but ultimately it is the "global clash" of celebrated modernity with "traditional social, political, and economic organisation" and culture (pp.1-2). I would argue that Rupesinghe's (1994) argument

[15] I refer to a '"culture of violence"' in quotations to underscore how this research does not necessarily accept this term as fact but intends to use space throughout this thesis to deconstruct its meaning and problematise instances where it is socially accepted as an explainer of violence in the Caribbean.

exemplifies a form of development discourse that requires problematisation. This is because he mobilises a concept that suggests when populations accept (‘celebrate) modernity without question (from curated development agendas applied by external development-type institutions), this becomes the cure to mitigating violence that inevitably arises when societies hold on to traditional systems that hinder their progress forward (*develop).* In other words, chaos (cultural violence) is bound to arise if development (that is inevitable) is hindered.

Morgan and Youseff (2006) take on this concept of a “Caribbean culture of violence” suggesting that it stems from early practices of violence that turned into persistent, “ritualised violence” linked to:

> “family violence, traumatic social, and cultural dislocation, and attempts to reconstruct a threatened patriarchal tradition in an alien and alienating Caribbean environment” (Morgan and Youseff, 2006, p.131).

Further, the violence we see today is the “historical genesis in the horrors of colonialist imperialism” coupled with poverty, “exploitative underdevelopment”, drug trafficking, and Caribbean states “authorising violence as the solution to violence” through justice systems continue to shape contexts of violence and devastate family relations (Morgan and Youseff, 2006, p.225). In light of the historical realities that penetrated the English-speaking Caribbean, Deborah Thomas’ (2011) work on exceptional violence in Jamaica importantly considers how it is necessary to understand the spatial effects of violence. She considers the way violence plays out across space and time, the historical patterns of hierarchy and inequality, the meanings of race, gender, and sexuality over time, and how violent representations circulate within and away from the Caribbean (p.7). Thomas

(2011) concludes that violence in the Caribbean is a “complicated result of a structural history of colonialism and underdevelopment”, a process that is imminently racialised and gendered” that develops new geographies of belonging and exclusion”, not a generational “cultural characteristic” (pp.4 and 6-7)[16]. Over time, regional efforts positioned towards self-determination and decolonisation of the Caribbean “endured a cultural re-evaluation” that “ideologically linked to a mythical or actual Africa,” and result in “ongoing tensions between race and nation” as tenets of belonging, governance, and development in places like Jamaica (Thomas, 2004, pp.4 and 6).

Linking the role of identity to the complex web of geographical belonging, colonial history, and a “Caribbean culture of violence” also take shape in cultural identity theory by Stuart Hall:

> “The more we know and see of the struggles of the society of the periphery to make something of the slender resources available to them, the more important we understand the questions and problems of cultural identity to be in that process…” These themes have been “richly explored by Caribbean writers and artists - cultural identity presenting itself always as a problem to Caribbean people" (Hall, 1995, p.3).

Above highlights an argument that not only underscores the role of how history, but how culture makers in the Caribbean (i.e., writers, artists, etc.), can use discourse and art to intentionally define cultural identity by leaning into the consequences of historical violence that relegate the region to ‘the periphery’ and explores the complex facets that position Caribbean culture as a ‘problem’. While culture makers use their art and

[16] See subsection 2.4.1 for more theories on structural violence

discourse to work through these themes of problematic culture, this alludes to my thesis' wider argument of a “Caribbean culture of violence”. It is clear in Hall’s (1995) work that there is a history of thought leaders embodying an important defining role that works through the complex ramifications of colonialism, the problematic consequences of violence, and the power of discourse to contextualise the problematic aspects of how Caribbean society views Caribbean cultural identity in specific ways. In using cultural theory to understand how the region contends with its violent history, we can see a contrast to previously mentioned critiques of development discourse that can define the region in particularly non-contextually friendly ways. For example, Rupesinghe (1994) reinforces the idea of the power of development discourse can cast targeted value on things the sector prioritises (things alluding to modernity) and carefully discard the rest (e.g., tradition), yet what is clear is how social attitudes, identity, and gender expectations have been key tenets that help conceptualise how violence today can thrive (Morgan and Youseff, 2006). This thesis ultimately examines discourse that lives within development to understand the experiences of experts in the field. As such, this research does not accept ideas around a “culture of violence” at face value but is something that as a researcher I contemplate quite deeply throughout this work and particularly as it surfaces during interviews (see chapter four A culture of violence?).

Adding to this discussion on culture and violence, Kempadoo (2004) argues that the cultural identity, “Caribbeanness", is not static nor something we can pin to one singular thing, but rather it is a sense of belonging to an identity that took shape from a specific history and socio-cultural negotiation amongst different groups. For instance, Caribbean

scholar and geographer Patricia Noxolo (2016b) adds that a singular cultural identity of Caribbean people can be a problem because “Caribbean cultural frameworks"… “are not always evident in dialogue with the cultural frameworks through which the Caribbean is studied by Caribbean scholars, including geographers" (p.830). This critique suggests the act of casting the broad term of ‘Caribbean identity’ to mean a singular thing is due to how scholars actually study it, and it often uses misplaced cultural frameworks to build understanding. One solution to this issue posed by Noxolo (2016b) is to intentionally approach this type of research with specific frameworks to understand key topics related to Caribbean identity politics, culture, and violence. This calls to discard the approach that often the development sector has come to rely on (e.g., global research models, generic surveys, and broad frameworks not designed with the Caribbean in mind) to explain gendered violence[17] in favour of regionally developed, critical frameworks like Black Caribbean feminism that take an interdisciplinary, context-driven approach to explain experiences of violence. Adding to this stance, Crawford and Jackson-Best (2016) argue that the use of Caribbean feminism as a “pedagogy and praxis have been central”[18] to the way people in the Caribbean are trained in gender analysis, development policy and planning and community work (p.710).

[17] See: UN Women *et al.*, 2020
[18] See: Kempadoo and DeShong, 2021 for more on Caribbean feminist research methods and practice.

To briefly circle back to the original report (UN Women *et al.*, 2020) as an example of development discourse, it is worth noting that the reports' mention of the relationship between history and violence foreshadows a theme that has been relevant within discussions in Caribbean feminist praxis, critical development scholarship, and postcolonial Caribbean studies. For example, Noxolo's (2016a) work on in/security in the Caribbean has considered the histories of slavery that are wedded to a "system of chronic violence, structured into everyday life over centuries" and include both emotional and physical violence (p.2). As a result, she argues that the fluctuation between insecurity and security in the Caribbean "is not only linked with violence however: it is also negotiated as precariousness, instability or even ephemerality" (Noxolo, 2016a, pp.2-3). Considering the concept of Caribbean insecurity, the aim is to understand history and the consequences of colonialism and genocide "that produced the Caribbean as a region" but to also move beyond the idea that these are "discrete events of terror" but rather as "forms of systemic violence, into which the everyday lives of thousands of embodied individuals were structured over five centuries" (Noxolo and Featherstone, 2014, p.604). This includes a consideration for:

> "Violence of occupations, of plantation clearances and of large-scale forced trans-Atlantic movements of millions of bodies as both producing and produced by the intimate corporeal violence of murder, rape, and disfigurement.… the psychological violence of voiding and reinvestment of those Black bodies with racialised meaning, a process of literal denigration" (Noxolo and Featherstone, 2014, p.604).

This contextualisation of examination of historical violence highlights its function of being implanted and operating as a structured system that is embodied, produced, and mobile. The temporal components of violence framed in this way indicate how it has

existed and continues to exist through time, further suggesting the importance of postcolonial perspectives that are focused on the discursive power of development on gender and violence. Noxolo and Featherstone's (2014) positioning helpfully urges this thesis to carefully consider how violence should be examined beyond the surface of 'official' development discourse on GBV as a failure of modernity (e.g., Rupesinghe, 1994).

Other relevant contributions in critical development studies emphasise the necessity to use both Black Caribbean feminist and postcolonial frameworks of understanding. For example, Caribbean feminist Kamala Kempadoo (2004) argues that the global imagination often represents the Caribbean as a region that is "'backward' and 'undeveloped' condition", a product of the "colonial discourses or metaphors", a "fabrication of the European mind and imagination" (p.1). She adds that "the Caribbean defies static definition" .... "despite the violence and disruption that characterises its colonial history" ... and that there is a trend in Caribbean studies that aims to establish new ways and produce new ways to understand the Caribbean (Kempadoo, 2004, p.6). In light of the region's historical placement, initial readings on Kalpana Wilson's (2011, 2012, 2017) extensive work on the relationship between gender, race, and identity in international development significantly inspired my focus on contributing to this area of work but from a Caribbean feminist perspective. While the above mentioned work by Wilson centres on the question of racism and racialisation in international development through postcolonial, critical race, feminist, and political economy frameworks, her geographical grounding explores these topics in South Asia (specifically India) and

South Asian diasporas. Despite the geographic focus of Wilson's (2017) work on Asian populations, she adds helpful development critique on the interplay between race and development discourse, specifically her positioning of racial identity as a "discursive strategy of power" that is also always gendered (p.8). This point on race and identity politics will be explored in section 2.3 of this literature review. In summary, a predominating critique within critical development studies points to this very "intimate relationship between race, power, development discourse, policy and practice to slavery, colonialism and the Enlightenment period" and intentional efforts to make race invisible by the professional space of the sector itself (Wilson, 2011, pp.8, 315-317 and 23-24; White, 2002).

Crawford and Jackson-Best (2016) similarly highlight the importance of "the legacy of slavery and colonialism" in a specific Caribbean context but from a social justice perspective that considers the impact of these issues as not geographically bound to the region itself but impact individuals whose identities are:

> "Informed by addressing a myriad of social justice issues in the region and diaspora (poverty, sexism, discrimination, gender-based violence, hetero-sexism and homophobia, rights and legal reform, among many other things) within postcolonial and transnational feminist frameworks (Crawford and Jackson-Best, 2016, p.713)."

These scholars extrapolate on the importance of mobilising postcolonial feminist perspectives as they are "essential in discussing pedagogies and strategies" that address gender and equality "in the development process and within globalisation" (Crawford and Jackson-Best, 2016, p.712). In the above discussion, several considerations emerge that will be examined in further detail below. However, the first

consideration from Wilson (2011) points to critiques of development agendas that intentionally mask identities. The second considers how Caribbean feminist perspectives of development processes (Crawford and Jackson-Best, 2016) specifically consider the 'masked role' of slavery and colonialism as it relates to a myriad of what the sector would class as 'key development issues.'

Wilson (2017) further argues that the development sector intentionally imposes practices that render race invisible, and in doing so, contradicts the core of what development actually is. In this process of making race invisible, development discourse often applies simplistic, repeating dichotomies that segregate the "deserving and undeserving poor" i.e., men of colour who are assumed threats, predators, and victims of racialised and gendered colonial representations that drive development intervention methods (Wilson, 2017, p.15). This trope will be explored with further consideration in a Caribbean-centric context later in this literature review. And, to perpetuate this process, Wilson (2017) argues that development solutions and policies that are often put in place to mitigate violence, invoking narratives that protect women's rights and encourage women's choices can be viewed as "discursive smokescreens" because they imply an embodied coercion and violence that is racialised and gendered (p.1). Ultimately, Wilson (2017) argues that as a sector, development is "structured around the production and extension of difference, inequality, exclusion, and exploitation" (p.24).

Adding to this, Caribbean feminist Honor Ford-Smith echoes similar tenets of how professional spaces within the development sector put in place this idea of the

‘discursive smokescreen’. This is because Ford-Smith (1997) argues that organisations in the sector “often determine priorities, which are then applied in a blanket way” .... “when local factors are not taken into consideration” and as a result have “negative consequences for local organisations” who already have “little capacity for negotiation with more powerful organisations" (p.257). As a result, “funding policies sometimes seem prone to fetishising grassroots women, confusing class and sex origins with class and gender consciousness” (Ford-Smith, 1997, p.257). She concludes that it is critical for actors in the region to disentangle themselves from these dependency-stricken forms of funding that are positioned to help solve these development issues (Ford-Smith, 1997, p.257). Interestingly, Rosenfield (2017) similarly argues that there is an unusual ‘script’ of working relations existing between grantor and grantee as Caribbean women’s programmes often only progress by using input or ‘local knowledge’ from Caribbean scholars and gender activists (e.g., Peggy Antrobus[19], Dame Nita Barrow) (pp.55 and 68).

Further, Pugh’s (2013) work on the professional space of development, specifically the British High Commission’s implementation of participatory planning with fishermen in Barbados highlights how the peculiar ‘professional space’ of international development has a “precarious relationship” to development discourse, concepts of modernity, Caribbean culture, colonialism, creolisation, and Afrocentrism (pp.1266-1267). More specifically, he argues that when international development institutions included Bajans

[19] See more: Antrobus, 2000

in specific development processes (i.e., participatory planning), rather than feeling manipulated or misunderstood by the sector, Bajan fishermen became alienated, felt "worthless to society", and were "victims of their own words" as the authority from their voices within the development project was removed (Pugh, 2013, p.1267). In other words, critiques of the development sector indicate it to be extractive and driven by structures of dependency as exemplified in Wilson's (2017) broader critique of embodied coercion that is perpetuated and hidden behind 'smokescreen' narratives of development funding, inclusion, and support.

In addition to these critiques of development as a professional space, its processes and practises James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002) argue that development alliances "forged by activists and grassroots organisations" … "supported by complex networks of international and transnational funding and personnel" in reality are "new strategies of discipline and regulation" (p.990). Caribbean feminist Patricia Mohammed contextualises issues raised by Ferguson and Gupta (2002) as she grapples with the future of twenty-first century Caribbean feminism and its place in development by questioning if "the activist component of feminism (will) become co-opted by bureaucracy, mainstream conservatism, and dictated by the demands of funding agencies" (Mohammed, 2000, p.118). This stream of consciousness concords with earlier critiques (Ford-Smith, 1997) of the power of development organisations who fetishise 'local Caribbean women', creating power imbalances between those who have a voice and those who are silenced. I would argue that in light of this reality, there are particular groups of people, types of specific development organisations, and embedded

systems that make up the development sector with implicit power over certain groups (as reflected in Ford-Smith's (1997) commentary on strategic uses of discipline and regulation).

This consideration circles back to Wilson's (2012, p.4) earlier discussions that use postcolonial and critical development frameworks to adopt Foucault's (1991) conceptualisation of power as something inescapable, "circulating, and pervasive." However applicable Foucault's definition of power may be in enmeshing the relationship between development and colonialism Young (1994) argues that there is a paradoxical "absence of explicit discussions of colonialism" in his work despite it being a "central theoretical reference point for postcolonial analysis" (p.1). Foucault's stance on the ominous presence that power has will be discussed later in this work[20], where I draw on examples of women's experiences that reveal problematic, racially violent aspects embedded in Caribbean-based development organisations, systems, policies, intervention approaches, funding schemes, discourse, and more. And in light of the pervasive Foucauldian sense of power, we "need to unmake and unlearn development" (Escobar, 2012, p.223) because development discourse should not be used to mask the "crude reality of the dollar sign" but function as an ideology removed from the "real world", with "crystalised in practices that contribute to regulating the everyday goings and comings of people" in developing countries and exercises power by producing an effect on how people behave, feel and live (p.104). In other words, Escobar's (2012)

[20] See more: chapter six Compounding vulnerabilities and professional violence

critiques suggest that not only does development and its discourse operate as a somewhat crude transactionary language that barters money for their baseline of ‘progress’, the sector lives in its own mythical reality that generates power by hanging like a cloud over every aspect of the lives of people in developing countries[21]. This critique also fits within the broader scope of Wilson’s (2011, 2012, 2017) foundational critical development work on how discourse can equate to a smokescreen of progress that is often exclusively applied onto people of colour to blanket priorities. When examined in the Caribbean, this process can problematically fetishise women (Ford-Smith, 1988 and 1997). This highlights the link between how histories of oppression can instruct responses to the very oppression as it ties to cycles of ‘under-development’ led by non-profit organisations positioning themselves as stakeholders in mitigating key development issues.

2.2.1 Post-colonialism and development

In consideration of how postcolonial perspectives play out in the context of the Caribbean, Baksh-Soodeen (1998) argues that the region has arguably experienced the greatest global colonial penetration since the fifteenth century, with entire populations “wiped out and artificially replaced by hundreds of thousands of people from other continents for the sole purpose of serving European economic interests" (p.77). Other scholars who are adept to the cultural legacy of colonialism in the Caribbean argue that

[21] See more on this from interview participants in their critique of funding problems in the Caribbean section 6.5

it has deeply implicated how “violence has become a way of life”, from the way individual islands adapt to problems to the way their value systems are constructed (Youseff, 2010, p.2). This circles back to earlier critiques in this chapter on the existence of a ‘Caribbean culture of violence’. Examples in Trinidad and Tobago highlight examples where forced labour, corporeal punishment, and genocidal violence transformed enslavement into a “routine practice” that was “legally sanctioned”, “customary”, and the “most humane way” to mitigate “disorderly behaviour” for people of African descent (Brereton, 2010, pp.4-5).

However, postcolonial discourse on the Caribbean from the 1960’s onwards has considered the colonial experience from an anti-imperialist framework to reclaim Caribbean identities and to overcome present-day colonial influences (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998, p.78). Geographer, critical development scholar, and feminist Marion Werner’s book (2015) *Global Displacements: The Making of Uneven Development in the Caribbean,* considers the ties between Caribbean development, regional development organisations, and colonisation. More specifically, Werner (2015) highlights CARICOM’s focus on slavery, reparations, and native genocide in a 2013 Committee agenda that attempted to formulate a “new development for the Caribbean” (p.164). Werner (2015) highlights that CARICOM’s consideration of the consequential impact of slavery and colonialism that resulted in the region’s struggle to accumulate development resources and negatively impact things such as the region’s “public health, education, cultural institutions, cultural deprivation, psychological trauma, and scientific and technological “backwardness” (p.164). And recent scholarship (Kapoor, 2023) that examines

processes of decolonisation in development today urge for the decolonisation of: "knowledge production" in favour of "non-Eurocentric pedagogies", development studies as an academic discipline that has "tendencies towards 'imperial amnesia'", and material decolonisation (pp.346-347)[22]

As such, we see in the scholarship outlined in section 2.2 how development discourse has had a critical role (that can often be masked) when it comes to uncovering the embedded links between its power, colonialism in the Anglophone Caribbean, and the trajectory of violence in the region. When considering the relationship between exceptional violence (Thomas, 2004) and effects on Caribbean development as a discourse, I have underscored how the sector often focuses on 'under-development' and exclusion as well as contemporary development agendas targeted at 'accumulating development resources' to reverse the negative outcomes of a violent history without addressing its violent history. In sum, section 2.2 has mobilised key critical development cultural theory and postcolonial perspectives to argue that in order to understand the role of violence within the sector and its impact on specific groups of people (i.e., Black Caribbean women who are development workers), it is critical to carefully contextualise the issue of violence from a historical moment of time when the geography of the West Indies was enmeshed in colonial violence and unpick the power of how violence is framed in development and its discourse. In building this discussion on discourse

[22] See more recent work on race and development as it relates to feminism and the process of decolonising development: Kapoor, 2023; Rutazibwa, 2019; Tamale, 2020; Vergès, 2021.

around violence, the next section 2.3 will focus on Black Caribbean feminist theoretical work on identity, conceptualisations of Blackness, the politics of race, and highlight concepts that have emerged in a racialised history of belonging including creolisation and colourism (see subsection 2.3.1).

2.3 Conceptualising racialised identity politics and Blackness in the Caribbean

In review of key literature from Caribbean studies, feminist geography, Caribbean feminism, postcolonial discourse, and cultural studies that has importantly questioned the role of racialised identity, this section aims to bring context to what Blackness in the Caribbean might mean and examples of how race manifests (e.g., concepts on creolisation and colourism), how Blackness is made visible, and plays a role in making identities. This focused discussion on racialised identity politics in the Anglophone Caribbean is critical for this thesis' upcoming discussion on the experiences of Black Caribbean women and violence in empirical chapters four, five and six.

Feminist geographer Susan Friedman (1998) provides a countering starting point in her critique of race-focused research because it can obscure "the way in which geographical location and spatial migrancy are distinct constituents of identity" that are related to imagined communities (p.11). Further, feminist discourses that is preoccupied with race results in:

> "Repetitive cultural narratives structured around the white/other binary: victims and victimisers, colonised and colonisers, slaves, and masters, dominated and dominators, 'us and them', the good guys against the bad guys'" (Friedman, 1998, p.38).

While it is important to problematise binaries between victims and victimisers, especially how roles within violent relationships can blur (discussed further in section 3.1), there is a significant gap in her overall argument that intends to minimise the value a consideration for race / racial identity can bring to feminist geography research. I argue that it is an overly simplistic argument to suggest that when research acknowledges and examines the complex consequences of slavery, the research becomes reductive, repetitive, and incites an 'us versus them' blame-game. To the contrary, feminist geographers concerned with race offer valid frameworks. Ultimately, Friedman's (1998) stance aimed at minimising race in feminist geography work as an unjustified focus inadvertently dismisses some of the more nuanced arguments that feminisms existing within the Global South, specifically the Caribbean, can contribute to understanding geographies of space.

Friedman's (1998) attempt to highlight the 'distracting' focus of race within the wider discipline of feminist geography brings to surface Giovannetti's (2013) critique of other types of frameworks used in geography. For example, he argues that macro-geographical frameworks "completely miss regional, let alone local, Caribbean connections (and indeed scholarship) that are central to the oceans, hemispheres, and worlds they examine" (Giovannetti, 2013, p.85). This adds to what Hosein (2011) argues when considering feminism and the geography of the Caribbean in that

Caribbean feminism “cannot simply ‘go global’ and orient around consumptions of North American-produced feminist knowledge” (p.e116). This is because there is a “dearth” and “lacunae” of Caribbean feminist geography in Anglo-Caribbean academic spaces because of history and contemporary governance (Gahman and Collins, 2019, p.991). Although limited compared to other schools of thought, existing Caribbean feminist geographer’s contributions have helpfully pushed forward this sub-disciplinary agenda, providing “situated analyses” and “grounded glimpses of everyday realities and structural issues in the Caribbean” that wrestle with questions such as in/security (Noxolo and Featherstone, 2014), and difference (McKittrick and Peake, 2005), “the nexus of race-gender-history’ (Momsen, 1993), and development (Dunn, 1999; Gahman and Collins, 2019, pp.990-991). Despite Friedman’s (1998) argument that circuitously attempts to invalidate the foundational work of Black Caribbean feminist geography has contributed thus far, it is vital to prioritise the history of the region that was:

> “For centuries was rapaciously dispossessed, enslaved and expropriated by a multitude of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous imperialists…. societies, cultures, ecosystems, and psychologies…penetrated, disordered and extricated…. into disparate sites of quarantine and extraction” (Gahman and Collins, 2019, p.991).

Ultimately, “the aim and ambition of the coloniser, geopolitically, and biopolitically” cannot be extracted from feminist geographic scholarship based in the Caribbean (Gahman and Collins, 2019, p.991). As such, prioritising “Black subaltern/alternative geographies” is critical as they “work alongside and beyond traditional geographies and as a site of terrain of struggle” (McKittrick, 2006, p.7 in Jolly, 2020). In other words, this work importantly contributes to traditional feminist geographic praxis as I place value on the contributions and prioritisation that ‘subaltern feminisms’ such as Black Caribbean,

take on the ‘aims and ambitions of colonisation.’ This specific type of feminist analysis has been taken up and advanced by Afro-Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean, and Indigenous women for centuries (although perhaps not necessarily explicitly labelled in practice) and stems from an ongoing history (Gahman and Collins, 2019, p.993).

In consideration of the specific discussion on Blackness that resonates throughout my thesis, it is worth outlining some of the key interdisciplinary discussions held around ideas of Blackness that permeate the Anglophone Caribbean. Welcome (2022) argues that discourse on identity politics within the Anglophone Caribbean has adopted the “myth” and claim “that class rather than race is the dominant organising frame post-1960’s” (p.110). This denial of the presence of race, ignores “the persistence of whiteness as coloniality” and then denies the ability of racialisation as a technology to circulate (Welcome, 2022, p.110). Despite the term race not being widely used in the region, through colonialism, the Caribbean has been racialised and race is constructed as real in Caribbean life (Kempadoo, 2004, p.9). As such, it is vital to reinvoke discourse on race in the Anglophone Caribbean and consider the:

> “Social and historical processes and constructs that created social differences in terms of phenotype and ethnicity…shape and inform social relations in the twenty-first century, despite the lack of single, homogeneous, region-wide discourse on the subject, and in spite of the often-heard claims that racism no longer exists in the region” (Kempadoo, 2004, p.10).

Further, cultural scholars argue that racial identity should be considered a fluctuating process and production that is constituted from an “amalgamation” of different representations and recycled narratives (Agostini-Allen, 2016, p.119 and 121, Hall, 2013). Postcolonial scholars similarly nod at the importance of history as Saïd argues

that identity is based on the colonial construction of the 'Other', or in other words, a racialised individual who is both "knowable and irreducibly alien" (Saïd, 1978, in Wilson, 2011, p.319). Intersectional feminists take a more structuralist approach arguing that identity is constantly in flux and renegotiated based on understandings of self and others, mediated by social power structures, discourses, ideologies, and subjective positions (Barratt, 2016, pp.13 and 36). This is because social categories work to exclude and privilege individuals based on "raced and gendered hierarchies" and form representations that systematically subordinate women (Crenshaw, 1990, pp.1298 and 1282). This intersectional perspective also adds that racial identity is a discursive strategy of power that is always gendered and has the capacity to function as a space of resistance for marginalised people (Wilson, 2017, p.8; Crenshaw, 1990, p.1297). This aligns with Foucault's analysis of power whereby difference is produced and reproduced to regulate individuals. Keeping in mind this perspective on racial identity, the actual process of self-identifying as both Black and woman also highlights underlying power dynamics.

Relatedly, Black Caribbean feminist Rhoda Reddock (2020) proposes, that "the issue of race and class and later ethnicity have been central to Caribbean postcolonial discourse" and contextualising this in a Caribbean-centric space requires a consideration for the domination of African-descended populations in the region and juxtaposition of anti-African discrimination, "well established self-denial", African rejection, rampant racism, and a "strong sense of resistance against racism" (p.202). This is highlighted by work from Tate (2009) that describes how "becoming/being Black"

can be both an individual and communal experience (p.53). This means that in addition to racial identity being a constantly evolving process on an internal level, it is also something that is developed by relating to individuals who also exist within the experience of being of African descent.

More recent Caribbean cultural theory from Grégory Pierrot (2022) emphasises discursive expressions around the notion of Blackness as he considers the role of the language (specifically French) in the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the Caribbean. He argues that the word ‘Black’ in English “exiles the politics of Blackness to a familiar, but conveniently distant, historical, and cultural realm belonging to the Anglophone world” (Pierrot, 2022, p.100). In other words, the use of the term ‘Black’ itself cannot be untied from its history tied specifically to the Anglophone Caribbean as its application in other non-English speaking Caribbean contexts differ. Adding to this, Caribbean feminist anthropologist Welcome (2022) suggests that the “positioning of Black-identified Anglophone Caribbean people" has morphed into a “homogeneous grouping” in a “contemporary imagined community of ‘the Black’” that is dominated by US-centrism (p.110). And this “global production of ‘Black geographic margins” is mobilised by gendered and racialised political economic systems that ultimately converge “through a feeling of disposability” (Welcome, 2022, p.110).

Despite attempts to conceptualise Blackness from a homogeneous, American-centric perspective due to the geographical closeness of the Caribbean to the United States, there are significant “variegated experience of Black-identified people globally” and

Blackness as a category of identity has an inherent “unstable and processual nature” (Welcome, 2022, p.108). As such, “the meaning of Blackness remains anchored in the geography of the plantation, and the deathliness this produces still haunts the Anglophone Caribbean” (Welcome, 2022, p.108). And, from a postcolonial vantage point, “the meaning of Blackness remains anchored in the geography of the plantation (along with its tools: the ledger, the ship, the whip, etc.)” (Welcome, 2011, p.110). Considering this conversation, it becomes difficult to not take an interdisciplinary consideration for the way postcolonial perspectives, feminist, geography, and cultural/identity politics converge to construct arguments around the complexity of defining a notion of what Blackness in the Anglophone Caribbean actually means, looks like, and the consequences of existing within the ‘category of Black’. As such, I would argue that to conceptualise ‘Blackness’ in the English-speaking Caribbean is to consider historically grounded representations which outline an individual’s sense of self and are reflections of existing power dynamics/structures that are constantly in-flux and have very real consequences for individuals who specifically identified by this category of belonging.

Deborah Thomas’ (2004) work that explores Blackness in Jamaica presents useful arguments from an anthropological, Caribbean scholar, and critical development perspective on this question of identity and development. Thomas (2004) argues that there has only been recent attention focused on the uneasy, contradictory relationships “between state-driven ‘identity politics’ and ‘development politics’” (pp.264-5). And, in her contextualisation of how “international racial and feminist consciousness” has taken

shape in Jamaica, she posits how individuals were encouraged to “organise for local development around identities that did not have local boundaries—as workers, as Black people, as women” (Thomas, 2004, p.77). Along similar lines, Caribbean feminist Shirley Anne Tate and race scholar Ian Law introduce the making of identity politics in the Caribbean through ‘racial Caribbeanization’. They define this as the outcome of the Caribbean experiencing a “process of ethnoracial domination” that is intimately rooted in European colonisation, the genocide of Amerindian people, the exploitation of Africans, indentured labour, and embedded “racial and ethnic hierarchies in post-colonial, post-independence contexts” (Law and Tate, 2015, p.2). In other words, “European and American racial regimes” have “instilled a long and terrifying process of domination and destruction” creating a distinct, new form of racialisation (Law and Tate, 2015, p.26).

Thomas (2004) adds that in the English-speaking Caribbean in particular, throughout British imperialism, “cultural control that attempted to socialise colonial population into accepting the moral and cultural superiority of Englishness” by “transforming space and linking hierarchies" specifically to “colour, class, culture and gender” (p.4). This means that upon the introduction the Caribbean had to British imperialism, the Caribbean underwent a violently forced socio-cultural, political, and economic upheaval (i.e., ‘spatial transformation’) where markers of difference based on physical appearance and ties to social capital became place makers for individuals who existed within the orbit of colonialism. Thomas’ (2004) focus above on the role of hierarchical control and cultural transformation alludes to her nodding towards an idealist and realist stream of critical race theorisation. For instance, idealists within critical race theory (CRT) argue that

racism is a way of “thinking, mental categorization, attitudes, discourse, and social constructions that can be unmade and deprived” through changing social systems and hierarchies comprised of “attitudes, unconscious feelings, scripts, and social teachings” (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017, p.21). On the other hand, realists within the camp of CRT would counter this by focusing on how racism is more than a collective of “unfavourable impressions” about groups of people, but it is the way that “society allocates privilege, status and racial hierarchies that determine who benefit tangibly” (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017, p.21). Interestingly, realists take a particular interest in the process of delegating privilege rather than idealists who focus on the social hierarchy itself. While there are subtle nuances that distinguish these particular two camps, I would argue that it is more helpful to examine the above conversations around identity politics in the Caribbean, specifically concerning Blackness, as identities that are in conversation with each other, reinforcing the other, remaining unfixed, and intersecting across different camps to understand race.

Adding to this, Hall (2013) and Agostini-Allen (2016) argue that racial identity in a broader sense should be seen as a production, something that is always in process and “constituted from different, complex representations rather than a historical fact” (Agostini-Allen, 2016, pp.119 and 121). It appears that both of the above scholars aim to emphasise the importance of historicising the makings of racial identity and politics surrounding this in the Caribbean. I would argue that this line of thinking directly correlates to certain streams within CRT, specifically materialists of CRT that argue it is necessary to examine the conditions that have prevailed over time and history to

understand the ebb and flow of racial progress and retrenchment as particular groups have exploited others to form collective attitudes which rationalise the exploitation itself (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017, p.22). In other words, it appears that there are acknowledgements of the role of materialist understanding of race within the frameworks used by Law and Tate (2015), Angostini-Allen and Hall (2013) as they examine Caribbean identity politics underscoring the importance of history.

It is worth noting that CRT does not go without its critiques, particularly within identity politics scholarship as Hall (2013) argued that the disciplinary focus on race categories indicates that scholars do not necessarily account for hierarchies relating to skin colour and tone, i.e., colourism. Tate's work (2015) on race considers the effects of the "transgenerational transfer of colonial positioning" and "colour hierarchy" that have positioned Black bodies in particular ways, and as a result we see things like skin bleaching become popularised in the Caribbean (p.73). In light of the different nuanced concerns for the way racialised identity politics emerge within Caribbean spaces, it is important to examine components of racialisation that are process driven. In one example by Tate (2015) this is the process of transmuting colonial values across generations in the form of bleaching skin to achieve whiteness in certain Black populations. As such, I would argue that a focus on the process-driven components of 'Blackness' over time, in conjunction with historicising identity politics through a post-colonial framework offers nuanced insight into this research.

Further, there is value in building understanding around the nuances and agility of identity politics particularly in consideration of Black women's experiences, Harnois and Barriteau (2015) and Crenshaw (1990) have helpfully emphasised their use and importance of intersectionality theory. This group of scholars focus on the specific way gender hierarchies are never experienced in isolation from other statuses, particularly race and ethnicity, which then create new forms of inequality and "dimensions of disempowerment" (Barriteau, 2003, p.67; Crenshaw, 1990, p.1249; Harnois, 2015, pp.365, 367, 382). While Crenshaw's work on intersectionality theory has been predominantly grounded in the experiences of violence against Black women in the United States, she focuses on "unveiling the processes of subordination…people who are privileged by them", and how this impacts people differently to "foster and create social hierarchies" (Crenshaw, 1990, p.1297). It is also worth noting that aside from Crenshaw (1990) there have been other scholars "working with the ideas of intersectionality" well before hers (Guidroz and Berger, 2009; Hopkins, 2019). In light of the helpfulness that intersectionality can provide as a broader theoretical reference point, the term has been mobilised by scholars from various disciplines and a "range of theoretical and normative vantage points" upon Crenshaw's publication in 1991 (Carbado and Harris, 2019, p.2194). For example, in academic spaces (inclusive of this doctoral research) intersectionality is now a common framework that calls for scholars, data, and research processes to recognise women's differences and their multiple minority statuses (Harnois, 2015, pp.365 and 368). The framework considers how racial identity is always gendered and how women of colour who experience racial oppression are more likely to hold a strong political consciousness of their gender (Harnois, 2015,

p.367). As such, it is worth mentioning that despite my work's focus on more specific Black Caribbean feminist frameworks, shedding light on the consideration that intersectionality theory brings to this work and its application within Caribbean feminism. For example, Caribbean feminists (Barriteau, 2003; DeShong, 2013; Mohammed, 1998) have extensively covered the way gendered social relations and identity politics shape women's experiences, and importantly confront interlinked layers of discrimination including (hetero)patriarchal power, (neo)colonialism, racism, sexism, and classism (Barriteau, 2003, pp.57-63; DeShong, 2013, p.2; Mohammed, 1998).

In highlighting Black Caribbean feminist thought, critical race theory, and intersectionality to draw insights into identity politics in this section of the literature review, Carbado and Harris (2019) highlight the possibility that scholars can "erroneously conflate intersectionality" (p.2196). This discursive overuse, or over-reliance, on popularised terminology like intersectionality that become mobilised in many different spaces, ultimately can fall into the category of a development 'buzzword and fuzzword' (Cornwall, 2007). In other words, terminology that becomes "passwords to funding and influence", with purchasing power, euphemistic qualities, and leaves "much of what is actually done in its name unquestioned" and "combines general agreement on the abstract notion that they represent" (Cornwall, 2007, pp.471-472). As such, I agree with Carbado and Harris' (2019) consideration of 'broadening and complicating' "standard conceptualizations of intersectionality" and contest views that other nuanced frameworks like feminism and critical race theory "can avoid essentialism" (p.2196). Further, its use in social geography has been critiqued by

Hopkins (2019) as being overlooked and calls for a need to use this output of Black feminist perspective with care rather than “being deployed in a way that unwittingly reproduces white, colonialist, racist and masculinist discipline” (p.937). Considering this, it is worth caveating this section by acknowledging the reality that while these theoretical frameworks help to frame how Black Caribbean women may experience their ‘Blackness’ in the context of violence, it is important to acknowledge the complexities of identity to erase the possibility of essentialising it as a concept.

Interestingly, scholarship from Black Caribbean scholars identify intersectionality’s history as tied to mobilising foundational streams of consciousness, identity politics, and power. Reddock (2020) argues that “conceptualising a theory of difference for the Caribbean” can be used to show our interconnectedness, our separateness, “isolate the ways in which the constructed differences have contributed to how we have conceptualised ourselves”, and be a “basis for collective social action” (p.208). Further, McDonald (2016) has highlighted these important, yet nuanced, intersections between Caribbean feminist theory and intersectionality theory, in that Caribbean feminism took shape across the Anglophone Caribbean to create a “consciousness-raising” or “praxis” where activists formed “intersectional feminist critiques” to address “the disparities among women” through organising (p.55). McDonald (2016) adds that “the attention these activists paid to the intersection of different power hierarchies was a product of their involvement in other forms of non-feminist politics” (p.55). Ultimately, Caribbean feminism has a highly reflexive nature, an emancipatory agenda, and aims to liberate women, however the attention that Caribbean feminism has given to certain women’s

experiences has been historically quite divided (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998; Lazarus, 2013, p.10). This divide can be seen in the second wave of Caribbean feminism which emerged in the 1960's and 1970's which had a majority Afrocentric focus and was rooted in postcolonial studies (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998, p.78). More recently in the 1990's, a wave of Indo-Caribbean feminist scholarship (for example Hosein and Outar, 2016), gained popularity, emerging through activist discourse and organisations that grappled with experiences of targeted oppression against Indo-Caribbean women (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998, p.79). It is worth highlighting this example of diversity within Caribbean feminisms to emphasise that the Caribbean brings a complex colonial history, diverse cultures, multiple lived realities, *and* divided feminist identity politics under the umbrella of Caribbean feminism. Amidst the complexities, nuances, and diversities held within the Caribbean region when considering women's realities, Hunter (2017) argues that there is the consistent experience of gendered exploitation that interlinks the territories together.

Further, work by Reddock (1988) defines feminism as the "the awareness of the oppression, exploitation, and/or subordination of women within society, and the conscious action to change and transform the situation" (p.53). Momsen (2000) adds that feminism "privileges the subaltern voices of a people marginalised by both gender and race, in a region which itself is increasingly marginalised in the global economy" (pp.51-52). Caribbean feminism has been critiqued for how liberal and socialist-feminist frameworks have had minimal relevance on the lives of Caribbean women because of the way women were positioned as ignored, passive victims (Foster, 1992). Instead,

Caribbean feminism should be seen to “operationalise gender, class, race, sexual identity, and political action within the Caribbean context” and note how these experiences were distinctly different to Black North American women (Foster, 1992, p.17). This new theoretical approach was expanded by others such as Baksh-Soodeen (1998) for example who focused on Indo-Caribbean feminist concerns and how postcolonial feminist discussions on race in the Caribbean had a predominating ‘Afrocentric’ discursive focus on the African Caribbean experience.

2.3.1 Creolisation and colourism

In light of the complex nuances of this discussion of Blackness and identity politics, an important tenet of discussion that emerges in the Caribbean includes the concept of creolisation. Jamaican cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter’s (1972) work on Blackness in the Caribbean helpfully introduces ideas on how processes of racialisation manifest in the form of creolisation. Wynter (1972) argues that reclaiming Blackness in the Caribbean is in a sense the “revindication of the native, the revindication of the humanness of Man”, and each time major “movements of social upheaval” locate Black populations in “frontier zones” (p.71). And it exists as a “secret underground current of people’s lives, myths, and dreams” that exist outside of the “time continuum” (Jones, 1994; Wynter, 1972, p.65). By way of explanation, Jones (1994) and Wynter (1972) propose that Blackness as a category of analysis foundational to what is human and exists beyond time and space, but Blackness emerges more clearly during times of ‘social upheaval’. This highlights the reality that there have been long standing discussions of race as a

category of analysis both across the Anglophone and non-Anglophone speaking Caribbean around the topic of creolisation, also known as "Kreyòl/Krijoro/Creole/créole/criollo" (Pérez-Rosario and Jobson, 2022). For reference, this section considers creolisation as a signal of belonging in the Caribbean "by birth or descent" ... "at distinct moments and locations," and an "exclusive category that at different junctures is deployed to marginalise bozales, Amerindian, or Indian Caribbean peoples" (Pérez-Rosario and Jobson, 2022, p.81).

Adding to this, foundational arguments from Brathwaite (1974), referenced by Reddock, argues that the Caribbean is in fact largely a "creole space" that is a result of the "forced acculturation of Africans to European norms, and behaviours", and the "inadvertent assimilation of Europeans to African norms" (Reddock, 2020, p.203). Reddock (2020) continues that this notion of a creole Caribbean established hierarchical cultural and linguistic forms of 'accepted' Euro-Creole identities to more hidden Afro-Creole identities. Interestingly, Oro (2021) mobilises Brathwaite's work (2021) focused on "the interiority of ancestrality and marronage" (p.134). And Stewart (2019) contextualises Reddock's (2020) work to suggest that "Afro-Caribbean feminism acknowledges the intersecting privileged and oppressed identities of Black Caribbean women ...and the continued legacies of colonialism on the commodification of Black women's bodies" (Stuart, 2019, pp.153-154). As an aside, Stewart's (2019) note on simultaneous privilege and oppressed identities aligns deeply with this thesis' methodological approach (section 3.2) and consideration for my own positionality (section 1.4).

On the other hand, Oro (2021) considers Brathaite's work (1975) that reimagines the terrain of 'Caribbeanness' as one that "transcends colonial knowledge production bounded by outer plantation speculations" to envision "an inner plantation where ancestrality and neglected Maroons are not simply footnotes but in the body of the text" (Oro, 2021, p.134). Cultural theorist Walcott (2021) adds to Brathwaite's (1974) theorisation of creolisation arguing that creolisation is actually not unique to the Caribbean alone, but rather cuts across the entire Americas and as a concept is unable "to come to terms with its actual reality", cannot "function honestly" and is:

> "Most heavily felt and borne by Black people who become the real and symbolic avatars of a notion of the creole" ...a "bastardised adaption of some other superior position that they can never reach" .... with a "violent logic that ranges from banal dismissal to death" (Walcott, 2021, p.120).

In other words, locating the identity politics of Blackness in the Anglophone Caribbean is a process that acknowledges the exceptionality of a specific Caribbean-contextualised experience deeply entrenched in colonialism, but also is one that considers the possibility of regional experiences that tie Blackness to one beyond the physical geography of the Caribbean alone. For example, a case study of the realities of race are revealed in Sylvia Wynter's (1972) work on Blackness and creolisation in Jamaica. Her work highlights a simultaneous "growing Black consciousness" in conjunction with a racial, economic, and social consciousness, "hence the complexity of this consciousness" (Wynter, 1972, p.69). Wynter (1972) adds that Jamaica's majority Black population is offset by an overwhelming concentration of economic power owned by whites (or as identified as Jews, Syrians, and "honorary whites" like Chinese, the mulatto class, and "the occasional Black man of wealth") reflects historicised concepts

from slavery where white exists at the top of social hierarchies, mulatto is deemed “Black-but-educated”, the creole class in the middle, and to be Black is to be at the bottom (p.69). This discussion on Jamaica highlights the hierarchical tension between race-based categories as being tied to power and class and how it permeates a Jamaican consciousness and sense of social belonging.

Adding to this discussion of stratified race relations due to creolisation, it is worth mentioning the role of colourism and how it permeates the politics of racialised identity. Hall’s (2018) work on colourism defines it as a “proxy code for an otherwise universal social dynamic”, the product of “the establishment of the globalisation of light skin”, a “racial world order hierarchy that is succinct, rigorous, and multifaceted” resulting in “forms of litigation, beauty standards, marital patterns, and rates of income compensation” (pp.2137-8). In addition to race, skin shade remains an everyday signifier of ‘Otherness’ and sameness in societies structured by racial dominance and hierarchy (Connor, 2004; Mercer, 1994; Tate, 2015, p.2). Even in postcolonial, seemingly racially homogeneous, societies skin reveals which individuals can occupy the category “human” (Pierre, 2012; Tate, 2015, p.2). In somewhat of a materialist critical race theorist perspective, Tate (2009) argues that throughout the history of the Caribbean, skin colour, facial features, and hair texture have had the power to shape the quality of Black women's lives. This is because during the enslavement period in the Caribbean a woman’s femininity and ‘raced beauty aesthetics’ were located very differently depending on her shade: the body politics of white women were elevated, compared to the way mixed race women were often hyper-sexually desired, and Black

women were often viewed as “the womb of slavery” (Mohammed, 2000; Tate, 2009, p.62).

This example of privileging gendered bodies based on race *and* skin shade within communities of people of African descent unfortunately plays out in similar ways today. I would argue this speaks to the way meanings inscribed based on one's racial identity can move and replicate throughout history and be a product of internalising self and those around you. For example, Caribbean feminist Shirley Tate (2021) considers the complexities behind racial meanings that have shown to travel through time by considering the psyche of creole white populations in the Anglophone Caribbean and the boundaries of Blackness. She argues that while creole white populations in the Anglophone Caribbean desire to be “brown”, this does not mean they desire to be Black because of “the history of settler colonialism, enslavement, indenture, and racialisation,” however “Blackness is disavowed within the desire for browning/brown” through processes such as tanning (Tate, 2009; Tate, 2021, p.197). Here we see how white populations in the region today have produced their own forms of identity politics around Blackness by instilling meanings on what is/not desirable that ultimately took root during a period when their forefathers existed.

Further, in the Anglophone Caribbean, “through colonisation, racism became prominent….and as a result, stratifying people on the colour of their skin became normalised” where populations of mixed mulatto people were created through (non)consensual relations between slave owners and slaves, forming their own social

class with better opportunities tied to lighter complexions (e.g., inherit wealth, educational access) and often dominated Caribbean politics, economics, and culture (Rahman, 2020, pp.18-19). Rahman further adds that today, colourism is "largely unchallenged in Caribbean culture," with colourist ideologies preserved in school, the media, politics, music, and social practices, resulting in persisting structural inequalities amongst minority white, Asian, and mixed-race groups with amassed control (Rahman, 2020, p.19). In this example, similar to Tate (2009 and 2021), we see how colonisation inscribed different meanings depending on skin shade and the origins of that skin (e.g., dark skinned Asian person versus a dark-skinned Black person) which established structural and systemic privileges that have stood the test of time and reinforce experiences of racism today.

With that said, the historic roots embodied in colourism today may depict an image whereby darker skinned Black women desire a lighter skinned appearance based on the affiliated advantageous "political and libidinal economies" yet despite this assumption, not all Black women want to be white (Tate, 2015, p.118). One physical example of this tension between non/desire of attaining whiteness can be seen in the popularised practice of skin bleaching. Skin bleaching, or shade shifting, is a controversial "race-performative decolonising practice" and arguable "aesthetic enhancement" that some scholars argue is practised "in opposition to white supremacy and colourism" (Tate, 2015, pp.3-4). Although my research on racialisation processes does not explicitly focus on women's narratives of skin bleaching as a form of identity making, it is worth highlighting the complexity of existing as different shades of Black.

Further, the second half of Tate's (2015) definition of skin bleaching can be problematised as being paralleled to self-decolonisation. This indicates that making permanent aesthetic changes to one's racial identity and orienting oneself towards whiteness can be seen as an act of self-liberation rather than, as I argue, subscribing to a Eurocentric, white beauty standard that has been historically based on racial inequality. Relatedly, Tate's work (2015) on shade shifting has paralleled "Blackness" to low self-esteem and argues this to be the root of racism rather than examining how whiteness functions "as *the* 'global ideal'" and how to "unseat whiteness as the space from which everything begins" (p.118).

With that said, I have discussed the role of identity politics in the Caribbean, specifically related to race and processes where Blackness is racialised. I have also drawn in important consideration to highlight the inner workings of identity politics that call upon 'Blackness' and processes of racialisation as a helpful starting point when considering the more specific experiences of a Black woman's experience of violence in the Caribbean. The next section 2.4 provides a focused discussion on theorising violence and gender relations in the Caribbean, with specific consideration for structural violence (subsection 2.4.1) and intimate partner violence (subsection 2.4.2).

2.4 Theorising violence and gender

This section considers scholarship that theorises the relationship between violence and gender relations in the Caribbean. It is important to consider this intimate relationship

and unpick some of the nuances to different types of violence that exist within the Caribbean. This is because one of the main critiques existing within research is that it can have an ungendered analysis and create a knowledge gap that ignores “gendered patterns of inequality [that] lead to differential experiences of violence for women” (Wilding, 2014, p.228). This thesis is an attempt to mitigate this knowledge gap from the voices of a specific group of Black women. In order to do this, I will first discuss some of the key contributions that engage discourse on gender and violence in the region including perspectives within feminist geography, Black Caribbean feminism, critical development studies, and briefly acknowledge important input from psychological understandings of violence and victimisation. I will then mobilise work that highlights some of the intricacies on structural violence in subsection 2.4.1. Then, in subsection 2.4.2 I will define intimate partner violence (IPV), contextualise it within the scholarship and region, and highlight nuanced examples of how individual identities tied to cases of IPV can blur boundaries between victims and perpetrators.

Globally in the 1980’s and 1990’s feminists mobilised “the language of ‘gender equality’ and ‘women’s empowerment’” to fit into “major development priorities” from “international NGOs to donor governments to multilateral agencies” (Cornwall, 2015, p.396). This was also largely the case in the Caribbean. The 1990’s experienced institutional and state-level engagement in this wider development discourse and agenda setting around the ‘key development issue’ of gendered violence. In Pargass and Clark’s (2003) summary of this history and relationship between Caribbean states, violence, and human rights, the scholars frame the Caribbean’s initial institutional

engagement with “regional and global advocacy” efforts as being committed to ending GBV (p.40). For example, several Caribbean countries signed and ratified the Organisation of American States’ Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence and Caribbean states part of CARICOM signed and ratified key recommendations made in the 1979 UN General Assembly adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Pargass and Clark, 2003, pp.40-41).

There were also significant ties between these examples of institutional responses and non-state responses (e.g., civil society actors) to violence. This is because the 1980’s and 1990’s also experienced a surge in local advocacy groups, civil society, and NGOs in the Caribbean focused on gender and violence issues (Pargass and Clark, 2003). In parallel to these developments, at the time Caribbean feminist agendas took shape in “pursuit of social justice” and the deployment of “gender as the primary category through which a critique of the human condition is invoked” (Rowley, 2010, p.1). Gender activism became conceptualised as the Caribbean feminist movement’s defining legacy (Robinson, 2011). This period “marked the beginning of and subsequent surge in the use of “‘gender’ to mark an institutional shift”, and a “thinly veiled articulation” of an “upward redistribution of state resources” (Rowley, 2017, p.116). In addition, there was a surge of social awareness campaigns, education programmes, project development initiatives, and community training opportunities all spearheaded by foundational feminist influences such as the Caribbean Association for Feminist Action and Research (CAFRA), regional groups like “Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

(DAWN), Women and Development Studies Project (WAND), and CAFRA [who] were aided by the machinery of the UN Decade" (McDonald, 2016, p.55; Pargass and Clarke, 2003). Other institutions based a universities including the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies implemented compelling research agendas (Pargass and Clarke, 2003) and "critical pedagogy" that connected teaching, activism, curriculum, and community outreach activities (Crawford and Jackson-Best, 2016, p.713).

Running in tandem to this included international agencies who worked to finance projects and campaigns on the popularised topic of GBV to build capacity and advocacy skills of local women's organisation and target local structures (e.g., churches, the police, legal systems) to bring transformative change at the local level (Pargass and Clarke, 2003, p.68). Several Anglophone Caribbean governments also formally accepted that the issue of GBV warranted attention and state action due to significant underreporting of domestic violence despite attempts to build "knowledge and understanding" to determine the root causes of the manifestations of violence (Pargass and Clarke, 2003, p.41). Amidst these multi-tiered efforts, a centralised system in any single Caribbean country that gathers data and information on GBV, despite attempts of standardisation, is an area of progress that remains underdeveloped (Pargass and Clarke, 2003). Due to this, some scholars argue that the "dearth of statistical data within the sub-region must be aggressively addressed" to examine social and gender issues related to Caribbean economies or the region risks poorly informed "policies and programmes" and to achieve the sustainable development goals focused on gender

(Stuart, 2017, p.45). Rowley (2010) adds that mobilising a gendered analysis today, is "now woefully inadequate when faced with the complex terrain of twenty first century Caribbean feminist advocacy" (p.1). This critique resonates with Cornwall and Rivas' (2015) position on how gender and development discourse has become somewhat outdated as "these terms have been eviscerated of conceptual and political bite", compromising their ability to "demand rights and justice" meaning a post-2015 agenda needs "new frames of analysis" (p.396). And, to maintain vigour across the Caribbean's gender justice movement, amidst a "history of feminist legal advocacy", gender mainstreaming is argued to be the "primary vehicle" where effective discourse on gender equality can be held (Rowley, 2011, p.56).

Amidst the variety of stakeholders (e.g., state institutions, international agencies, grassroots organisations, localised feminist movements, etc.) who demonstrate their commitment to anti-violence and women's issues, the Black Caribbean feminist movement provided rich theoretical contributions based on their specific concern and focus on gender and violence. For example, Tate (2015) argues that while there are overarching similarities of violence experienced by Black women and contributing local identity politics, Black Caribbean women simultaneously become "unknowable", the "most known body" and have an "unremarked absence" (p.118)[23]. In other words, it becomes a common experience for Black Caribbean women to be simultaneously ignored (e.g., a personal experience of violence turned into a statistic on violence in a

[23] The experience of being invisible and hypervisible is explained in further detail in section 6.3.

development report), be hypervisible (e.g., re-victimised as the social demographic that overwhelmingly experiences domestic abuse), and be invisible (e.g., the conditioned expectation of violence as part Black women's history)[24].

Crenshaw's work on intersectionality (1990) adds that for Black women, violence remains a significant social and material consequence of the multiple dimensions of Black women's identities. In other words, violence can manifest both in clear and unmarked ways[25], and take different physical, emotional, structural, and symbolic forms depending on the context and actors involved. Findings from Barriteau's (2019) recent Caribbean feminist investigation on power and intimacy argues that economic violence against Caribbean men and women can manifest simultaneously in both the public and private spheres of women and men's lives (e.g., within the home and intimate relations and externally by way of community/society/work, etc.). She extends her findings by critiquing the lack of literature concerning Caribbean women's experiences of economic violence, increased vulnerability in their sexual unions and the "absence of state-sponsored protective mechanisms" (Barriteau, 2019, p.318).

Adding to these conceptualisations of violence, feminist geographer Wilding (2014 and 2016) relates violence to identity politics, building onto the discussion I presented in section 2.3 that conceptualised racialised identity politics. Wilding adds that violence is

[24] See section 4.5 on racialised violence in Trinidad and Tobago
[25] The specificities of how violence manifests in unexpected ways will be discussed in empirical chapter six on 'Compounding vulnerabilities and professional violence'.

something that is “not fixed, but mutable, contested, and constructed by dominant moral codes and social institutions” that can “mediate narratives” existing in societies often with “deep social cleavages” and function as a “catalyst for effective action and organising” (Wilding, 2014, pp.239 and 4-5; Wilding, 2016, p.198). She argues that a feminist geographer's lens provides a “particular language to problematise the discursive crossroads that violence occupies” and “make sense of the legal, moral, and ideological boundaries that govern how violence is understood and responded to” (Wilding, 2016, p.198). Further, forms of violence that are understood to be real, ordinary, or (un)acceptable depend on the context, which can also be managed, manipulated, and interpreted by individuals differently (Wilding, 2016, p.5). The threat of violence itself can be established through rules, stories, symbolic acts, and behavioural norms that can be just as powerfully debilitating as the actual lived experience (Hume, 2008, p.71; Wilding, 2014, pp.232-233). Here we see working arguments that incorporate intersectionality, Caribbean feminism, and feminist geography perspectives to discuss the function of violence and how violence becomes an elusive process dependent on the context in which it manifests, how it can be imagined/locally interpreted, and the identities of individuals involved.

Feminist geographers Valentine (1989) and Wilding’s (2014) concept of “Othering violence” adds complexity to this interdisciplinary discussion. Both scholars similarly argue that in violent contexts, it can be a challenge for victimised women to maintain a sustained fear towards men at all times which makes women less likely to respond to violence within the familiarity of the private domestic sphere (i.e., the home) and more

so ‘accept’ the idea/existence of the threat from “stranger danger” and develop coping avoidance strategies such as seeing violence as an experience of the ‘Other’ (Valentine, 1989, p.71; Wilding, 2014, pp.232 and 240). To sustain ‘Othered violence’, “gendered geographies of fear” emerge, or in other words, an individual’s movement becomes controlled by the actual perpetrators of violence existing both inside and outside the home (Wilding, 2014, pp.229 and 231). In sum, there is a noted tendency for women to affiliate danger within the public sphere, adopt social distancing techniques to cope with their fears, and overlook violence that may occur in the privacy of their homes (Valentine, 1989).

Adding to these discussions highlights examples of ‘Othered violence’ found in Wilding’s (2016) work on the ways different actors participate in the perpetuation of “persisting, diverse forms of gendered violence” in Trinidad (p.4). Gang violence was found to blur identities and boundaries between individuals who can be classed as simultaneous perpetrators of and protectors against violence (Wilding, 2014, pp.239 and 231). This specific type of violence (one that is deeply tied to cases of domestic violence) can highlight how in Trinidad, violence can manifest as control that relies on how it is interpreted externally and responded to by others to “extend that control” (Wilding, 2014, p.232). In examples of domestic violence in Trinidad there was a noted tendency to normalise “physical abuse” that conflates with visible hyper-masculinities of men that can be acquired through goods, money, respect, and having submissive, loyal women (Wilding, 2010, p.743). This example suggests how “social fabric is deeply impregnated with gender conventions” which “only become obvious when transgressed” (Plummer

and Geofroy, 2010, p.8). Using gang violence as an example highlights a case where violent control transforms into expressions of hyper-masculinised gang violence as men respond to one another's behaviour in displays of 'gendered conventions' that blur the boundaries between victim and perpetrators of violence and acts of violence/self-defence become complicated (Plummer and Geofroy, 2010; Wilding, 2010, 2014, 2016). This discussion and example lead me to consider the blurred, bounded geographies of violence between the public and private and other ways (gender) identities in the Caribbean require careful examination when discussing specific forms of violence.

Additionally, this interdisciplinary mosaic of examples outlining the complexities of (gender) identities and violence draws in Deborah Thomas' (2011) work on 'exceptional violence' in Jamaica. She argues that 'exceptional violence' can help us "reimagine the postcolony from the imperial moment of New World expansion" which concretised the Caribbean due to cycles of genocide, violence, patterns of colonisation, Zionism, everyday structural violence[26], and the emergence of urban gangs that impersonate state-like functioning (Thomas, 2011, pp.3, 8, 10). Youseff (2010) adds to this postcolonial positioning:

> "The encouragement of intra-group violence; the deliberate breaking down of family units; and the absolute subjugation of the African male to inhumane white male —owners and overseers, all contributed to a legacy of violence through these practices' devastating effects on the human psyche" (Youseff, 2010, p.2).

A consequence of this is domestic violence due to the "internalisation of male powerlessness" that is the result of women and children becoming astoundingly

[26] See subsection 2.4.1 on structural violence

vulnerable, men become villainised, abused, find difficulty “managing conflict and disagreement and their own sense of powerlessness”, and attempt “to maintain power and control” while women develop a stronger desire to “take control of their lives” (Holder-Dolly and Youseff, 2010, pp.3-4). This resonates with critiques of human rights discourse in the Caribbean. For example, Pargass and Clarke (2003) argue that “within the Caribbean…violence against women is embedded in the context of cultural, socioeconomic and political power relations" (p.39). They further add that Caribbean societies are “cleavaged by class and race divisions, are organised around hierarchical gender power relations with male domination” ultimately “reducing women to economic and emotional dependency” (Pargass and Clarke, 2003, pp.39-40). Ultimately, because of the complex nature of violence tied to historically grounded narrations of violence that play out in contemporary gender relations, violent expressions cannot be boxed into neat, dichotomizing categories of analysis. Rather, violence exists on a continuous, “interlinked spectrum of mutually reinforcing behaviours” (Kelly, 1989, p.76) that influence each other (Wilding, 2014, p.236). In this description, violence becomes an expression within a cycle that feeds itself. Violence as a set reinforcing behaviours aligns with Salem and Larkin’s (2021) work on ‘wild masculinities’ within racialised policing in Brazil that considers transgressive violent formations that intersect “with other forms of social inequality” (pp.69 and 76).

It is worth highlighting that some scholars like Wilding (2014), argue that current research on this topic can risk trivialising violence against women, women’s narratives, attitudes, and descriptions that highlight both their agency and insecurity from chronic,

gendered acts of violence (pp.229-30). Melde and Rennison (2010) have argued that there is a research gap on the attitudes, motivations, and behavioural impact of individuals who are affected by violence during and after a traumatic encounter (p.658). In light of this research gap a gendered approach to this research mobilises questions on how violence (i.e., vulnerability, impacts, socialisation, etc.) is always gendered, how women's behaviours can be active stakeholders in condoning and challenging violence, and how women's complex roles can operate as supporters, facilitators, partners, mothers, messengers, and carers of/to perpetrators of violence (Wilding, 2010, p.722; Wilding, 2014, p.238; Wilding, 2016, p.5). This is a compelling perspective on how women can also occupy multiple, and sometimes contradictory roles as both 'victim and offender, protective partners, and inciters of violence' themselves (Wilding, 2010, pp.733-735) which blurs what we may visualise victimhood to look like.

I would agree with Wilding's (2010) concern of the risks of pathologizing culture, discourse, and images of victimhood in particular ways (p.727). I would suggest that it is vital to continue to disrupt colonial-rooted narratives and disarming typecasts of a 'Black Caribbean male aggressor' as also indicated by Holder-Dolly and Youseff (2010) in describing connections between Black masculinity and marginalisation. For instance, Gibbison (2007) found that amongst groups of men in Jamaica aiming to 'prove virility and heterosexual orientation' as a means to meet the social demands in Jamaica can mean exuding sexually aggressive behaviour and "using violence to control the sexual choices of women" (p.66). However, Thomas (2013) adds that in order to dismantle tropes that parallel Blackness with violence we must examine the "production of

archives of violence", historicise tropes to deconstruct them, and consider the limitations and benefits of cross-disciplinary approaches that are "well suited to make them" (p.38). This is especially important to consider when examining both structural violence (see subsection 2.4.1) and intimate partner violence (IPV) (see subsection 2.4.2) that both highlight the intersection of race, violence, and gender (specifically masculinity) and how we can problematise concepts like a Caribbean "culture of violence" (see chapter four).

2.4.1 Structural violence

In light of my thesis' focus on violence, formations of structural violence become critical to define and highlight their key nuances that tie to forms of racialised violence within the Caribbean development sector and in cases of intimate partner violence (see subsection 2.4.2). In conceptualising structural violence in these ways, gender scholars Brysk and Mehta (2017) underscore how it is "disruptive structural changes and conflicts" exemplified by things such as:

> "income inequality, urban crowding, corruption, political violence, auto-cracy and unequal representation of women in politics are associated with more physical insecurity ... challenges to patriarchal gender roles, and increased exposure of women to violence" (Brysk and Mehta, 2017, pp. 441-442).

The above suggests that there is a variety of components that can interact with one another to create the setting whereby structural violence can thrive. Considering how structural violence can play out within the context of the Caribbean development sector, Penado ***et al.'s*** (2023) work on structural (slow) violence comes to the forefront. More

specifically, the concept of slow violence within the development sector “connects the dots between colonial power”, violence, and race (Penado *et al.,* 2023, pp. 2 and 4). These scholars highlight an example of structural violence within the Caribbean development sector that inflicts violence over time. More specifically they found that economic development projects focused on the environment and climate change involving Indigenous Caribbean communities actually:

> “exacerbate environmental degradation, undermine Indigenous self-determination, and constitute contemporary manifestations of colonial power, racial-capitalist exploitation” (Penado *et al.,* 2023*,* pp. 8 and 1).

In other words, we see an example that demonstrates how Caribbean development projects nestled within the lexicon of neo-colonialism can result in contemporary forms of targeted violence against racialised communities that unfold in perverse ways over time, and are embedded within the system structure / functioning of how a sector defines progress (e.g., participatory planning in this instance).

Adding a gendered framework of analysis to exemplify structural violence pulls in Pain’s (2022) work on GBV who argues that survivors and victims of GBV can be isolated not only by perpetrators in cases of IPV for instance, but also by the state, their communities, and can also emerge with shared experiences from racism, colonisation, genocide, warfare, state violence, patriarchy, cissexism, homophobia, geopolitics, and more. Particularly when examples of community and state emerge, they often can be “overlooked, and even sanctioned” (Pain, 2022, p.1788). And, in interviews with GBV victims who described their trauma, Pain (2022) found a noted role of everyday structures, institutions, systems, and professionals expected to help can in turn impact

the “longevity of trauma” (p.1797). In other words, while there are more obvious forms of structural violence (such as colonialism), it is critical to bring to light the nuances of structural violence that can be found within communities (see empirical examples sections 4.4 and 4.5) and the Caribbean state (see empirical examples in section 6.5 and subsection 6.5.1).

Further examples of structural violence as it ties to IPV (see subsection 2.4.2) within Black Caribbean feminist research is explored by DeShong and Haynes (2015) in a discourse analysis of IPV in Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados by examining the “state, activist, and media responses that reproduce and/or challenge asymmetrical relations of power and gender” to create social contradictions surrounding a woman’s ability to activate agency in a violent, intimate relationship (p.1). What is most profound about this study is that it relates to this section’s earlier discussion on identity, gender relations, and theorisation of violence. This is because responses to IPV are “characterised by institutional challenges” at the state level, “significant NGO responsibility…despite underfunding and partisan political arrangements” which inhibits progress, and “survivors’ agency is framed very narrowly” which creates restricted participation creating solutions to IPV (DeShong and Haynes, 2015, p.11). Men’s engagement in the issue also becomes problematic. This often results in responses to IPV that in turn “re-inscribes asymmetrical relations of gender”, norms, intimate relationships, and media representations work to “frame women’s agency” in a harmful, negative way resulting in research gaps in state responses and IPV/gender sensitisation

and the intersection of power to better conceptualise women's agency (DeShong and Haynes, 2015, p.11).

Another example of instances of structural forms of violence in the Caribbean can be seen in Morgan's (2010) work on gender relations in the imagination of some Trinidadians. Morgan (2010) found that gendered violence in the Caribbean is the outcome of the "spectacular failure" of the Eurocentric Victorian ideology of family that is "patently unsuited for Caribbean gender relations" resulting in violence occupying prominent places in "every imaginable shape and form" (p.7). She further relates this postcolonial perspective on the force that colonial violence projected into contemporary gendered relations to the way it manifests into the public imaginary of an entire country like Trinidad and Tobago by exploring discourse of media reports on violence. She found that in Trinidad, public attention to cases of GBV only became significant the more heinous the act of brutality was because media reports demonstrated bias, "superficial explanations", and did not consider the implications of structural violence (Morgan, 2010, p.6).

Further, epidemiological data from studies across the English-speaking Caribbean like in Trinidad and Tobago remain unavailable due to a 'failed justice system' positioned to absorb reports on gender-based crimes in conjunction with socio-cultural values that place shame on making GBV and intimate partner violence (IPV)[27] a public issue (Clark,

[27] See next subsection 2.4.2 on IPV for more

1997; Ffolkes, 1997; Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006, p.742). Women who do find themselves turning to NGOs or the police/justice system for support reported minimal satisfaction due to their lack of confidentiality procedures, social stigmas attached to affiliating with public agencies, and inappropriate, dismissive procedures that place women in higher risk scenarios of returning to their abusers (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006, p.751). Women who did find support escaping IPV situations were turning to their mothers or older children (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006). However, (while somewhat dated) statistics show that between 1998-1999 when the United States and Canada allowed 'battered' Trinidadian women to claim refugee status and seek asylum, there were 5,042 cases of IPV filed, which only increased over the years (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006, p.743). IPV in Trinidad is recognised as a major social and public health issue which cuts across age and socio-economic groups but predominantly is concentrated amongst women who have less financial capital and are of Afro-Trinidadian and East Indian descent (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006, pp.743 and 479). And, more recently during the height of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, data from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service suggest a 140% increase in cases of abuse against women and girls compared to 2019 (Pan American Health Organisation, 2021). With that being said, it becomes clear the prevalence of the structural ways that violence emerges within different Caribbean contexts. The role of intimate partner violence will be discussed next.

2.4.2 Intimate partner violence

This subsection will mobilise key cross-disciplinary arguments around a specific form of GBV that is more commonly thought to be synonymous with physical abuse: intimate partner violence (IPV). I use an interdisciplinary approach to help define violence and individuals involved in violence because in a review of Paula Morgan and Valerie Youssef's book *Writing Rage: Unmasking Violence in Caribbean Discourse,* reviewer Lalla (2010) they urge scholars to use different collaborative disciplinary approaches to build understanding when examining 'intellectual enquiries' that specifically trace the "interrelationship of domestic violence with other forms of social violence" (p.1). A specific form of violence that draws particular concern for the blurred distinctions between victims and perpetrators of violence worth highlighting is work on IPV. IPV can be defined as "behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm" ranging from "physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviour" (Chandra-Mouli, 2012, p.427). This form of violence has contributing indicators at the individual, social, and community level, ranging from one's minority status, education level, marriage status, substance abuse, anger management issues to poverty, literacy, unemployment, and more (Chandra-Mouli, 2012, p.427; Tillyer and Wright, 2014, pp.32-4).

Conceptualising cycles of violence and IPV to be an "expression of male domination over women" requires close analysis as scholars have found IPV to be a "conflict occurring in intimate settings" and overlap between who victims and offenders are

(Tillyer and Wright, 2014, pp.30-31 and 35). As such, they urge researchers to consider conceptions of IPV that mobilise limiting dichotomies of male perpetration, female victimisation, and distinct binaries between victims and offenders because both "share similar traits that create opportunities for both criminal victimisation and offending" (Tillyer and Wright, 2014, pp.30-2). And they found that relationships demonstrating IPV can be defined through the 'victim-offender overlap theory' whereby "offending increases the likelihood of victimisation and victimisation increases the likelihood of offending" (Tillyer and Wright, 2014, p.34). The mutuality of violence between two individuals offers interesting insight as they argue the cycle allows them to both function as offenders and victims (Tillyer and Wright, 2014, p.36).

This resonates with work from Chandra-Mouli (2012) who argues that violence is tied to relationships between individuals, intimate relationships, and communities at large (p.427). In light of this helpful definition of IPV and theoretical framing of how individuals in intimate heterosexual relationships can mimic each other's violent behaviour to make a dynamic of two people becoming violent enablers, (Tillyer and Wright, 2014) it is worth problematising one of their concluding findings tied to victim-offender overlap theory as they argue that 'race-based tendencies' of African Americans and Hispanics mean these groups are inherently more likely to be involved in violent relationships because perpetrators and victims of violence from these ethnic groups 'accept violence' (Tillyer and Wright, 2014, p.45). I note this because this thesis previously dismantled the argument in section 2.2 on the idea of groups embodying an inherent, accepting cultural acceptance of violence within the Caribbean because I argued it to be a deductive

explainer of GBV. In light of some of the frays in Tillyer and Wright's (2014) findings, conceptualising victim-offender overlap theory to highlight the blurred boundaries between victim and perpetrator brings an interesting perspective to understand IPV in the Caribbean as it also emerges as a theme in discussion with GBV experts in the field (see empirical chapter four).

Adding to this discussion on IPV, critical development scholars like Cornwall and Rivas (2015) argue that the development sector relies on the dominance of "popular development discourse in the Global North" to frame women as "heroines or victims" when it comes to GBV related issues such as "human trafficking, early marriage, or female circumcision" (p.400). This results in development agendas to "lift communities up by investing in women" but in actuality takes "scant consideration of the structural barriers to women's individual self-actualisation" who are entrenched in "webs of social, cultural, and economic relations that produce and sustain inequalities and discriminations" (Cornwall and Rivas 2015, p.400). Further, Dobash and Dobash (1998) argue that maintaining cycles of IPV is accomplished when the offender has the ability to maintain dominance, control, dependent, and social isolation. As such, from a community psychologist perspective, victims who are able and decide to leave their abusers and the relationship with access to (in)formal support resources are able to better maintain their wellbeing and have lower instances of anxiety (Mitchell and Hodson, 1983). Further, DeShong and Haynes (2015) underscore the public health and criminal justice components of IPV cases in the Caribbean, adding that "morbidity and mortality" among women is also a frequent "consequence of IPV" (p.1).

Qualitative interviews in a study by Hadeed and El-Bassel (2006) with Trinidadian women on the prevalence of IPV and trauma and impact found indicators of their identity as related to prevalence rates. For instance, of their interview participants, 65% were married, 76% live with their abusive partners, 88% reported physical abuse, 41% sexual abuse, 88% emotional/verbal abuse, and 70% controlling behaviours (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006). Further indicated from this study is that the top typologies of IPV for Afro-Trinidadian women include: physical abuse (hit/threatened with object or weapon, 33% of which requiring hospitalization), sexual abuse (forced sex/marital rape), verbal abuse (including name calling, insults), and controlling behaviours (jealousy/abuse due to relationships or activities outside partner, monopolizing time) (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006). Specific qualitative details from Hadeed and El-Bassel's (2006) research found that women described experiences where partners threw hot water, hot rice, or kerosene on them and threatened to set them afire or be beat with a machete, be stripped naked, beaten and headbutted (pp.490-492). They also argue that women on average experienced more than three abusive incidents each of which each grew increasingly violent than the previous over periods of six-month intervals, often resulting in hospitalisation and pregnancy or the presence of others did not seem to minimise risk of violence (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006, pp.757-758 and 490-492). With regards to reconciliation after each abusive incident, women explained that sexual intercourse was used to make peace or perpetrators of violence would help clean up the wounds they inflicted on the victim (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006, pp.490-492). This cyclical characteristic of IPV resonates with findings from a study on IPV in Suriname,

(although not considered a part of the Anglophone Caribbean), Pargass and Clarke found that “when women made the first report of violence, their partners had been violent for many years before” (Pargass and Clarke, 2003, p.43). With that said, in order to transform these patterns of abuse it is necessary for “ingrained habits of male dominance”, “new models of interpersonal relationships" need to be created (Hadeed and El-Bassel, 2006, pp.757-758). While much of my empirical analysis in section 6.2 focuses on how development workers mitigate violence against women and girls in addition to some LGBTQ+ groups, it is worth mentioning the role of development practice that can work directly with men who are also caught in cycles of violence - especially considering one interview participant[28] who advocates for restorative justice for perpetrators of violence.

Another case example, from Krishnakumar (2018) applies a postcolonial perspective to demonstrate the ways violence in this Anglophone Caribbean country manifested differently depending on one’s identity. Depending on one’s affiliation of enslaved versus indentured worker, different groups have been able to maintain or merge heritage and cultural practices whereas others “have had to contend with the destructive elements of slavery that decimated ancestral practices, redefined family structural patterns, and challenged family relationships” (Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2018, p.305). This indicates the way historical circumstance dictated race-based outcomes of violence. Krishnakumar *et al*. (2018) found that there is a correlation between early instances of

[28] See more: section 4.4

domestic violence, depression, pain, and somatisation for Afro-Trinidadian and mixed-ethnic Trinidadian mothers (p.304). In other words, due to experiences of IPV and other forms of violence, Black Trinidadian women are made to be more vulnerable. This means that they are also at a higher risk of experiencing mental disorders such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation (Maharaj *et al.*, 2010).

One study conducted on trauma in partnership with local women's rights groups in St. Lucia by Asnaani *et al*. (2020) found a significant "disparity between high trauma exposure and sparse trauma-related resources" (p.1) which ultimately has a negative impact on trauma survivors. They argue that in order to mitigate the "growing divide between Caribbean survivors of trauma and provision of evidenced-based care" (Asnaani *et al.,* 2020, p.2) work needs to be done around reducing stigma/biased/blaming beliefs on trauma survivors and increased equitable access to and number of mental health resources including trained "stakeholders whom trauma survivors may be more willing to approach" (Asnaani *et al.,* 2020, p.3) in the region and "a variety of non-psychology specialists" engaged in 'task-shifting- working in partnership with community partners (Asnaani *et al.*, 2020, p.13). These findings interestingly highlight the importance of my research's overarching methodology in the inclusion criteria process I applied to gather empirical evidence. During the interview process, I specifically sought out Black Caribbean women who identify as either gender activists, development and GBV specialists, and/or Caribbean feminists and ultimately

act as a resource for trauma survivors in their respective locations across the Anglophone Caribbean (see chapter three Methodology).

Considering the study above, there is psychological evidence that corroborates the importance of having both psychological and non-psychological trained specialists from the community where trauma survivors come from as it plays a critical role in lowering the disparity of high trauma exposure and minimal trauma resources and position the specialists as ‘more approachable’ to the trauma survivor. This also confirms the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration as my doctoral research could actually be used to extend Asnaani *et al.’s* (2020) findings as I focus on the role and power of the identity politics of Black Caribbean women in mitigating violence and trauma in countries like St. Lucia. This ties to further explanation on my use of interdisciplinary research approaches to this research is explored in depth in section 3.2 as well as contributions made to the specific interdisciplinary field of Black Caribbean feminist geography outlined in section 7.3.

The next section 2.5 will conclude this literature review by focusing on how conversations on violence and communities advocating against it take shape in online spaces. This is a particularly timely concept as this literature review was written during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when social networking platforms emerged as even more of a vital tool to host key conversations across distant geographies and build community when social distancing and isolation became a common global experience.

2.5 The digital mobility of violence and cyberfeminism

This section chapter of my literature review discusses some of the key work on the mobility of violence as it relates to the digital worlds/lives of GBV activists (in this case cyberfeminists) in the Caribbean. In light of my methodological use of discourse analysis to examine online content produced in digital feminist spaces (see empirical section 3.4) the scholarship highlighted in this section discusses how some feminists have moved online to produce a new form of discourse that defines their own digital world, the context they come from, their identities, and their experiences/understandings of violence. It is important to imagine the Caribbean and identities away from scholarship that re-colonises, fix our own definitions, and consider the notion of the region as a “set of distant island pearls to be discovered and imagined in and from different locations according to the logics of those locations" (Noxolo, 2016b, p.832). Considering the focus of my work that takes place with a digital scope, this means it is important to reimagine the Caribbean through the lens of a specific group of women existing both on/offline who intentionally re-articulate the region through digitised accounts of their complex identities, contexts, politics, and logics.

2.5.1 Tracing discourse, feminism, and space in the digital world

Earlier discussion in section 2.3 defined the complexity of Caribbean identity as influenced by histories of plantation societies, entrenched racism, the commoditisation of the human body, and eroded cultural moorings and self-esteem (Morgan, 2010).

However, colonialism is not the sole factor that can trace and influence Caribbean identities. Feminists argue that Caribbean discourses function as a way to affirm the measure of worth of Caribbean people and societies, and ultimately "define a place and a way to be human" (Morgan, 2010, p.1). This means that people themselves are the ultimate defining force of what it means to be human, rather than solely the conditions history once forced them into. In other words, Caribbean "people transform space without necessarily going anywhere" and can influence hierarchies and statuses (Thomas, 2011, p.11). Thomas' work on Caribbean exceptionalism (2011) further argues that in former English Caribbean colonies people share a unique set of hybridities, or 'ancestral elsewheres' that reach beyond the traditional boundaries of the state and can create a new dimension of de-territorialised belonging, making them 'exceptional.' In other words, it is an argument that is focused on how the Caribbean and its diaspora can uniquely belong to multiple locations, unbounded by a specific geography due to hybrid identities. I would argue that this notion of Caribbean exceptionalism is a concept that helpfully mobilises the way Caribbean identities can be seen as a force and form of discourse with abilities to take shape differently across time and space. This means Thomas' concept (2011) can be applied to the way enslaved Africans used resistance to create new identities connecting their past in Africa to daily experiences of violence in the islands, to contemporary ways cyberfeminists use digital platforms to define new spaces of 'deterritorialised belonging' or digital communities that transgress physical boundaries out of communal experiences of gendered violence. This example will be evidenced in my three empirical chapters later in this thesis that examine some of the digital discourses articulated by women who take part in internet

communities on Twitter and have a unique discourse to describe their work fighting violence both on and offline.

Frömming *et al.* (2017) considers the digital world to be a conglomeration of people, communities, internet technology (like the smartphone), online venues (like virtual communities such as Twitter or LinkedIn), events, and realities. This conglomeration ultimately interpenetrates and can co-constitute one another and lead to: “changed ways of being” (p.13), expressions of identity, ways of working, political strategies, modes of producing sociality, exchanges of intimacy, and interlinks to the physical world (Frömming *et al.*, 2017). Today, the current digital era that we exist in is a combination of different social engagement forms (Leid, 2017; Polletta *et al*., 2004) with users playing a key role in sharing information and keeping their online constituents conversant in a digital language (Leid, 2017, p.199). I would consider the cyberfeminist community on Twitter that I have highlighted in this thesis[29] to function as a tool that produces specific forms of Caribbean diasporic sociality and activist exchanges around the politics of gender and violence in their respective contexts but also as it translates across distant island locations. This ties to earlier discussion held on the mobility of Blackness (see section 2.3).

Further, Sobande’s research (2020) on the Black digital diaspora similarly highlights a real, yet borderless connection, or in other words a digital encounter that can centre the

[29] See methodology section 3.4 on Twitter and tweets as secondary empirical evidence.

lives of Black women existing in other locations, navigate similar experiences of difference and centre the politics of that experience. This means that there is a diasporic connection that can instantaneously occur when Anglophone Caribbean feminists participate in digital exchanges in virtual spaces that are shaped by the physical to create a "Black digital diaspora dialogue contoured by Black people's" connections, disconnections, differences, and commonalities (Sobande, 2020, p.104). In addition to Black Caribbean women creating a digital discourse on Twitter about key issues on violence, as I engaged as both an *insider* to Twitter (an occasional Twitter user and Black Caribbean feminist) and an *outsider* (a researcher studying at a Global North university and Vincentian diasporan), the connections, differences, and commonalities between this group of Twitter users sustain this niche digital community/world to move a conversation on the digital mobility of violence forward. I would argue that there is a specific type of borderlessness of these digital spaces and conversations that enables someone like me (a doctoral researcher and Black Caribbean feminist with complicated Finnish-Vincentian roots) to richly engage with and analyse online Caribbean cyberfeminist debates that digitise the context of GBV and make GBV experiences virtual from my living room in London.

To briefly expand on this argument, it is worth considering the interconnection between the digital and physical world. Richard and Gray-Denson (2018) argue that internet technology should be seen as a cultural map of whiteness and where a user's physical identities and experiences are tied to them (e.g., gender identity, Blackness, etc.). These scholars push this consideration further. They define cyberfeminism as: when

marginalised women (identified as “wired women”) develop internet-based methods and tactics that self-consciously confront “dominating structures of oppressions”, dismantle the existing order and meaningfully communicate, empower, and elevate voices based on their unique understanding of how oppression materialises on the body (Richard and Grey-Denson, 2018, pp.122-123). In summary, cyberfeminism is a product of the experiences of these women who use the internet to narrate their lives in an effective way aimed at making change. Sobande (2020) adds that the mobility of experiences between the on/offline worlds (digital feminist content translated from lived, daily experiences) are actually their reflections of what takes place offline and can function as a collective attempt to deal with communal experiences of marginalisation. Additional scholarship that has studied the role of digital spaces and GBV activism also echoed much of this discussion. For example, Leid (2017) found that online social media spaces can build legitimate “virtual constituencies” which foster community building, information sharing, and networking for both on/offline participation (p.194). In light of these contributions, it could be argued that the digital world is an outlet that digests and makes sense of what goes on in real life, but also the production of content in this space is a form of resistance that re-affirms discourses occurring offline. These digital spaces and digital experiences also can function as sites of group formation or “alternate publics” that foster resistance (Steele, 2016, p.1) and affirm Black women’s identities (Sobande, 2020).

However, there are some limitations that can arise in analysing digital spaces as primary spaces of evidence in research. Some scholars have considered the ability for

digital spaces to enable long term analysis or create viable solutions for GBV issues and the limitations of using it as a "digital silo" or single "site of legitimacy for Caribbean feminist thought and activism" (Hosein and Outar, 2016; Sanatan, 2016, p.161; Sanatan, 2017, p.338; Leid, 2017, p.186). They further critique the viability of what a large online following can mean when it comes to making real change offline because having popularity online does not guarantee an influence or official change. There are also arguments (Leid, 2017) on accessibility and how focusing on the outputs of cyberfeminists can limit voice, contrary to earlier arguments by Richard and Grey-Denson (2018) who focus on the way the digital elevates voices. For example, critiques suggest that digital platforms can work to exclude the most marginalised in society due to a lack of financial means to access the internet, but also it can allow stigmatised groups of certain backgrounds (i.e., with access to technology) to find support in online communities who share experiences with ease (Leid, 2017, p.191). For example, Leid (2017) found that Caribbean grassroots organisations have demonstrated their own use of the internet to expand accessibility with 84% of organisations using their virtual social media platforms to expand accessibility, 76% for information sharing, 69% for community building, and 57% for enhancing constituent engagement (pp.202-3). In a panel discussion, Haynes argues that Caribbean cyberfeminists are the ultimate producers of knowledge and have the power to both bridge and reinforce the digital divide amongst users (Black Women Radicals, 2020). This suggests that instead of excluding those on the outside of the digital divide, this select group of feminists work on behalf of those who are in fact the most marginalised in society. Another example of this work is the cyberfeminist activist movement in Barbados #LifeInLeggings that was

founded in 2016 by a young Caribbean feminist with the aim to raise the awareness of sexual violence through feminist consciousness translations and make policy changes, creating a “new generation of scholars and activists” who energise an “intersectional analyses of the movement” (Sanatan, 2017, pp.323 and 327). In other words, #LifeInLeggings is the birth of creative technology and feminist discourse, or in other words a “digital conduit mobilising Caribbean feminism” (Sanatan, 2017, p.327). To date, #LifeInLeggings has received national and regional policy responses, internationalised support of Caribbean feminism, and collaborations with international organisational bodies focused on the elimination of gender inequality (Sanatan, 2017).

2.5.2 Emerging Caribbean cyberfeminisms

In the Anglophone Caribbean, the constitution of feminism before the internet in the early twentieth century “addressed: women who were conscious of their African/Indian heritage at a time of great European colonial power” and anti-racist activism (Reddock, 2007, p.1). Today, the topics of race and identity politics have become “more poignant” and Caribbean women are well positioned “to use their theorising, their historical experience, and their activism to develop new socio-political paradigms for our countries and our region…and construct broad alliances and coalitions” (Reddock, 2007, p.22). With the advancement of technology, locating the Caribbean feminist movement now occurs in multiple contexts: both online and offline. This multiplicity of contexts is argued to be because feminism and the contested identities of Caribbean people “are at stake” (Sanatan, 2016, p.161). It appears that the desire to foster identity-making through

Caribbean feminism in both online and offline contexts highlights how the process ideally should opt to maintain inclusivity so those on the margins and/or geographically live within the Caribbean diaspora can participate and move the collective forward. With that said, according to scholar Tonya Haynes, cyberfeminisms originating in the Caribbean can continue to prioritise women's experiences but they also run the risk of replicating processes that grant unequal access and privilege to some and must work through differences to avoid reproducing long standing oppressions (including those that are race based) (Black Women Radicals, 2020).

Haynes continues that digital Caribbean feminists have also trained and have arguably oriented their critical lens to both the Caribbean and outside influences from United States popular culture as a means to engage with other feminisms, scholars, and activists (Black Women Radicals, 2020). In consideration of these geographic ties due to proximity it ties to earlier arguments on the mobility of the movement taking shape across different geographies, Haynes argues that Caribbean cyberfeminists networks are "simultaneously national, regional, global, transnational, and diasporic" and practised through online "media creation, curating, (re)blogging, (re)tweeting, sharing, and commenting across multiple social media platforms'' (Black Women Radicals, 2020). For example, findings on an assessment of existing Caribbean feminist blogs by Haynes found that a key emancipatory practice of feminists is an "insistence of geographical, national, racial/ethnic, and political qualifiers" because these identity markers help address "geopolitical and racial hierarchies" that occur "inside and outside feminisms" (Black Women Radicals, 2020) This concept of 'qualifiers' also emerges in

my methodology chapter where I consider eligibility criteria for interviews and Twitter profiles and reflexively consider the interplay of my own identity markers. With that said, the online, as a site of investigation is a platform whereby real individual identities and economies exist by individuals where “their bodies are already engaged” (Haynes in Black Women Radicals, 2020).

In light of the discussion held above and the history of Caribbean cyberfeminism being logged about over the last ten years, Sanatan (2016, 2017) classes it as an emerging analysis of study that can be considered a tool that can organise gender justice. The first online footprint of Caribbean feminism in cyberspace dates to around 2000 and according to Hayes, since then there have been feminist voices that have gone viral and created some visible change in Caribbean societies like causing marketers to pull sexist advertisements from public display (Black Women Radicals, 2020). In summary, Caribbean feminism expressed in digital spaces is “extremely diverse, heterogenous, and polyvocal” (Haynes, 2016, p.3). Aside from these examples of qualities that constitute Caribbean cyberfeminism, critics also point out that the quotidian experiences of Caribbean women voiced as cyberfeminism on social media can run the risk of having women open to attack (i.e., cyberbullying) and not actually make significant changes to gender policy (Sanatan, 2017). Further critiques consider the possibility of lost academic labour of feminist epistemology that is not necessarily engaged with, recognised, or properly referenced as hashtags like #LifeinLeggings gain popularity, quickly develop and feminist ideas increase online notoriety (Sanatan, 2016). Although this is an important consideration that is a possibility, engaging with Caribbean feminist

epistemology was not necessarily created to be solely mobilised by academics and students examining the movement from certain disciplinary frameworks.

2.6 Conclusion

This aim of chapter two has been to locate key academic discussions from the disciplines of critical development studies (section 2.2), racial identity politics from Black Caribbean feminism (section 2.3), as well as theories on gender, violence including structural violence and IPV (section 2.4), and cyberfeminism (section 2.5) to create a theoretical framework for this research's niche focus on the intersection of gender, race, and violence in international development. My research intent remains steadfast in illuminating how working within the international development sector in the English-speaking Caribbean highlights a distinct experience of an understudied group of Black Caribbean women (see more in concluding section 7.3). The next chapter three outlines my research's methodology and processes that were specifically selected to be highly reflexive and consider the impact of whose voices have been selected and elevated for my doctoral work.

Chapter Three Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this methodology chapter I will outline the key research methods that I applied to conduct this research across three digital platforms (LinkedIn, Zoom, and Twitter) that have been important to this work. First, I will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using a multiple methods research approach that are largely drawing from: reflexive Caribbean feminism, feminist geography, and digital ethnography in anthropology. Second, I will outline the specific methods I used to understand the lived realities of GBV in the Anglophone Caribbean from collecting primary and secondary empirical data. This includes my secondary source of empirical evidence that is discourse analysis of a collection of tweets published by Black Caribbean cyberfeminists. This also includes my primary source of empirical evidence that is discourse analysis and reflexive digital ethnography of qualitative, semi-structured interviews with professionals on Zoom identified on the social media platform, LinkedIn. I will also detail key reflections noted during this research that arose throughout the fieldwork, especially due to my reliance on feminist reflexivity approaches to conduct a digital ethnography during Zoom interviews. I will close this chapter by highlighting the role of COVID-19 and the significant impact that social distancing played into changing the course of my research's methodological approach and fieldwork plans to online research.

3.2 Multiple methods research approach: reflexive Caribbean feminism, feminist geography, and digital ethnography

This research applies a multiple methods, interdisciplinary approach primarily drawn from reflexive 1) Caribbean feminism, 2) feminist participatory methodologies in geography, and 3) digital ethnography in anthropology. It is important to note that even within Caribbean feminist research, there are different research approaches within it as outlined by Kempadoo and DeShong's (2013) overview of Caribbean feminist research methodologies. The two scholars outlined several examples of how "Caribbean feminists utilise a variety of methods in the production of social research" such as: reflexivity and positionality (Kempadoo and DeShong, 2013), embodied theories on the location of one's body, and how it's implicated in studies of sexuality (Nixon and King, 2013); the "ethical and epistemic issues when researching 'hidden populations' as well as problematising 'insider/outsider subject positions[30]', 'diasporic/regional situatedness', 'national/Caribbean resident status', and "claims to authenticity" within the research process (Lazarus, 2013); historical and archival research that does not introduce new methods but asks "new questions" to change "Caribbean historiography" (Brereton, 2010); theoretical approaches using "photographic and screen-based texts" (Kempadoo, 2013); and examining how knowledge is gained between research and action (Andaiye, 2003; Kempadoo and DeShong, 2013, pp.3-5).

[30] See sections 1.4 on how I define being an insider/outsider within this research based on my own positionality and section 4.3 on examples of being insider/outsider within the data as voiced by interview participant professionals working with GBV and experiencing their own forms of violence.

I have used Black Caribbean feminism as a key research approach[31] for several reasons. First, the discipline has a history of fewer published resources that speak to a specific Caribbean feminist methodology in light of the region's colonial and postcolonial conditions and history (Kempadoo and DeShong, 2013). Another is that Caribbean feminism as a research methodology mobilises diverse methods to produce social research (Kempadoo and DeShong, 2013) which similarly links to the way my literary and methodological considerations take a highly interdisciplinary approach to answer my key research questions and gather the necessary evidence to do so. Feminist participatory research methodologies within geography also played an important role in how I gathered my empirical evidence in my consideration of exacerbating power imbalances within academia, and more specifically research processes. An example of this occurring can be seen in the way that I intentionally positioned the expertise of Black Caribbean women professionals as a key source of knowledge to understand, define, and contextualise violence as opposed to positioning them as research objects within a wider project situated in a Global North academic institution. Caretta and Riaño (2016) argue that feminist participatory research methodology has a specific concern for how and where power and knowledge exist in research partnerships and by bringing scholars together from the Global North and South can help address historical imbalance to produce new research insights.

[31] See methodology chapter three

In other words, these research frameworks provide an incredibly relevant point of reference that requires me (as a contributor to the production of knowledge) to address the potential for unbalanced power relations within this work, especially considering my thesis' conceptual and empirical contributions in chapter seven. For example, this means addressing the embedded power of me operating as both insider and outsider with access to privileges as a Caribbean diasporan in comparison to women (the research participants) who are also experts in this field who may not have the same level of access or privilege as me.

These research frameworks also enable me to contribute to a unique, interdisciplinary research methodology that has a history of low visibility but pulls together a variety of methodological considerations to produce frameworks that are specifically relevant to the geographic context in which my work lives. Additionally, my use of reflexive digital ethnography in anthropology was also necessitated due to COVID-19 (see methodology chapter three) as my original fieldwork plans of an organisational ethnography at Trinidadian NGOs were disrupted. As such, reflexive digital ethnography played a particular importance to my work in light of the need to develop digital relationships and rapport with interview participants through a screen. Further, negotiating this highly reflexive project in conjunction with my use of digital ethnographic methods required me to re-conceptualise ideas around the "fieldsite", "researcher", and "researcher participant" (Frömming *et al.*, 2017, p.16). For example, I re-conceptualised my plans of what my original fieldsite would look like (several NGOs focused on mitigating GBV in Trinidad) to what it actually became due to the critically important digital conversations

and connections forged online in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (a digital exchange between myself and the interview participant through Zoom).

In light of the above three approaches that have largely informed this work, I drew on feminist reflexivity throughout the data collection process. By defining and considering the impact of my own positionality (as a woman based at an institution in the Global North with a privileged academic history, roots in the Caribbean, and identity as a Black Caribbean feminist) my aim was to ensure that my research outcomes were critically informed. My ultimate intent was to not produce or erase a research 'subject' or present my work as a 'positivist reflection of an objective reality', something critiqued by Caribbean feminists like Kempadoo and DeShong (2013, p.3), but rather, I intended to provide an intertextual analysis of gendered experiences and power relations. With that being said, the mixed methods used to gather these two sets of empirical evidence include:

- Discourse analysis of tweets from a pool of Black Caribbean cyberfeminist activist accounts (comprising the secondary empirical evidence base),
- Discourse analysis of semi-structured, qualitative, Zoom interviews (comprising the primary empirical evidence base) and,
- Reflexive ethnographic observations from Zoom interviews (comprising the primary empirical evidence base).

The social networking and digital media platforms of Twitter and LinkedIn functioned as important search engines and digital tools that expanded the reach of this research with regards to recruiting interview participants based on their digital resumes (LinkedIn) and social media cyberfeminist activists' digital footprints (Twitter). This interdisciplinary application of social networking/media platforms (Twitter, LinkedIn, and Zoom) in my methodology importantly operated as "multi-sited, internet ethnographies" (Edwards *et al.*, 2013, pp.247-8) which deal with contextual digital fields and allows for an ethnographic exploration of digital "meta-fields" (stages of social interaction such as a single hashtag that activates thousands of tweets from a large amount of users) and their publics (Airoldi, 2018, pp.661 and 664; Bonilla and Rosa, 2015). This is because they have demonstrated their functionality with search features (Twitter and LinkedIn) and viable digital social networking locations that foster community where ethnographic reflections can be drawn from (Zoom) and enable discourse analysis to reveal rich data/evidence (tweets). Another reason that necessitated my use of a multiple methods approach within this research is that social media is organised into different "de-contextualised communicative contents" and microlevel self-presentations that require context-sensitive perspectives (Airoldi, 2018, p.662). As such, using a combination of interviews and discourse analysis in addition to my reflexive ethnography provides a more comprehensive, contextualised account of the 'microlevel' presentations of self (Twitter users/cyberfeminists) that can be rendered from reading a single tweet for instance[32]. And, while much of my work with social media could be classed as an

[32] It is worth noting that there was some overlap between interview participants who also had relevant Twitter accounts/tweets that have both been included in this work.

'internet ethnography', Airlodi (2018) notes that working within this framework requires researchers to focus on "bounded sites" populated by "virtual communities" (p.661) because social media can "elevate certain experiences" of marginalised communities who have a history of erasure in academic and popular discourse (McCauley *et al.*, 2021, pp.1915-1916).[33]

This ties to one of the arguments from Kempadoo and DeShong (2013) regarding the low visibility of Caribbean feminist research/methodologies as lacking visibility in academic spaces. My use of social media as a tool to gather discourse of Black Caribbean cyberfeminisms is intimately tied to arguments in favour of the functionality of using social media sites to explore communities with history of erasure. McCauley *et al.* (2021) and Airoldi's (2018) discussion of social media in research methodology also encourages consideration for the use of 'bounded' to describe Black Caribbean women. I would argue that with a deeper look, the women behind the Twitter accounts discussing key issues on violence and gender online actually push conceptions of what the geography of the Caribbean actually looks like as: GBV being a borderless experience impacting Black Caribbean women (and others) across the Anglophone Caribbean (and beyond). As such, using Twitter to examine Black Cyberfeminists activism helps this research identify emerging trends within GBV discourse (at the

[33] See more on the importance and value of social media, specifically the emerging work within Caribbean cyberfeminism in Literature review subsection 2.5.2.

macro level), and it can be used to follow an individual thread of discourse within a meta-field (Airoldi, 2018; Bonilla and Rosa, 2015).

Despite how useful social media has functioned throughout this research process, its credibility as a primary tool for analysis can be critiqued for lacking context. For example, it is unclear that if data from social media communication gives researchers like me a sufficient alternative to traditional "ethnographic immersion" in an offline context (e.g., the planned organisational ethnography with Trinidadian GBV non-profits and in-person interviews with feminist activists) to wholly understand that context (Edwards *et al.*, 2013, p.247). In other words, one important critique of my application of a digital ethnography in conjunction with reflexive Caribbean feminist and feminist geography methods, is that my gathered evidence could be deemed as incomplete due to it not fitting with traditional social research methods. However, in decolonial criticism of traditional ethnography suggests the idea of "ethnography-as-colonialism / colonialism-as-ethnography" and that ethnography is never complete, functions as a colonial practice, and produces an "illusion of completeness" (Tomaselli and Mboti, 2013, p.528). And, while digital research is newer than traditional ethnography, the association of it being 'incomplete' appears to be an easier critique to make but even with conducting this research face to face, this work would encounter critiques of the illusion of its 'completeness.'

As such, it is important to consider that this critique relies on the "uncertainty" within academia of how to analyse populations through social media (Edwards *et al.*, 2013,

p.248). While I consider the applicability of this critique in light of the way social media has transformed my work (largely for reasons out of my control, i.e., social distancing regulations from COVID-19), I argue that the 'unknowns' of social media's applicability in research is an outdated conceptualisation that unjustly denies it as a viable research method, and it is important to consider the digital transformation of higher education throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that relied on digital classrooms powered by knowledge exchange through platforms like Zoom. Harcourt and Calle (2022) argue that against the backdrop of COVID-19, feminists have participated in a transformation of creating "safe places of engagement via the internet as part of embodied active research processes", underscoring the links between the digital world and gender power relations (p.79). Further, Steele (2021) adds that recent digital engagement of Black feminists in the "blogosphere" has resulted in them crafting "new rhetorical strategies" of engagement" and "positioning a dialect of self and community interests" (p.861). As such, social media as a research method should be considered a progressive, valued site of ethnography that can provide rich evidence and complete primary and secondary sources of data.

Aside from the possible limitation of using social media as a primary site of investigation, my research applies a multiple methods approach to ensure that findings are informed and aligned with diverse methodology and an orientation towards Caribbean feminist methods. However, even as this research relies on "ostensibly empowering feminist methodologies", power imbalances can still exist, meaning the intentional relationship development between myself and research participants is

important to avoid misrepresentation and/or partial “vision and knowledge” (Lazarus, 2013, pp.17-18). This suggests that research processes can be described to fit within appealing reflexive frameworks (like a box ticking exercise), and unless they are continually and actively engaged with by the researcher throughout, this can inadvertently undermine the entire basis of reflexivity itself. In sum, a multiple methods approach in this methodology is necessary as I intend to centre Black Caribbean women’s voices and experiences with violence and identity politics and continually consider the role, position, and space that I take up as the research myself. With that being said, the next section will discuss how my research originally was intended to be completed in person in Trinidad. I will then move into a discussion of how my research methods transformed digitally by discussing my secondary and primary empirical evidence bases.

3.3 COVID-19: transforming in-person fieldwork to the digital world

This section importantly highlights the role that the COVID-19 pandemic played in changing the trajectory of my research and significantly impacting my selection of methods to adapt to social distancing. Upon finalising a plan for my methodology and submitting a fieldwork plan before the pandemic hit, I originally intended to conduct in-person fieldwork on the ground in Trinidad during what would be the height of the pandemic. As such, I had prepared to collaborate with several non-profit / social

enterprise organisations who agreed to partner with me in advance so that I could conduct in-person interviews with women in their networks and complete a placement and organisational ethnography of their grassroots feminist work. However, around this time COVID-19 struck and I was no longer able to travel to Trinidad due to restrictions put in place by the UK and Trinidadian government and the University of Birmingham. As the world shut down and reports of COVID-19 and domestic violence surged I knew my work remained critically important but required an immediate shift in my methods.

The reality of gendered violence unfolding in real time while doing my PhD required me to completely redo my methods and fieldwork plans which delayed my research timeline by several months. As such, COVID-19 compelled me to cancel my planned in-person work and organisational ethnography/placement with NGOs in Trinidad. In discussion with my supervisors, I took time to develop and propose a new way of understanding complex violence, not only in Trinidad, but across the digital geography of the Anglophone Caribbean, a place where I could conduct fieldwork and could immediately access. Thus, my methods focused on a group of professional women located in the Caribbean with gender and development expertise on their LinkedIn resume profiles to conduct online interviews with them. I replaced my original plan of having an in-person placement at an NGO in Trinidad and conducting an organisational ethnography to conducting a digital ethnography of my online interview and encounter with each interview participant on Zoom. In this regard, the Zoom exchange became the ethnographic space. Further, as a secondary source of empirical evidence to supplement my discourse analysis of interviews, was conducting a discourse analysis of

Black Caribbean cyberfeminists on Twitter, a digital geography that I had immediate access to when much of the world shut down and online interactions were surging. Twitter also was a space that represented the reflexive part of this work as it has functioned as a shared space between myself the researcher (as I am a casual user with a profile that fluctuates between public/private settings and the occasional original tweets with a lot of retweets) and observer of discourse occurring between feminists located in the region.

In sum, COVID-19 restrictions made it necessary for me to make immediate, unexpected, unintended, and quite drastic changes to what I originally planned my work to look like. Instead of building in-person relationships and rapport with communities that I deemed vital to my work, I transformed my methods to the digital world whilst maintaining my overarching research aim of how Black Caribbean women negotiate around issues of their identities and violence.

3.4 Secondary empirical evidence: approaches to discourse analysis of tweets on violence

This section outlines the secondary empirical data that I collected, which was gathered from analysing the digital social practices of Black Caribbean women on Twitter through discourse analysis of the text and content they published around the following themes: race, identity, gender, and violence in the Caribbean. This secondary data source was

collected by conducting a keyword search (see next subsection 3.4.1) on Twitter, a social media site that was imperative in my assessment of GBV and identity.

My use of Twitter had a dual function: a research method/tool (search engine functionality) as well as a (digital) site of investigation where evidence of social practices could be gathered and logged. For clarity, I refer to social practices in light of Bourdieu (1989) and Foucault's (1980) consideration of a social convention engulfed in a 'habitual disposition' and 'regime of knowledge' that outline behaviours, identities, and relationships. In other words, digital social practices of today relate to how digital group membership or identity is performed, attains certain social goals and "transverse boundaries between the physical and the virtual, technological systems and social systems" (Jones *et al.*, 2015, pp.2-3). While social practices can reflect behaviour or relationships across boundaries, time, and space. Although Jones ***et al.***'s (2015) description of digital social practices on an individual level, I also investigate larger discourse and social goals within the wider movement to advocate against violence across the Caribbean. As such, social media proves to be a site that generates new forms of distinct, organic, "user-generated data" of populations for social research in (near) real-time (Edwards *et al*., 2013, p.245) and is a useful tool to examine these social processes impacting "locomotive profiles of populations" and how an individual identifies with data tied to social identities (pp.245 and 252). In other words, the functionality of Twitter in this research is generating data through its own search engine capabilities with helpful "signature proxies for age, class, gender and ethnicity" (Edwards *et al.*, 2013, p.252) powered by users. In this case, it was Black Caribbean

cyberfeminist activists who simultaneously presented me as the researcher with data via Twitter discussion threads that resonate with them. I also largely consider my own personal use and engagement on Twitter and insider/outsider to the community (or 'publics' as Airoldi states above) of cyberfeminists under investigation to class this component of my fieldwork as an internet ethnography (Airoldi, 2018).

3.4.1 Keyword search

The approach I used to sample and analyse individual tweets includes sampling online tweets lifted from a selection of Twitter users with what I classed as a digital footprint resonating with 'Black Caribbean feminist discourse'. During the keyword search I used the Twitter 'Explore' search function as the primary search engine tool to collect tweets and search for relevant hashtags related to the overarching research themes / arising patterns in online discussion threads, photo media, linked media, and / or video media. The purpose of conducting a social media keyword search on Twitter was to consider recurring themes around discussions on GBV, race, and gender across the Anglophone Caribbean which on Twitter presented as a new site and digital geography. I conducted this keyword search over a six-month period (tweets published only between the period of March 2021 to August 2021) which coincided with the United Nations Generation Equality Gender Equality Forum discussion on Twitter and used inclusion criteria to compile a list of data for analysis:

- The tweets included discussion that related to the following keywords that I used as part of the keyword search and could also be found in the body of the tweet itself:
    - “Black women in Caribbean development,” “Caribbean women,” “gendered violence in Trinidad,” “GBV and race,” “GBV and Blackness,” “women development [**insert Anglophone Caribbean country],” “violence and race in [insert Anglophone Caribbean country],” “race and violence in the Caribbean,” “Black Caribbean feminist activist and violence,” “violence and Caribbean cyberfeminism,” and “Black Caribbean feminism and race”.
- The Twitter profile indicated the user’s group membership to the Anglophone Caribbean based on location (indicated by geo-tagging their tweet, usage of emoji flags, or geo-tagging their Twitter profile location).
- The Twitter profile and/or banner photos reflected the user’s physical appearance which I used my discretion to identify each user as a Black Caribbean identifying woman.
- The Twitter profile remained public access (no tweets or profile settings were set to private). I continually checked the status on each profile throughout the research process to ensure that profiles remained public access throughout.

- I also considered if the Twitter biography of each user indicated group membership to any activist or professional group related to women's/gender activist groups or professional development group membership.

As a result of applying the above inclusion criteria and considerations throughout the keyword search period, I curated a host of relevant Twitter profiles, groups and discussion threads that were aligned with the overarching themes of identity, race and GBV aspects of my research questions. I used my research questions and my purpose of study to influence this purposeful sampling strategy (DeJonckheere and Vaughn, 2019). And, in light of the recent but rich history of Caribbean cyberfeminism, the themes that emerged in this part of the research were the most actively engaged with on these social media networking sites. Additionally, I relied upon a pre-existing network of users, hashtags, and followers that I used to snowball my initial search. Many of these followers already fit into some of the categories of the inclusion criteria set above, indicating their claim/membership to a group of Black Caribbean women concerned with the topic under investigation.

After identifying each tweet, I took a screenshot image of the tweet and manually populated/uploaded it and organised them by username[34] into a database that was divided into the following categories for analysis:

[34] If there was more than one tweet from the same user, I opted for username + numbered system to organise the data.

- Twitter username
- Biography
- Location
- Twitter profile link (this ensured I could refer back to each user and if the status of their profile remained public or changed to private[35], which would disqualify my usage of their tweet for the purposes of this research
- Date of tweet
- Hashtags used
- Relevant links posted in tweet
- Theme/context (any thematic content revealed in the body narrative of the tweet itself). Repeating themes that I summarised in this database ranged from: GBV activism; St. Vincent volcano eruption; sexist advertising; GBV/misconduct in politics; colonial violence; racism and COVID-19; GBV and feminism; responses to GBV in the news

The logic of the category of choices above were based on several scans I conducted of profiles where the most visibly identifiable information of users could be examined.

3.4.2 Discourse and content analysis

Conducting discourse analysis of each digital text that was described above was a key element in this phase of the fieldwork which took four things into consideration in light of

[35] I stopped checking the public/private status of the tweet once the data collection phase of the research completed (end of August 2021).

Jones *et al.'s* (2015, p.4) roadmap to conducting discourse analysis of digital texts. Upon examining each question, I asked:

- How did the socially recognizable text form?
- What was the context in which it was constructed/exchanged?
- What did people do with the texts?
- How were they used to create versions of reality?

In light of answering the above questions, the overarching aim of conducting discourse analysis of Black Caribbean cyberfeminists social worlds on Twitter was to understand: how usage of Twitter 'extentualises' their actions, digital social practices, relationships, performativity as a technology that performs social action on an individual and group level "how their discourse performs, maintains, reproduces and transmits these social practices" (Jones *et al.*, 2015, pp.4-6). Upon doing this, emerging findings from my secondary empirical evidence base helped to clarify and highlight some of the influences and conversations held within the text (see empirical chapters four, five, and six). I use the words 'conversation' and 'influence' to describe what happens between the two texts because there was an interesting coincidence between examining the identities of Twitter users selected for investigation and selected interview participants: several double crossed and happened to the same person. As such, there is something to be said about social action taking place online and offline and how GBV activism and development practice can transgress physical and digital geographies (see more in conclusion chapter seven).

Another consideration that I took into account during this phase of data analysis is the meaning of the text by examining where it is situated and how it is produced, consumed and used to take social action against GBV in the real world. This is a nod to Malinowski's (1923) work on the 'context of culture' or in other words, how people behave in different situations. One consideration my research has taken throughout this phase of discourse analysis has been tracing how both texts (i.e., tweets and interview content) and their meanings or affiliated identities change as they move between different contexts (on/offline and on different social media platforms). Another ethical consideration on this component of the research is my relationship with and responsibility to the research participants (on Twitter and in the LinkedIn/Zoom exchange) because I am somewhat a part of the community that is under investigation as I have profiles on Twitter and LinkedIn, we work in a similar work setting where paths could cross, and I have engaged with all of these individuals on some level[36].

I also examined the data and information from the selected online texts, media, and documents to understand the relationship between race and the particular form online media/text/document. In light of analysing this media, particularly when conducting interviews with participants (see next section), there is a process of co-creation between interviewer and interviewee during data collection and between research and text during data interpretation (Schreier *et al.*, 2019, pp.9-10). This means that the researcher must

[36] See more on positionality, reflexivity, and discussion on insider outsider in sections 1.4 and 3.2.

consider the conditions under which the text was created, focusing on the content of text and also on what is not in the text to highlight the "societal allocation of power and resulting conditions of what can be said and become the content of a text" (Schreier *et al.*, 2019, pp.9-10). This is because the text can have multiple meanings and simultaneously not have a single true meaning, which makes my role as interpreter crucial in highlighting all the possible meanings (Schreier *et al.*, 2019, pp.9-10). While Schrier *et al*. more so references the way this process of co-creation occurs with interview data analysis, I would argue this also occurred during my interpretation of the key themes. For instance, in each text it was possible to draw connections between and through them as an active participant on Twitter (co-creator) and researcher. Adding to this important point on data analysis that highlights the linkages between texts, McGann's (1996) work on radiant textuality offers early insight similar to Schrierer *et al*. However, this McGann's (1996) work focuses on the usability of "new electronic venues" or a "new kind of textuality" such as the hyperlink to be decisive in connecting texts and facilitate critical writing and interpretation (p.384). In other words, it is important to understand the ways in which Twitter as an 'electronic venue' or 'new textuality' connects with other texts related to this research investigation. For instance, in collecting tweets from cyberfeminists that responded to a quote or another tweet, I note throughout this thesis if it is a retweet and if it is in response to an external link describing a case related to GBV to bring further context and understanding of the discourse under examination. The next section on primary empirical evidence outlines my use of my main text drawn from qualitative semi-structured interviews.

3.5 Primary empirical evidence: qualitative, semi-structured interviews

This section covers my methods behind my primary empirical evidence. The primary empirical evidence under investigation was collected from qualitative semi-structured, informal Zoom interviews over the course of a six-month period and comprises of thirteen transcribed interviews from voice recorded Zoom interviews and reflexive, digital ethnographic notes of the interview encounter. The aim of the interviews had three aims. First, to shed light onto two of my research questions: *How do racialization processes within GBV form by organisations and individuals online? How does race and gender intersect to shape violence in the Anglophone Caribbean and what is the impact on these women's experiences?* Second, to understand coded language and themes that arise as the participating women discuss their experiences of working within their respective fields and in-country contexts. Third, to broaden the research beyond my own personal experiences (also working in the same field as the interview participants). This is to ensure that in addition to being highly reflexive throughout this process, other women's accounts are taken into consideration and analysed in depth. And it is important to acknowledge that in the selection process of the interview participants, creates a specific category that includes some and excludes others (particularly those located on the outside of the digital divide), and relates to colourism and certain class privileges across the wider Caribbean.

The professional and personal profiles of the interview participants fell into the following category: women located in and from the Anglophone Caribbean who self-identified / described themselves as being Black and/or of African descent. The main focus of their work and professional history indicated from their LinkedIn profiles demonstrated professional expertise in the area of gender and/or violence issues in the Caribbean. This could be demonstrated by professional experiences such as activist work, and/or international development-based work (i.e., international/local NGO, charity, think-tank, foundation, civil service department, etc.) focused on issues related to gender, women and girls, and/or violence. It is important to note that working as an activist or 'traditional' development practitioner[37] are not two distinct categories and some interview participants' professional backgrounds significantly blurred these categories. The inclusion criteria on the consent form circulated pre-interview included the following:

- Gender: self-identified woman
- Location: English speaking Caribbean country
- Race: self-identified Black or being of African descent / Afro-Caribbean
- Nationality: from a Caribbean country
- Professional background: institutional ties to an 'international development', civil service, social enterprise or non-profit organisation with technical expertise primarily focused on violence, gender, GBV, violence prevention programmes, and/or women's rights and advocacy around violence

[37] See section 2.5 for more on how the digital impacts work and activism

The networking search engine that I used to search, identify, and curate a list of prospective interviewees was the professional social media platform LinkedIn. The sampling processes that I used to collate a list of prospective interview participants from an initial keyword search on LinkedIn drew on Pawelz's (2018) definition of purposive sampling and snowball sampling as methods used in qualitative interview studies with vulnerable populations in Trinidad exposed violence. By applying purposive sampling in this research, I used my judgement as both insider and outsider to determine who would provide the best perspective on the research topic (Pawelz, 2018, pp.9-11) focussed on identity and GBV. As such, the keywords that I used to conduct an online search through LinkedIn included but was not limited to:

"Black women in development," "women of African descent in development," "violence in [**Anglophone Caribbean country]," "GBV," "Womens organisation," "women's development," violence," "Black Caribbean feminist activist," "violence in the Caribbean," "violence against women in [**Anglophone Caribbean country]," "GBV and feminism in [**Anglophone Caribbean country]," "Caribbean cyberfeminism," and "Black feminism/feminist"

Additionally, I used LinkedIn's search engine feature that allows users to search for people in specific locations and input each Anglophone Caribbean country in addition to doing more general keyword searches of professional histories tied to the list of words above. I also searched through my existing network of LinkedIn connections to see if

anyone I was somewhat familiar with already fit my inclusion criteria, as I am simultaneously connected to the community, I am also conducting reflexive research with/on.

One interesting result of researching in small, close-knit Caribbean contexts online was the natural occurrence of snowball sampling that I experienced in interviews with research participants. I noted during the interview process in particular, a chain referral system began to happen which helped me as the researcher gain initial knowledge, map research, and generate a good rapport with the specific group of women I was interested in (Pawelz, 2018, pp.9-11). For example, there were several occasions when interviewees recommended that I interview other women in an attempt to help and champion the progress of my research (as I never asked directly for interview recommendations[38]). However, what they did not realise is that several times when this happened, I was familiar with the person they recommended, I had already interviewed them, or I had already requested an interview from their suggestion. As a result of this keyword search and digital networking throughout the interview process, I had thirteen confirmed Zoom interviews over the course of six months of fieldwork. And of these thirteen, there were several interviewees who also had relevant Twitter accounts and tweets that overlapped with this research and were included as part of my secondary source of evidence which will remain anonymous.

[38] See more on research snowballing and interview referrals from Noy (2008) who argues that if an interview participant feels the researcher has won their trust and sympathy, there is a higher chance of referrals.

Following one interview focused on a human trafficking ring, undercover brothels in a red-light district, a police crackdown, and trafficked migrant sex workers, I actually had a significantly memorable nightmare about this exact scenario as a result of compartmentalising my exchange with the interviewee. My dream felt incredibly real, vivid, and quite haunting. This experience encouraged me to grapple with my positionality even further within this research as my own subconscious dealt with it in my dreams. Mullings (1999) discusses some of the key outcomes as a result of acknowledging insider/outsider positionality in using reflexive Caribbean feminist research methods. More specifically, in “recognising the subjectivities and positionalities underlying many supposedly objective interviews” researchers can make analysis that reflects their own interpretation of an interview participant’s experience which can dynamically transform identities and “power relations” when writing the “final text” (Mullings, 1999, pp.337 and 339). My digestion of an interviewee's experience transforming into a dream that positioned me (the researcher) at the centre of the experience, highlights the importance of having an awareness of how identities can transform, and the complex power relations embedded in interpreting research when writing this thesis.

Further, as a Caribbean feminist geography researcher writing on a sensitive, and fairly emotionally taxing topic of violence, I immediately thought of how my nightmare relates to a part of my literature review I did last year on vicarious trauma. Now it is ringing true. The literature on vicarious trauma that focused on the side effects of encountering

violence relates to nearly everyone participating in my thesis. This is because the majority of women interviewed actually revealed to me (without me asking them) harrowing encounters they may have personally had with sexual abuse, rape, violence, domestic abuse, verbal abuse, and other forms of violence. Upon realising that most of the women themselves revealed this specific type of information to me (which was always unsolicited and not included as part of my interview questions[39]), it became heavy information to absorb for myself - not only as experiences of violence that become data points, but as real women who entrusted me with sensitive information in a safe, digitised research space that I fostered.

Upon reflecting on the process of selecting interviewees on LinkedIn I realised that on some level, I was seeking out women to interview like me, or who were similar to me. This was the beginning of me blurring the boundaries between researcher and participant. While I do not necessarily believe that this (un)conscious effort negatively impacts my research findings as the interview inclusion criteria underwent thorough consideration to correspond to my research questions, methodology and literary frameworks. It is also worth noting, that if someone else was taking up this exact study and was seeking out interview participants, my LinkedIn profile would indicate my profile nearly fits perfectly within this scope of the work. I was and have been essentially searching tirelessly on LinkedIn for other Black Caribbean women with a professional background that reflect my own - those who look like me (or similar have similar origins

[39] Interview questions carefully focused on three key areas: contextualising violence, defining identity, and highlighting international development work in the Caribbean

to mine) and are specialised in either gender and development or work to mitigate violence against women and girls. Upon reflection, I do not believe that this sampling process disrupts my research methodology. Rather, it adds to the feminist intersubjective process that I have intentionally woven into this thesis that is not meant to absent the researcher from the process. As Kobayashi (2003) argues, this discipline (self-reflexive feminist studies) is “highly personal” and scholars are concerned about “the potential for recreating or reinforcing the forms of social exclusion”, as such feminists often situate analysis from within a marginalised group (p.346). As such, it must be of no coincidence that if someone else was taking up this exact study and reached out to me on LinkedIn, my profile would indicate that I am a nearly perfect fit to be interviewed and assessed for the research at hand. The next section further teases out additional components considered in my research methodology and earlier mentioned considerations for the impact of being exposed to trauma on this research.

3.5.1 Interview compensation

It is worth noting that as my research methods unexpectedly had to transform digitally (see section on COVID-19), it required me to consider best practices and recommendations for engaging with interviewees based in the Caribbean from a distance (i.e., being online and based in the UK). I considered Hadeed’s (2006) research on IPV in Trinidad that took place at a distance (screened phone interviews) with Black Trinidadian women to discuss their experience of intimate partner violence as Hadeed opted to compensate interview participants. Whilst this method to encourage

participation functioned well for Hadeed's work, I opted not to provide financial compensation to the particular group of women I interviewed as I considered a recent feminist geographers' critique on interview compensation especially when conducting research on "intimacy, social reproduction or trauma" (Warnock *et al.*, 2022, p.199). As an important aside, I did not ask research participants to reveal their own trauma but rather focused on their professional development/activist work, however many revealed experiences of trauma in light of this. This distinction will be discussed in depth in section 4.3.

Further, it is important to consider all the complexities relating to the reality of the "often unjust conditions of the researcher herself", the benefits of incentivising research participation, and the need to reduce stigma around compensation to "address power imbalances between researcher and researched" (Warnock *et al*., 2022, p.199). As such, a feminist ethics of care in my own qualitative research was applied in this instance particularly because I considered the context in which I was researching and made the decision on compensation that appropriately responded, "to the particular embodied needs and relationships" (Clement, 1996, in Warnock *et al.*, 2022, p.196). First, I considered my own positionality within the research process as both an outsider and peer to the research participants (working in the same sector as them, with similar professional aims). I also considered my use of purposive sampling (Pawelz, 2018) to apply my best judgement on how best participants would receive the interview request in light of their possible belief systems. In conducting this research from a reflexive standpoint, I have considered how both myself and the research participants were

development workers sometimes working within precarious professional environments. As such, questions of income inequality were not so marked as often are in discussions of interview compensation. With that said, I opted not to compensate and encountered no negative feedback throughout the interview request process.

3.5.2 Interview content and building rapport

When conducting interviews with research participants on sensitive topics including violence, I took several considerations into account, particularly in light of my aim: understanding the relationship of identities. McCauley *et al*.'s (2019) work focused on research approaches to violence highlights the importance of using intersectional, community engaged approaches to enhance impact dissemination and mitigate the prevalence of GBV, especially on Black women. My earlier literature review's focus on the role of intersectionality and its application within Black Caribbean feminist frameworks (see chapter two Literature review) to understand identity politics, McCauley *et al*. (2019) offers further confirmation of its importance within the research design and dissemination process. Further, when gathering new knowledge and evidence on intersectional identities, specifically on IPV, Mulla and Hlavka (2011, p.1517) argue that researchers must consider the field of study (gendered violence) to be ever shifting with "unstable population characteristics" as well as embrace and reflect on these complexities. Throughout the open-ended interview process, I was aware of the possibility that the interview trajectory could become quite personal quite quickly. When discussions became more personal, I attempted to remain non-judgemental and

express sympathy organically throughout the conversation. Upon reflection, this highlights the intersubjective nature of this work where my personal responses were a strength in fostering a safe space when interview participants began to reveal highly sensitive details about their personal lives that they directly related to their work on GBV.

Another related point that was taken into consideration regarding developing interview content on sensitive topics like violence and complex identities, was the way in which the questions I asked should be posed as I was focusing on implementing an open-ended, semi-structured, informal interview. I considered Krishnakumar *et al.*'s (2018) study of IPV and ethnic variations in Trinidad that was largely informed by development discourse taken from an adapted WHO study (2005) on women's responses to domestic violence. It is worth noting that this work's methodology used a global WHO survey and made minor country-specific modifications by "adding a limited number of questions to explore country-specific issues or modifying the response categories used to make them appropriate to the particular setting" to ensure cross-country comparability was not jeopardised (WHO, 2005, p.20). As a result of Krishnakumar *et al.*'s (2018) adapted use of WHO interview methods (described by the development agency itself to be developed 'out of context', required WHO approval if adapted, and had the underlying aim of mass adaptation/consumption), their research creates arguments around the ethno-variations of experiences of domestic violence in Trinidad. As such, their survey questions required participants to recollect detailed experiences of specific acts and objects/weapons used to inflict said violence (e.g., "Do adults pull cutlass, knife or gun

on someone?", "Do adults burn someone with a hot object?") (Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2018, p.305). I would argue that the use of mass-produced development discourse to enquire about women's violent experiences for the purposes of my research is ill-fit[40]. As such, direct questions such as types of weapons experienced/witnessed during instances of IPV were not used in my methods. The content of my interview questions remained open-ended and avoided specific questions on personal encounters with violence to mitigate risk in re-traumatising interview participants but enabled participants to feel a sense of control in the direction of the conversation. And, I had a list of resources for support ready to provide each interview participant in case this did occur[41]. For example, instead of a direct attempt to understand their individual encounters with violence indicated in Krishnakumar's (2018, p.305) work by asking specifics on if "adults burn someone with a hot object", I inquired about a more general perspective on violence (with the opportunity for each participant to be as specific as they felt comfortable with the use of "your" to indicate ownership of experience of their context/expertise) by asking "what is your perspective on violence against women in your country?"

After several revisions of my interview questions, the following questions were used in an informal, open-ended, qualitative, semi-structured interview on Zoom video. I also integrated DeJonckheere and Vaughn's (2019) approach to conducting effective semi

[40] See section 2.2 on development discourse and colonialism.
[41] This list was only shared when deemed appropriate. Upon reflecting on all of the interviews, there were no cases that were deemed necessary.

structured interviews by using a “a relational focus including active engagement and curiosity” between myself and the interviewee to avoid transactional question/answers and apply “interview skills” that “balance relationship and rigour” (p.1). With that being said, I loosely categorised the interview into three different stages: 1) friendly warm-up/introduction to build rapport (this occurred pre-recording with informal conversation about how we may be personally connected to one another) 2) professional history to ground experience, and 3) perspectives on violence to have participants feel ownership of their narrative. I used the following interview questions below as a conversation guide:

Introduction:

1. First, it would be great to get to know you a little bit and about your personal background. Could you tell me a bit about yourself?
2. How do you identify when it comes to your background and what defines you most?
    a. Follow-up would you describe yourself as a Black Caribbean feminist?

Professional History:

3. Could you tell me a bit about your professional history - how did you end up where you are today?
4. How would you describe your professional expertise? Does your work target any prominent group or mitigate a particular issue?
5. Do you feel that your personal identity has any impact on your work? How so?

6. What is it like to be a Black Caribbean woman in your field of work? Have you experienced any type of discrimination in the international development sector? What was that like for you?

Perspectives on Violence:

7. What is your perspective on violence against women in your country?
8. Do you think any certain aspects of a woman's identity increases her vulnerability to violence or injustice in your country?
9. Is there anything beyond what we have discussed that you would like to say that you feel is important to highlight?

One key consideration that I took during the interview process was determining how much personal information to share with participants prior to the interview as a means to build rapport and a certain level of comfort prior to beginning the interview itself and pressing 'record'. In light of this decision I made as the researcher, I considered Lavorgna and Sugiura (2022) arguments that researchers working with more controversial topics means there is an "onus" placed on academics to distinguish the personal and professional because of the "inevitable blurring of boundaries" during online ethnographic processes (p.261). And, in light of this work being a simultaneous opportunity for discourse analysis and digital ethnography, it was critical in this methodological approach to consider what goes "beyond what is observable on the screen" (Androutsopoulos, 2008; Kozinets, 2010; Lavorgna and Sugiura, 2022, p.261). As such, I took time to reflect on the level of engagement I had with each interview

participant leading up until the interview (often via LinkedIn chat, email, WhatsApp chat), how they presented themselves on the interview, their background and surroundings, level of privacy they required to have the interview (e.g., were they alone, were people in the background, where they at home/in the office), and their timekeeping (e.g., my interpretation of an interviewee being on time/early, cancelling or rescheduling pushed me to consider cultural differences and attitudes on timekeeping and punctuality). I also aimed to have a small chat prior to beginning to cover my conversation topics to continue to build familiarity through the digital space.

3.5.3 Coding

Each Zoom video interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and held in an anonymous, secure filing system on my computer. Interview times varied from the shortest being thirty minutes to the longest being an hour and twenty minutes (however, the longest interview I had to unfortunately was cut short due to technical errors with my computer). After transcribing each interview, I conducted three stages of coding to focus the research and conduct additional empirical work as a result of theoretical considerations that emerged during coding (Scheibelhofer, 2008, p.410). The three levels of coding I used included:

The first was individual coding each individual transcript several times to highlight what the individual herself was primarily concerned with, who they are and give the transcript

the opportunity to narrate each transcript's unique narrative and preoccupation (e.g., repeating words relating to gender, race, identity, development practice, etc.).

The second level I used was purposeful coding. I re-read each transcript to highlight the context in which the words were being used in light of my research questions. For example, how the coded theme (or code family) of race was used to relate to a specific experience of colourism during a job search within the development sector. I aimed to understand the shared codes of how individuals speak about one theme compared to how another individual speaks on the same topic.

I then conducted the third level of axial coding by reading across the entirety of the interview transcripts to highlight emerging themes, their commonalities, shared ideas, and what was spoken about quite differently. For example, notions of power, identity, race, etc. The aim of axial coding was to understand these emerging themes, what was (not) discussed considering each participant's contextual information (e.g., their background, what is happening in Caribbean society, etc.).

The extensive use of coding in my research functioned as the primary analytical approach to inform my discourse analysis of this empirical evidence. I based my discourse analysis on the 'methodological assumption' that each participating woman who was interviewed presented a narrative that ultimately functioned as the primary communicative form on the Zoom exchange (interview setting). And, as Scheibelhofer (2008) argues in doing so, each interview participant has the power to choose how and

what to disclose, necessitating the research to conduct “reconstructive interpretation” of each text (p.411). In other words, as the researcher I used informed meanings of interview participant experiences that arose to conduct ‘reconstructive interpretation’.

3.6 Intentional reflexivity and digital ethnography: reflections from a digital ethnography

In addition to using coding to inform my discourse analysis, I kept reflexive, ethnographic notes of the interview experience on my personal reflections and responses of the encounter immediately after the interview completed. In privileging reflexivity in the digital ethnography of the Zoom encounter/interview, I worked with Kempadoo’s (2013) definition as “acknowledging the privilege and awareness” of the material I am researching (p.3). It is important to underscore the intentional use of reflexivity within this research, particularly throughout my methods. This is because I noted that in the process of capturing interview participant’s perspectives to “reconstruct meanings” required me to rely on my reflexive field notes and interpretations of the interview encounter that comprises my digital ethnography (Scheibelhofer, 2008, p.405). And most importantly, my work relies on scholarly contributions from Caribbean feminist research methods and praxis that is concerned with the acknowledging your social location and its influence in the production of knowledge as well as “the process of documenting, analysing and (re)presenting the lives of others” (DeShong, 2013, p.3). As such, I have included an in-depth section in my introduction that underscores my social

location in this research process and the limitations as well as benefits this positioning has within my work. And, as DeShong (2013) highlights, when conducting ethical research on GBV in the Caribbean from this praxis, it is important to acknowledge limitations of “meaningful reciprocal consciousness-raising” in one single interview sitting, and the possibility of research methodology turning into reductive procedural descriptions instead of how my own choices as the researcher shape knowledge production (p.4).

With that said, the process of taking reflexive, ethnographic fieldnotes commenced from the moment I made the first digital attempt to connect with each interviewee (sending an initial message on LinkedIn or email to request an interview). It also included my reflections on:

- My response to the overall digital exchange of energy on the Zoom call itself (i.e., how did I make sense of the overall tone between the interviewee and myself)
- The depth of our conversation (based on how well of a sense did I get to know them as a person post-interview)
- If participants were early/late/on-time/were no-show’s/needed to reschedule the interview
- Any questions the participant asked me throughout the interview process
- Any changes in attitude/tone/demeanour once I said the interview was recording in comparison to initially being on the Zoom call

Considering my positionality within this research, I uncovered several key points from my digital ethnographic fieldnotes taken during the Zoom interviews with thirteen women. Throughout the interview process, I was consciously aware of the multitude of possibilities in which interview participants could/would react to me. During the interview recruitment process, there were a handful of women who I knew personally that I thought would make themselves available to be interviewed when several immediately responded/demonstrated to me that they were unavailable via email or non-responsiveness. What was interesting is that the interview participants who were most responsive and available were women I had no prior connection to or engagement with. Amidst this, there were minimal lows and more highs throughout the interview process (i.e., I felt excitement at the overwhelming number of positive responses that I received to my interview requests indicated by immediate interest/fast email response time and verbal support of my research in email correspondence leading up to and during the interview).

There were also many frustrations and feelings of exasperation and worries over emails not being responded to after receiving an initial positive response from a prospective interviewee, several repeated ‘no-shows’ to scheduled Zoom interview appointments, and sometimes weeks of no scheduled interviews coupled with back-to-back scheduled interviews on the same day. I later realised that scheduling back-to-back interviews took a high emotional toll on me as the researcher. I also experienced having my laptop’s motherboard crash in the middle of my fieldwork stage which added to the complexity

around audio recording and on-camera Zoom interviews all on my iPhone (which also had a recently cracked screen). And conducting the research on GMT located in the Global North (London) added an additional layer to scheduling issues because all of the women I interview work the equivalent of full-time jobs and live in the Caribbean on EST - most suggest interview times after they get off work. Interviewing during the women's 'off hours' (all except for one), perhaps indicates a particular type of environmental ambiance and mental escape that was required for the interview in order for them to be fully present and feel safe in consideration of the topics under question and their own personal traumas. In light of it being a necessity for myself as the researcher and for the participants to create a safe ambience for the interview to take place online, what was largely missing from my research was face to face contact. Visible face time on camera during interviews on my part was a priority. Whether or not my participants decided to put their camera on was up to them however, I did notice that it aided greatly in creating a positive conversational flow. I wanted to ensure that all my interviewees felt comfortable talking about violence, race, and injustice-type of issues to a person who would physically resemble some of the marginalising and often painful experiences they were narrating.

Overall, there was a diverse mix of women with varied levels of experience, with careers at different stages who brought diverse skill sets related to GBV including: grassroots activism, policy, law, non-profit leadership, civil service, academic research, and more. I also noticed that mid-way through each interview, it became apparent to me that there were varied levels of confidence and self-assurance in each woman's individual tone

when explaining her work history. Some women presented as over-confident, some less so and others displayed a mid-range of confidence in tone. I also noted that I came with an assumption that women with lengthier LinkedIn resumes (due to age difference and professional opportunities) would perhaps draw richer insights, but this was not always the case. In other words, making comparisons based on the display of professional expertise on social media (in this case LinkedIn profiles), proved to not always mirror richer/more insightful responses during our interview. In sum, the empirical evidence demonstrated that amidst the diversity of experience, mixed levels of confidence, and varied time spent in different professional roles, all thirteen interview participants provided rich and sometimes unexpected insights to this research. In sum, I deduced the following summary of reflections regarding key themes that emerged as a result of my personal interactions with each interview participant:

I found that being on camera as the researcher was necessary. Allowing interview participants to see my expressive face and reactions ultimately drew out a more personal interview experience and fostered a positive talking space, even if the participant did not reciprocate with being on camera. Being on camera also ensured my interviewees understood and could see that I also was a Black woman and could find allyship in speaking about things like racism. I have evidence of the role that being on camera played because up until the day after my laptop stopped working, I was on camera for each interview. Once my laptop stopped working, I had one interview that required me to be off camera for the first half of the interview. As a result, the first half of the interview my camera was off, upon reconfiguring my camera to ‘on’, I immediately

noticed how the interviewee opened up (in their responses, speaking more freely, tone, etc.). This corresponds to findings (Lindsay, 2022) that distinguish the difference between conducting an interview with the camera off which are often “shorter in duration than interviews with the camera on” and have “fewer sub-themes” emerging in data (p.1).

All of the interview participants were approximately between their early twenties to mid-forties which was not a part of the inclusion criteria but coincided with generational patterns of social media usage and socio-economic class backgrounds of women who exist on a particular side of the digital divide (with access to data and the internet). Although I did not set out to only interview Gen Z and Millennials for the most part, I did reach out to these women initially on social media (LinkedIn). This means many of the participants were active social media users (LinkedIn on the minimal end). Further, class background and the digital divide was also brought up by several interviewees as a common concern for understanding the experiences of women who are harder to reach but also were either GBV activists or did their own form of ‘gender and development work’ locally. This pushed me to consider how and if it was possible to account for these missing perspectives. While this was important, due to my limited timeframe of the doctoral research enrolment period, the upcoming end to my studentship funding this research, COVID-19’s social distancing that prohibited travel to hard-to-reach areas, and the important digital component of this research focused on cyberfeminist spaces, a crucial consequence of all of these considerations is that only

women with certain class backgrounds of certain age ranges with access to the internet could be included in this thesis.

There were also a significant number of interviewed women who also were the voices behind some of the tweets used in this thesis' empirical analysis and who I had been previously engaging with on Twitter. As such there was an interesting, unintentional, generationally linked, and digitised relationship the interviewees had to the pool of Twitter user data. This indicates that everyone engaged in this research project is on the side that more so aligns with the digitised trends that Black Caribbean feminist development/activist work has taken- whether or not they actually articulate in that way is up for debate. However, during the interviews I did not really highlight or draw this to their attention as the main focus was the 'professional experiences of Black Caribbean women in the region'. This suggests the group is closely related to one another and pushes me to consider if this might skew results in a certain direction.

Violence within the LGBTQ+ community appeared as a consistent theme of discussion within the majority of the interviews. Many of the interview participants also included in their responses of identity as a part of this very community as well. While sexuality was out of the scope of this research it is worth acknowledging as a common theme surfacing throughout[42]. It is also worth pointing out that this could have become a limitation in my research by having a targeted scope around 'Blackness' and

[42] See more work focused on violence against and within LGBTQ+ communities in the Caribbean: Bucknore, 2012; Haynes and DeShong, 2017; Tinsley, 2008

‘womanhood’. For example, when I developed my inclusion criteria, one of the criteria markers was to be a “self-identified woman”. During the interview recruitment phase of this research, I received feedback from one prospective interview participant that questioned if they would be eligible because they did not identify with the pronouns ‘she/her’ but identified with another category of belonging. Whilst I did not consider the role of gender fluid identity markers as this was not the main focus of investigation in this research, this could have impacted the response rate for interviews or created uncertainty in prospective participation.

Experiences of colourism[43] was another theme that arose during the interview phase and was interesting to discuss with the variety of different women (of different shades) in interviews. For example, one interviewee offhandedly mentioned that she may have lost out on job opportunities due to her being darker than her counterparts made me reflect on a level of privilege I have that have in certain contexts and how I have been read by human resource employees during job recruitment/interview processes in the past when pitted against other women interviewing (e.g., me versus white women, me versus darker/lighter skinned Black women) and how racial biases can come into play. Other interviewees noted stark differences in media attention for lighter skinned women compared to darker skinned women, specifically concerning a news case of two murders, the murder of an Indo-Trinidadian and an Afro-Trinidadian woman. In this

[43] See subsection 2.3.1 on colourism and creolisation and more work from Tate, 2015

example, there was loudly voiced criticism over the discriminatory public responses that varied between the two victims of GBV.

I also noted that the last interview question I asked each participant tended to be the one that is most revealing:

> "Is there anything else outside of what we have discussed that you find is important to share?" (Interview question)

I believe this was the case because when I first started doing the interviews, I realised I needed a nice way to informally ease into ending the conversation without making the participant feel this was a formal interview or that I was not interested in what they were saying anymore. In asking the above question, I ensured it was carefully phrased in a way to suit the tone of each conversation so they could continue to feel that they could speak freely. What I realised was that in asking this, many of the women seemed to have used the rest of the interview to warm up and then launch into a closing monologue voicing additional relevant experiences, frustrations, criticisms, passions, and opinions within the wider frame of the work which turned into vital data that can be examined in my empirical chapters four, five and six. Caribbean feminist approaches to qualitative research note that open-ended interviews "allows space to examine the contradictions and complications of everyday life, which can lead to uncovering new findings on longstanding issues, such as VAWG" (Bhattacharya, 2017; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016 in Rodney *et al.,* 2023, p.3). In other words, my intent to close out the interviews by giving interview participants the floor to speak often transformed our

exchange and the interview to hold space for unique details on the contours of violence, gender, and identity.

Another point of self-awareness that I asked myself throughout the interview process was: how would I be received and read by the participants? For example, did they know my family? Does my digital footprint (LinkedIn and Twitter profiles) as a postgraduate research student supersede my other professional experiences? Does positioning myself as a researcher online establish a power dynamic where interview participants feel like subjects or professional peers within my research project? Or does my LinkedIn/Twitter profile convey that we are operating on parallel playing fields as colleagues, aiming towards the same professional goal? Do I intimidate them? Am I intimidated by them? On some level, after each interview, I got a sense of the answer to these questions, but pre-interview, consideration for how my positionality was read by each interview participant played into each interview.

In sum, I would argue that my methods took on an “embodied action of research” (Kempadoo, 2013, p.3). And in light of my reflection on the above questions, I intended to incorporate “Black women’s embodied experiences”, their “discussions about issues of omission and misrepresentation”, and explore the compounded location of race and women’s complex lives (Jolly, 2021, pp.227-228). As the researcher, the reflexive, ethnographic notes I took were tied to personal perspectives, knowledge, history, self-awareness of the research practice, and “contested reflection” of the texts (Kempadoo, 2013, p.3). Overall, I have tremendously valued each exchange I have had within this

community of women. These women generously shared with me their professional triumphs, aggravations, very personal traumas, and diverging opinions. There was an interesting undercurrent of energy that I felt upon reflection of my exchanges with these women that I can only explain to be a unique voice that emerged and linked all of our conversations into several key ideas that have deep linkages to thematic trends uncovered in the Twitter data that I gathered such as discussion around feminist movement building/activism, responses to violence in the Caribbean media, cases of violence in the media, critiques of the state/authority figures, and identity politics.

3.7 Conclusion

In discussion of my multiple methods approach to this research, I have underscored the importance of using a reflexive, Caribbean feminist, and geographers' approach to my thesis' digital ethnography. And, in discussing the role of COVID-19 on this research, it has importantly prioritised the ongoing digital discourse on GBV across the digitised geography of the Anglophone Caribbean. This has led to rich primary and secondary empirical evidence that will be outlined in the following three empirical chapters to discuss three relevant themes: a "culture of violence" (chapter four), identity and power (chapter five) and compounding vulnerabilities and professional violence within the international development sector (chapter six). I will then close with chapter seven to outline how the evidence has led to two key contributions.

Chapter Four A "Culture of Violence"?

4.1 Introduction to the data and ethnographic reflections

The empirical qualitative evidence that I have collected throughout the course of my research consists of two interconnected sets of data. The primary data set is sourced from the voices (informal interviews) of Black Caribbean women[44] who are considered experts in the 'Caribbean development'[45] sector, more specifically, the field of gender, the Caribbean development sector and/or violence and originate from English speaking Caribbean countries[46]. The secondary data set includes the digital voices (published tweet) from Black Caribbean women on Twitter who voice ideas that resonate with Caribbean feminist activism. This section introduces data that elevates women's voices, experiences, and perceptions of topics within this research. In light of the qualitative data findings from my two varied data sets, these women's voices function in very specific ways across the next three empirical chapters four, five, and six as the primary,

[44] Black Caribbean women will be used interchangeably with women, Caribbean women, and Black women throughout these chapters to refer to both interview participants and Twitter users selected in this research in line with my inclusion criteria (see methods chapter).
[45] Quotations used in this work that refer to the 'Caribbean development sector' are necessary because it can refer to a variety of agendas and professional environments focused on progress for the Caribbean and is somewhat of a buzzword. However, in consideration of this research, 'the Caribbean development sector' will be used as a placeholder to refer to the specialised professionalisation of the women I interviewed which cut across the gender development, women's rights/advocacy, and feminist activism space with the overarching agenda of aiming to mitigate violence in the Caribbean.
[46] 'English speaking Caribbean countries' that are referenced as the key geography under investigation throughout this research may occasionally be referred to as 'the Caribbean' or the 'Anglophone Caribbean' for variety.

qualitative voice. With that said, I have used an intentional research approach that emphasises voice as qualitative evidence, or in the words of one cyberfeminist on Twitter who posted:

> "It is important to remember **beyond "data"**[47] we have the **experiences of our lives** - this should count. #GenerationEquality." (Tweet)

While this thesis' qualitative evidence is technically classed as 'data' gathered from a very specific methodological process that took ethical precautions, I would argue that my focus on centring women's voices draws out the need to circulate 'the experiences of women's lives' in an important way. The above tweet suggests that data gathered within the development sector (i.e., the United Nations' popularisation of #GenerationEquality to promote gender equality agendas) can often be void of lived experiences, deductively quantitative and thus dangerous if used to speak on behalf of women in inaccurate ways - particularly where women's development issues are concerned. Ultimately, this tweet's conceptualisation of data confirms the necessity for my work and the need for researchers who occupy both insider and outsider positionalities within this group of women to be intentional with their use of sound methodology to elevate lived experiences and voices in non-reductive ways.

Additionally, in consideration of the majority digital components of this research and my use of Caribbean feminist positioning that is intent on avoiding reductive data analysis, it is important to acknowledge the scope of my research and how it inadvertently could

[47] Throughout this thesis, I will intentionally bold certain phrases or words when quoting tweets or inserting interview quotes from research participants. This is done to highlight particular phrasings or emphasise the underlying theme or specific content relevant to the analysis.

not include every woman's voice or lived experience. Due to limited research time, funding, resources, and most importantly COVID-19 government regulations on social distancing at the time of gathering data, I was unable to engage with women face to face in Caribbean communities (see methods chapter three) who lived their lives offline, with limited access to social media or the internet at all. The research participants that were available to engage with in a time of global uncertainty amidst the thick of the pandemic had access to posting one hundred- and forty-character tweets and/or the means to use the internet and engage with me on LinkedIn. This means that there are groups of women from different geographies in the Caribbean with different social statuses whose voices would offer rich insight but are not included in this thesis. Interestingly, cyberfeminists with similar aims to provide an analysis on key social issues like GBV like this thesis, confront their own limitations when faced with using the digital platforms to do so. For example, one Twitter user argued:

> "**140 characters is too little** to provide **analysis** on any **social** issues that requires lots of explanation to be completely **understood**." (Tweet)

Despite limitations like these, the tweets that have been gathered for this research's analysis provide valuable excerpts that help us understand the reality and power of multiple identities in a specifically Caribbean context mobilised through social media (see also: Sinanan, 2017; Maynard and Jules, 2021). While it was not my original intent to take a deep dive into the digital worlds of feminism or the politics of online identities (in fact I preferred in person participant observation as well as organisational ethnography and field site visits at grassroots NGOs), COVID-19 completely transformed how my empirical evidence, research tools, and research participant

engagement took shape. Ultimately, this digitised approach to my research caused more dominant (and simultaneously accessible) narratives of women's lives to surface. Further, the information sourced from women who operate from behind a screen (i.e., their computers, phones, LinkedIn profiles, Zoom cameras, and Twitter profiles) can provide them with a sense of freedom (or anonymity) to discuss topics in a way that may be different from face-to-face engagement. In light of the small, integrated, and tight-knit geography of Caribbean communities that each woman comes from, their digital engagement in my research offers means they had the opportunity to express themselves differently (Josephs and Risam, 2021).

It is worth noting how the interview space was treated by the researcher (myself) and interviewees as an opportunity to self-express in specific ways. As such, there were several prominent personalities that emerged upon reflection of my ethnographic notes that are worth briefly touching on as this chapter next discusses personal encounters with violence from a Caribbean feminist reflexive standpoint. One interviewee who positioned herself as a whistle-blower, alerted me to some of the toxic internal politics within her Caribbean feminist activist space that she described as an incredibly small, tight knit network of women who all know each other. In her exposé on some of the inner workings of this specific activist network, I noted in my ethnographic notes the immediate hushed tone our conversation took:

> "It sounded like she was about to start whispering as she leaned closer into the computer camera…. She told me that there was a social media drama about the case that went public…with a detailed description of the accusations of violence." (Ethnographic notes)

I began to connect the dots of the story that she revealed. In my post-interview analysis of our conversation, it did not take me long to dig a bit online and uncover the entire story. While I will not divulge the specific details of who was involved in this research, this instance of whistleblowing a case of domestic violence suggested a level of trust that unfolded[48]. I deduced that our interaction and perhaps my positionality helped to provide me with unique access into a different side of the activist sector – an uglier side that perhaps outsiders (or the broader international development sector) are not necessarily privy to. In her revealing a very specific and pointed case of accused domestic violence within her community suggests to me that our digital encounter and the online space that we created together became a safe jurisdiction where sensitive conversations could be held in confidence despite only recently building rapport with one another and having met online.

In complete contrast to this experience, I experienced intense questioning related to the focus of my research by another interviewee. While I found her challenging my thesis' focus unexpected, specifically when she asked why I was focusing on Black women, I interpreted her question as really saying: "why do you care about us" ('us' as in both her and I but also 'us' as in a group excluding me as the researcher)[49]. This left me feeling slightly dishevelled, caught-off guard and designated me as the outsider to the scope of community and work that I had been researching for the last few years. Looking back at

[48] See more from Noy, 2008 on building trust and sympathy in qualitative interviews.
[49] See more on the layers to holding insider/outsider positionalities found within this thesis more below in this section and in sections 1.4 and 4.3

my interview notes, I remember stumbling a bit in my response to the question because our conversation prior indicated the obvious importance of this work and focus on women, specifically Black women. However, her question and tone suggested that I also needed to prove some sort of 'jurisdictional authority' to work on the topic which I found surprisingly unsettling on a personal level. This is in contrast to every other instance when another interviewee questioned my work, the tone was completely different. For example:

> "I felt 100% more confident and comfortable answering…the energy, tone, and facial expression that accompanied…came across to me as her wanting to understand my positionality…. Levelling with me as equals, rather than something requiring a defensive response." (Ethnographic notes)

Ultimately, this pushed me to consider the power that lives within the role of being a researcher. More specifically, how there may be different levels of belonging versus being an 'outsider' to the research itself. For instance, being a Caribbean diasporan who is a researcher but also is often "caught in between being other(ed) enough to study people from the Global South and being different enough to graph but not live the social reality" of interviewees, described as "'Other of the Other'" (Giwa, 2015, p.6; Khan, 2005, p.2025; Villenas, 1996). In other words, I experienced being 'Othered' as both a researcher by some interviewees, 'Othered' as a Caribbean diasporan by others, and classed as 'different enough' to be able to have some sort of jurisdiction to study people from a geography that is my home. According to Noxolo (2009), "many feminist writers have sought to include their own body within their texts," based on the understanding that the body is contested and can simultaneously perceive and produce difference (Defromont, 1990; Simmonds, 1997). And, considering the politics of positioning and

acknowledging the salience of embodied positionality, “there is no way to ‘be’ simultaneously in all or wholly in any, of the privileged (subjugated) positions structured by gender, race, nation, and class” (Haraway, 1991, p.193 in Noxolo, 2009, p.61). In the case of this research, the consideration for how my ‘body’ is perceived i.e., the fluctuation of my insider/outsider status throughout the research has informed my interpretation of the interviews and experiences during them[50]. This corresponds to Grahame and Grahame’s (2009) findings on fieldwork in Trinidad experiencing “insider/outsider locations that were multiple and shifting…transient, a set of perspectives in flux, rather than as fixed statuses or as a concrete problem to be solved” (p.299). The range of my own embodied positionality throughout this research varied greatly. There were instances where the research dynamic and interviewees positioned me as an ‘insider’ with access to ‘secret’ information. There were (minimal) instances described above where the work and my stance was subtly challenged as me being outside of the work. There were also two subtle instances where I had to take the necessary steps to regain control of the interview process when I noted attempts to overshadow the intended research process took place.

I also noted on several occasions unexpected, ‘insider-esque’, sisterhood type bonds to develop when quite niche commonalities appeared between myself and the interviewee. For example, this surfaced in the form of an interviewee knowing a family member of

[50] See more from Alcalde (2007) on the blurred boundaries between insider/outsider identities as an academic and advocate and how conducting feminist research experience power asymmetries tied to identity; See more from Cowley and Kelliher (2022) on the benefits of research that considers the positions of insider/outsider perspectives provides insights, informed and improved research practice

mine, or having academic institutional ties to me, or growing up in the same place as me or having a similar family background to me. The tone of these conversations became less formal and somewhat removed the tone of interviewee/interviewer. I also came across a participant who exuded an intense amount of self-assurance and confidence that I could read through her voice, tone, and attitude on screen. This perhaps was her reaction to an assumption of the researcher being 'all knowing' on the subject matter or was a reaction to her being conditioned from working in a sector that treated her as an outsider, needing to 'prove' her worth/skills/insider knowledge in the workspace.

A final example of an interviewee persona who emerged was the unexpected contrarian, or in other words an interview participant who presented opinions that went against the grain compared to the majority of respondents. On one occasion I was discussing the complex causal factors of violence with a participant who voiced that there was truth behind the stereotyped tropes about Black Jamaican women as inherent inciters violence and overly loud. Amidst the diversity of responses and noted trends from conversing with interviewees, they overall received me as the researcher positively and my insights suggested there was some level of 'acceptance' established amongst all of us. For example, I highlighted how several interviewees offered to share materials with me (oftentimes links to news articles or stories I should read), make connections for further opportunities, or meet up with each other in the future. This:

> "made me feel oddly like a part of the community…. somewhat of an olive branch of equalising our exchange as we are both in the same field." (Ethnographic notes)

As such, I felt a mutual sense of sisterhood that was fostered between myself and most of the interview participants which is an indication of a trend as to how my individual positionality was read by interview participants.

With that being said, the next three empirical chapters of this thesis will outline three key discussion points that build into this work's overall argument (see conclusion chapter seven) drawn from my gathered qualitative evidence from fieldwork. I will begin this chapter four by contextualising perspectives on GBV by critically examining the way interviewees express the surrounding context of violence, in other words the notion that the Caribbean has a "culture of violence" and how women can struggle in their everyday lives to navigate this violence. This will lead into a focused discussion in chapter five that examines how Black women navigate identity and power in the Caribbean. The final empirical chapter six will discuss a third key component of this research: violence in the workplace, using the Caribbean development sector and GBV activist space as two key sites of exploration of how violence is fostered within professional spaces in the Caribbean and more 'global' workspaces.

The main component of this chapter and its following sections is to conceptualise and problematise a concept that emerged in the data: a Caribbean "culture of violence". This concept was initially expressed by several interviewees to describe their individual surrounding context of violence and the breakdown and reconfiguration of society and power relations. It is important to note that I will examine this argument from a critical

stance, rather than an ‘uncritical truth’ as both an insider to the issue (as I am a part of Caribbean culture) and an outsider (researcher and Caribbean diasporan). In problematising this concept of a “culture of violence”, it is worth introducing historical context as a starting point, as such the next section will discuss remnants of colonial culture. I will then highlight key data points that focus on some of the personal encounters with violence that research participants invited me to learn about as a means to contextualise their own understandings of GBV prevalence in their surrounding community. Then, this chapter will highlight three examples where Caribbean community systems have a complex relationship with embedded instances of violence: family structures, the church, and public social responses to viral cases of GBV.

4.2 A "culture of violence" and remnants of colonialism

By examining the interview and Twitter data, there is evidence to suggest that feminists and GBV experts play an active role in defining violence in the Caribbean based on the historical ties it has to colonialism. For example, both a Twitter user and interview participant voiced the ties between colonial culture and violence in the Caribbean:

> “If you’re already in an **environment** that is **very violent**, which is a reality for a lot of **Afro-descended** populations…then the **violence** you see in the **community** is also going to be reflected in the whole…a **legacy** of the kind of **violence** that was **perpetrated during slavery and colonialism… Afro-descended men** feeling…to assert their **masculinity** as more **powerful**

> because they were so **debased and demoralised culturally** and continuously as a result of not being able to protect the ones they love." (Lauren)[51]

> "**Their legacy** is violence, and **their role** is a mirage designed to **conceal that violence**. Their **victims deserve freedom** and reparations." (Retweet)[52]

Lauren's response above was to a question that I asked about factors that could position a woman more vulnerable to violence which drew out her experience as to how history, race and violence play out in her development work. She also makes underlying suggestions about the idea of a reflection of a type of community violence, or in other words a "culture of violence" that is experienced on a social level. Interestingly, her overall argument echoes Youseff (2010) argument on how colonialism has "deeply implicated in the manner in which violence has become a variously way of life", is "an adaptation to problems too profound to plumb", a "self-perpetuating force" and informs how "value systems are constructed" (p.2). Further, colonialism in the Caribbean:

> "shaped cultural norms surrounding the use of violence to assert gender, race and class boundaries including the cultural and social norms that are preoccupied with a heteronormative assertion of Caribbean men and their masculinities" (Lacey *et al.*, 2019, p.12).

Here we see assertions suggesting that gender dynamics and Blackness have been influenced by past colonial cultural values that were violently placed on particular types of classed bodies. This in turn relegated people of African descent as simultaneous victims, perpetrators, and objects within a complex, non-linear colonial project. And, in

[51] All quotations with names in parenthesis are pseudonyms of interview participants to retain their anonymity.
[52] "Their" is referring to the British monarchy as indicated from context clues related to the retweeted linked article by the Twitter user from the online magazine, wearyourvoicemag.com, focused on the legacy of the British Empire.

examining the retweet above on the legacy of violence, we can see a published example of cyberfeminist discourse that acknowledges the historical truth of power inequalities exhibited by a force of colonial empire and its direct implications on creating an identity of victimhood. Putting these two excerpts of evidence in conversation with one another suggests that Afro-descended people in the Caribbean have been victimised by violent powerful forces of colonial empire, “victims deserve freedom”, and in turn treaded dangerously close to also becoming perpetrators of violence “asserting their masculinity as more powerful” as a defence mechanism to being violently victimised.

There is evidence to support postcolonial arguments that clearly define the contemporary role of colonialism on the present-day, socio-cultural normalisation of violence in the Caribbean, i.e., a "culture of violence". However, what unexpectedly emerged in conversation with several interview participants was the seeming acceptance of this paradigm that contextualises violence as a cultural trait within the Caribbean. For example, one interview participant stated:

> “**Culture** has a really, really significant role, perhaps the most significant role to play in your **vulnerability** to violence against women and girls, especially intimate partner violence.” (Lauren)

We see the allocation of cultural explanations and justifiers of gender vulnerabilities and cases of violence such as IPV. I found quite a few references to the ‘significant role’ that culture plays across the interviews, ultimately suggesting there to be an accepted contextualisation of a Caribbean "culture of violence" as the explainer of high GBV

prevalence rates. Drawing from the interviews, the first definition of what a "culture of violence" could mean in the Caribbean was described as:

> "We also have a **culture of violence** where violence is seen as an **acceptable form of conflict resolution** and an **acceptable form of control….**it manifests itself from childhood…we **accept violence** against children as a **form of discipline**…Lots of perpetrators have witnessed **violence in the home**….have also experienced **corporal punishment** as children…a **history of violence**….our **acceptance of violence** against, of vulnerable groups or people who are **seen as less powerful**." (Paloma)

Paloma introduces this idea of childhood rooted trauma and family structures tied to violence which lends itself to a study (Debowska *et al.*, 2018) on adolescent violent exposure in the Eastern Caribbean (specifically Barbados and Grenada). Debowska *et al*. (2018) found that violent victimisation has positively strong associations with social norms and attitudes surrounding physical forms of domestic violence. In light of this, Paloma's narration of what she has witnessed in her work suggests that there is evidence of childhood socialisation practices (specifically attitudinal ones) that position girls and boys in particular ways, playing on the vulnerability of age to define adult behavioural patterns and lending itself quite fundamentally to gender theory. Debowska *et al.* (2018) defines 'GBV-supportive attitudes or cognitions' as the use of physical violence against women and girls. As such, Paloma's definition of a "culture of violence" implies that colonialism today[53] preys on the identity politics (gender dynamics) and relies on the vulnerability of youth that more so easily accepts physical violence which then becomes habitual later in adult life for victims of childhood trauma.

[53] See subsection 1.3.1 and more examples on neo colonialism in: Spivak, 1988; Wilson, 2012; Wilson, 2017; Ziai, 2015.

Another interesting aspect of this first definition of a "culture of violence" stems from language that reflects a larger conversation with Paloma and several postcolonial Caribbean arguments with regards to drivers of violence in the region. Here we see her use different forms of the term "*acceptance of violence"* repeatedly in conjunction with different types of violence (e.g., "control, discipline, corporeal punishment, conflict"). She also indicates that violence in the Caribbean can be read as a cultural conditioning applied as a 'remedy' to day-to-day interactions that require discipline or conflict resolution between individuals (especially in instances where one individual is read as less powerful or vulnerable than the other). According to Brereton (2010), in Caribbean colonies a pervasive "culture of violence" was erected by the end of the nineteenth century and was "in some respects gender neutral" however there is no doubt that women of all ethnicities were prominent among its victims…. [and] its active agents" (p. 2). While historically there is evidence to suggest that colonial violence was inflicted on individuals regardless of their gender or ethnicity (in slight contrast to what Lauren's focus on Afro-descended people), as a result of victimisation and the internalisation of conditioned violence, perpetrators of violence could essentially be anyone regardless of their gender.

The second and third definitions of a "culture of violence" were in response to my interview question that asked Zari and Samantha to contextualise GBV and violence more widely in the region:

> "**Our culture**…a man cannot be a victim of the violence, it's as if something is wrong with him… **Culturally**, we have a **serious problem** in terms of **seeing these things**. Until the **culture changes**, in terms of we **widen our lenses**, we will

> continue to not have a true reflection on what the actual percentage of victims in most situations are." (Zari)
>
> "**Culturally,** we have a **culture of gender-based violence**. We know that **it has that system**. And so **culturally**, these things are kind of **overlooked and overshadowed**, and we don't consider them to be big deals." (Samantha)

Looking more closely at the discourse to contextualise violence above, Zari explains that men become silent victims in the process and as a result of gender biases and expectations of what a man can/not experience, understanding GBV victimisation in the Caribbean will never be achieved. In fact, Holder-Dolly and Youseff (2010) argue that Black men in particular have held a complex role. In a historical Caribbean context, enslaved African men in particular were subjugated to the level of inhumane and today they are simultaneously both "victims and heroes, condemned and marginalised", "the villains and the abused", yet also expected to maintain dominance in their relationships (pp.1 and 3). When put in conversation with the practices of silencing around male domestic abuse as interviewee Samantha highlights, as a collective whole, violent exposure becomes normalised, minimised, and unaddressed in the Caribbean. And, on a professional level, GBV data, programmes, and support that could be available to all victims remain insufficient when there is a group of victims made invisible based on their gender.

There is undeniable evidence (see section 2.2) pointing to colonialism's role in internalised violence that is re-enacted today. However, digging a bit deeper into the three definitions of a "culture of violence" ultimately create a relationship between violence to a distinctly Caribbean feature of the region, people, and values i.e., a certain

level of socio-cultural acceptance, I argue leaves the region and people vulnerable hyperbolic misinterpretation and dangerously exacerbate pre-existing racialised tropes of Black men and women (e.g., Black male aggressor, angry Black woman, hostile Black child, etc.). Problematising the idea around a "culture of violence" does not negate the very real cases of violence that exist across the Caribbean. However, it does reinforce the idea of there being racialised behavioural patterns to be expected from a group of people i.e., corporal punishment on / against / amongst / accepted by Black Caribbean people. As a result of this process that is distinctly racialised when we spread ideas of a "culture of violence" outside of the geographic bounds of the Caribbean, this has the power to reinforce warped, internalised images, and understandings of self. For example, one interviewee described gendered traits that are common in Jamaica that in her view are intimately tied to IPV:

> "**Jamaican women** tend to **talk down** to their men a lot in Jamaica….**vocalise** a lot……Jamaican women sometimes **they don't know when to stop**…in Jamaica you have a lot of **women beating their men** as well…..it's not a **culture** where you find women being very **submissive, no…it's a talk back culture**…it's like a **power struggle** for the most part….in general it's an **aggressive culture**, an **aggressive culture**." (Anonymous)[54]

While race was not specifically defined within this particular description of cultural violence, a gendered trope emerged and functions as a stereotype of a type of Caribbean woman. The idea of a group of women not knowing when to stop suggests there to be something inherently problematic, innately encoded within a group of

[54] All of the interview participant's actual names have been kept anonymous to protect their identity by using pseudonyms for each throughout this thesis. There are several occasions where identifiable information based on the location of their described experiences may reveal their identities. In this case, I have removed these interview participant's pseudonyms and replaced them as 'Anonymous'.

people. I will briefly interject a personal yet important and relevant opinion here to point out how extremely harmful the above perspective on Caribbean people can be if it is lifted from text and not examined critically. The quote above made me concerned as to the possible implications of including this type of discourse within the work I am producing as a doctoral student as well as the responsibility and power that I have as an insider (I self-identify as a Black Caribbean woman) and an outsider (both researcher and diasporan) in reproducing discourse that pushes these narratives outside of a conversation between two Caribbean women on Zoom. This point in the interview also made me pause because it essentially reinforces narratives as a collective group Black women oftentimes are forced to run away from: the stereotype of the 'loud, angry Black woman'. The quote was ultimately included in this research as a learning point to demonstrate a ramification of discourse, how 'violent culture' can be digested back into the very population it intends to describe, and what can happen when we look in the mirror with these conceptions of self that we must battle with. In this case, it is a convoluted power struggle between a heteronormative couple that commonly vocalises and makes physical their relationship struggles i.e., "talk back culture", "women beating", and "aggressive".

This complicated process also has the power to reinforce punchy headlines that cast entire peoples as inherently violent. For example, we see how these types of narratives can feed public opinion and ultimately feed opinions of self on the individual level - coincidentally the day I wrote this section of the thesis an article by published by the *Jamaican Observer* with the headline:

> “**Violent** Jamaicans: **Culture vs genes:** The **violence** now **ravaging** Jamaica has earned for the island the **unenviable** reputation of being the world's second most **dangerous** country, with a **murder** rate of 43.85 per 100,000 people.” (Lowe, Aug 2022).

The discursive use of repetitive, descriptive terms with outright negative, sensationalised tone: “violent”, “violence”, “ravaging”, “dangerous”, “murder”, and “unenviable”, ultimately work to condition social responses into accepting their environment to exist as fact and truth. It also demonstrates a similar point made above about what violence is understood to look like - largely the physical act resulting in the most hyperbolic end, i.e., “murder”.

Additionally, related to this idea of the transference of violence (I would define in the context of this work as violence that articulates/manifests through space and time informed by past predictors) has mobility and roots due to the stake colonialism has had in the region. Interestingly, this concept of the mobility of violence was not only highlighted in the cited news article above, but also in conversation with interviewee Lauren:

> “...How **trauma** has affected our **DNA**. I don't think that this means that we're more **inherently** one thing over another. I do think it will help us better assist people in **flipping that influence and addressing the issue.** And that's something **no one wants to speak to**. Because it's **uncomfortable**. Because it feels like it's going along the **eugenics** argument. But that's not where it needs to be…I think that whatever happens is understanding a little bit more our notions of **identity**.” (Lauren)

When Lauren highlighted these points, we were nearing the end of our scheduled interview slot and I sensed we were starting to lose focus as she transitioned out of the

interview to her next meeting as she took our interview in her office at work. As such, we did not have time to discuss the risks of hyperbolic discourse that ties violence and identity, looking beyond a "culture of violence" but how it is threaded to colonial informed myths such as eugenic arguments for instance. Despite this potential for further investigation that was cut slightly short, I have included Lauren's point above because at the very end of her statement, she ultimately reinforces the importance of a key piece of my thesis: a critical understanding of violence through the lens of identity in Caribbean contexts.

One final part to consider with regards to this discussion on a "culture of violence" and colonialism can be seen in the next two examples where GBV experts Samantha and Breeny defined examples of how violence that is exacerbated on a 'cultural level' ultimately can impinge on the anti-violence nature of their professional work:

> "All of these **bad behaviours** for men and for women is very important because **women uphold patriarchy as much as men** do, and we **teach patriarchy** and we **teach patriarchal ideas** and ideals to children because we are so many places, we end up **socialising** children..." (Samantha)

> …you find that women are becoming **more empowered** and **more domestic violence** going on. **I don't know if I want to say that** it has increased, but it is consistent, where you find out women are leaving, but yet **women are chatting back and fighting** the men as well." (Breeny)

Samantha's mention of 'bad behaviours', 'patriarchy', and non-traditional characters (women) implementing patriarchal ideals can be put in conversation with Breeny's ambivalence about the way empowered women actually behave. In Breeny's explanation she questions whether gender empowerment is truly an asset because she has seen cases where it results in more domestic violence and conflict - an alternative

perspective that could be problematised. It is unclear if Breeny truly believes what she is saying but narrates something that Samantha also echoes - the reality that women can contribute in problematic ways, be it to her misplaced Caribbean feminist empowerment to justify violent behaviour (Breeny) or upholding patriarchy through parenting (Samantha) - the result is GBV. Even further, it could be misinterpreted as something like the Black Caribbean feminist movement being used as a tool to falsely justify violent behaviour because a woman feels 'empowered' to do so and as such perpetrate violence against a man. Uncoincidentally, this sentiment was echoed in another interviewee who said:

> "I once got into an argument, or a discussion, about whether and not **sexism is still a thing** in Jamaica. And honestly, it shows how **disenfranchised Jamaican men** are because of the **introduction of a feminist movement** in Jamaica." (Anonymous)

Be it the harmful misinterpreted applications of Caribbean feminism described by Breeny and Samantha, or an overall denial of the reality of gender inequality in the specific example of Jamaica above, in any case, what is consistent is that both men and women can risk disenfranchisement because of GBV. This correlates directly to the nuanced conceptions of gender identity and blurred boundaries between insider and outsider to violence, victim and perpetrator, active agent in reproducing remnants of colonial culture, and recipient of the violence. This will be explored in the next chapter. Additionally, there were several instances where harmful cultural codes were named by GBV experts as directly correlating to the reproduction of the "culture of violence" produced by the colonial project in the Caribbean:

> "[There are] tendencies in the region to **accept locker room banter.**" (Lori)

> “We don’t take things like, seriously enough, and we believe that things are like **private business.**” (Kristine)
>
> “I am certain that every woman in the Caribbean has heard this statement. Little girls should be **seen and not heard** or the statement that **boys will be boys**.” (Samantha)
>
> “A woman…her value is based on her **proximity to a man**...we are **raised** to **expect gender-based violence** or to be able to prevent it” (Samantha)

Above there is a clear repetition of socially coded sayings and practices that lead to a particular set of expectations between men and women. For instance, the idea that across the region we “accept” patriarchal discourse or how individuals are raised to “expect” violence at some point in one's life (whether a victim, bystander, or perpetrator it is unclear but the reality of it is ever pressing). We also can dissect common sayings indicating gender norms between girls and boys and silencing - silencing women's voices as well as silence around issues related to ‘private business’ or issues perceived as ‘closed spaces’.

In consideration of the evidence provided by the interviewees, the links between colonialism, identity, and violence have been voiced as something to challenge their own realities and the realities of both men and women in the Caribbean. The evidence in this section also raises concern for the power I can embody as the researcher who is both insider and outsider to the particular argument of a Caribbean “culture of violence”, and some of the choices that I have made to include it, contextualise it, and problematise it in this thesis. In line with these two points, the next section 4.3 adds to my overall argument that positions the complexities of violence experienced by

interviewees as both insider and outsider to said violence - their personal encounters with a “Caribbean culture of violence”.

4.3 Insider, outsider: personal encounters with violence

It became very apparent during the fieldwork stage of this work, that as a student of human geography within the humanities, the psychological impact of interpreting violence would be great. This also became apparent when discussing the lived realities of Caribbean women dealing with GBV and trauma as their profession. Section 4.3 will build on the prior section that discussed interview participant’s articulation of their cultural understandings to digest violence exposure and dive into how all of them demonstrated their own experiences that make them both an insider and outsider to violence by way of experiencing second hand trauma. More specifically I will discuss the critical role of being an insider and outsider to this work and consider the way it can “circumscribe identity, social position, and belonging” (Mohammed, 2001, p.101 in Giwa, 2015, p.1). It is worth underscoring the layers within this concept of being insider/outsider to this research in light of my use of reflexivity as a key research method[55]. The first layer of being inside and outside of this research focuses on myself as a researcher sharing some identity positions with the interview participants who are Black Caribbean women, feminists and development professionals (see section 1.4 positionality within the research). The second layer of being inside/outside of this

[55] See more on insider/outsider in consideration of my research methods in chapter three.

research which will be outlined in this section 4.3 focuses on interviewees are professional women who are experts in working with people who have experienced violence and who have themselves experienced violence.

Psychologists Pearlman and Saakvitne (1995), coined the concept of vicarious trauma (i.e. secondary traumatic stress or compassion fatigue) as the long term exposure to traumatic experiences of victimised individuals, which can cause disturbances about one's "basic schemas" about the world and result in major paradigm shifts about the goodness of other people, post-traumatic stress disorder, intrusive thoughts, anxiety, and/or reactions unrelated to pre-existing victimisation (Schauben and Frazier, 1995, pp.50 and 61). This work on vicarious trauma also highlights that those who have directly encountered violence and victimisation are not necessarily more distressed by doing trauma work than those without a history of victimisation – however, the research process on trauma is difficult, specifically hearing survivor's stories and reflections on the after-effects of abuse (Schauben and Frazier, 1995, pp.58 and 63). Schauben and Frazier (1995) also argue that both victims and support workers can be "doubly traumatised" by recounting victimisation and by violence support systems that are put in place, intended to help (pp.62-63). In other words, if a Black Caribbean woman (in this case interviewees) has previously encountered violence, doing work (e.g., like this very doctoral research on violence or working at a GBV support centre with victims) she would not necessarily find her work more personally taxing compared to if she had a personal background that was trauma-free. She could however inevitably face structural violence for instance by infrastructure put in place originally intended to mitigate

violence[56]. This reality of double and triple exposure to violence and re-victimisation will be discussed in depth in section 7.3. With that being said, this research has been challenging because the empirical evidence in this thesis focuses on the after-effect of the violence itself. Despite every effort of crafting interview questions to not directly ask about violence, discussions on violence can be triggering for anyone engaged in the discourse, even for myself[57]. While my research is aimed at becoming a reference and tool to facilitate wider regional aims of ending GBV, the process of understanding the context of violence, women's identities, and both personal and professional experiences tied to violence ('my intention to help') has a possible risk of traumatising myself the researcher or those involved in the research process.

With every attempt made to develop ethics criteria as to not cause harm and create risk mitigation plans, it was important that I (the researcher) was not left out of the equation. And, understanding my positionality with regards to where my interpretations of the discourse lead this discussion and argument is worth acknowledging. Schauben and Frazier (1995) recommend ways to "cope with stress" and seek "instrumental and social support" for those involved in trauma and violence related work (e.g., researchers and support workers) by creating an action plan with activities like exercise, journaling, meditation, or cognitive restructuring (pp.62-63). This idea of creating a coping method plan was also recommended by my mother (a clinical psychologist and my supervisory

[56] See literature on structural violence in subsection 2.4.1 and examples of structural violence at the institutional level in section 6.5.
[57] See methodology chapter for details on the logic behind interview questions and sampling interviewees based on their professional and personal backgrounds.

team). As a side note, throughout the interview process, self-care was not a topic of conversation and as such it was a challenge to decipher if preventative measures (such as an action plan) were a part of interviewees day to day life as no one mentioned or inferred ‘self-care’ throughout. I made note of this in section 7.4 as a future area of research to extend this thesis. Nonetheless, I had to be forcefully proactive in reminding myself of self-care throughout this triggering research process. My personal list of coping mechanisms included: monitoring my caffeine take, taking yoga classes, going to the spa for a hammam, journaling my dreams, jotting down ethnographic notes related to the research, taking extra warm showers in the day especially after interviews, not scheduling more than one interview per day to allow time for me to digest conversations, cooking more, travelling in my downtime, speaking with my partner, friends and parents on a regular basis, and taking the weekends off to temporarily remove myself and recover from the research. It is worth noting that prior to beginning this research I was warned of the possibility of experiencing vicarious trauma due to the specific topic I intended to research. This is the result when someone has repeatedly been exposed to trauma and violence and results in the significant change in one’s worldview or damage their level of empathetic engagement. Pearlman and Saakvitne (1995) add that best approaches trauma professionals, such as trauma therapists, should take need to be attune and aware of how violent processes can work to inform understanding, enrich your work, and ultimately protect yourself.

As an aside, I noticed being anxiously intrigued in anticipation of writing this part of the evidence that focuses on personal encounters with violence. This occurred once I

realised that the majority of the interview participants who I initially identified by their professional work in the development and/or activist space, revealed to me that they were survivors of violence either directly or indirectly. With that being said, I absorbed all of the detailed examples of violence in our conversations so intimately that it did take somewhat of a toll on my own emotional wellbeing. This personal reflection within human geography research is important because it demonstrates the limitations[58] to this thesis as a doctoral student in this discipline, how closely I relate to the work as the researcher[59], and my ability to metabolise and interpret details on violence (and also intentionally exclude some) in a way that thoughtfully results in empirical contributions[60]. It also demonstrates the reflexivity required to conduct (Black Caribbean) feminist research and the noted blurred boundaries between the researcher and research participant.

In light of this, two examples where professional women more immediately revealed their status of being victims of violence to me during our interviews, handled them in slightly varied ways. For example, one woman said:

> "My **preoccupation** with issues that affect **Black women** disproportionately is directly as a result of my own upbringing…. **I am myself, I'm a victim survivor**. So that definitely **steered** my first part to kind of understand or have an awareness of where that's where offending comes from." (Anonymous)

[58] See section 7.4 for more on the future areas of this research.
[59] See section 1.4 for more on positionality within this research.
[60] See section 7.3 for my empirical and conceptual contributions.

The use of the term ‘preoccupation’ to justify her focus of her work suggests an underlying tone that perhaps she was expected to take a different professional direction because the word ‘preoccupation’ has undertones of being unnecessarily focused on something that one would usually not be focused on. As I reflect on this use of the term ‘preoccupation’, on a personal level I find that it perfectly describes my relationship to my own profession, research, and personal experiences tied to GBV and how it has driven my daily concentration of this thesis over the last four years. In general, it is common for me to encounter a combination of shock, pity, and confusion from people when they find out the specific topic of my doctoral research ‘on violence and gender in the Caribbean’ due to its painful affiliations. With that said, the above interviewee’s specific use of the term ‘victim-survivor’ interestingly reflects how people exposed to violence can have inevitable experiences and process where violence can shape “how meanings are assigned by the observer to the victim and the social context given the event” (McFee, 2017, p.86). Here we see how this interviewee personally experiences her reality that span the realms of ‘survivor-hood’ and ‘victimhood’ based on the way she processed her awareness of the violence she experienced.

I later noted that she also consciously assigned more humanising meanings to people she encounters in her work (i.e., perpetrators of violence) as “human being”, “offender”, and “law abiding citizen.” She explains:

> “I guess this is always **a controversial thing whenever I say it,** but to have some sort of deference for **the rights of offenders as human being**s, as a way of ensuring that their propensity for re-offending is reduced as much as possible,

> of reintegration of offenders as **law abiding citize**ns is very much tied into how they are **treated as citizens.**" (Anonymous[61])

While her description above has the undertone of apprehension around boldly justifying what she deems as important for perpetrators of violence and ultimately creating a non-violent society, is perhaps because of how her work and interests have been received by others- be it socially, by academia, by policy implementers, or international development spaces focused on victimhood. Throughout the interview, some of the vocabulary she uses demonstrates how her personalised encounter with violence has guided her somewhat uncharacteristic focus on mitigating GBV. With the use of describing herself as a hyphenated "victim-survivor" rather than just victim or survivor perhaps can be interpreted as her on a spectrum of recovery from her own personal encounters with violence. In another instance, she describes the passion she has for her work as a "preoccupation" that humanises offenders to mitigate future cases of violence. This interviewee also indicated quite clearly that although she had no interest in delving into the details on her own personal encounter with violence, she did say I could look up a published piece of her work to learn more about it. Upon doing this, I learned about her victimisation in a domestic violence situation.

I will draw on a second example where a different interviewee revealed that she also experienced violence, this time in quite extensive detail and on different occasions. Upon reflection of this conversation, I found it to be one of the most profoundly personal ones I encountered as the researcher. It was the longest in terms of the interview time

[61] See footnote number 42 on my process behind using pseudonyms and anonymity.

stamp, and we struggled to end our conversation. It is worth noting that during this interview in particular I found it more challenging to separate myself as the researcher during and after our conversation meaning it took an emotional toll on me. This interviewee journeyed her introduction into activism, went into great detail on her mental health struggles, and various experiences of intense violent assault. Her narration pulled me into her life to the extent where I felt as though I was on the side-lines cheering on her survival and accomplishments when she juxtaposed her traumatic past as a driver of her professional achievements in the wider Black Caribbean feminist space. The conversation was profound:

> "I identify as well and a **survivor of gender-based violence**, but I don't consider it to be my only identity or what so defines me as just a person. You know, one of many identities and experiences that I carry out. In terms of advocacy, I'm also an activist…. I sometimes take a while to **be my own advocate**…..I would have had **a kind of defining moment for me** because **I experienced abuse** before. And again, all these different issues of **abuse were not linear**. I mean, along the way, they were **recognised as abuse**." (Anonymous)

The interesting separation of these two key identity markers points to a later conversation she raises with regards to the relationship activists can have with themselves regarding being their own activist or advocate. She stated that a defining moment for her in recognising her own trauma (and one identity mark of being a survivor) was when she opened herself up to help others through her own organisation. This was when she "...actually **recognised** it fully for what it was." As she circled back briefly to her own personal encounter with violence, she disclosed that one day when she was commuting to work on a busy road in the morning near patrolling police officers, she noticed a car following her on the side of the road. Someone was watching

her. The car slowed down next to her, and the driver called out, she lowered down to see who it was and did not recognise the driver. Immediately the person in the car:

> "Got upset and tried to **drag me into the vehicle.** I **panicked** and I took off running." (Anonymous)

Once she reached her friend's house nearby, her friend convinced her to go to the police station despite her feeling that they would not "take it seriously", "do anything…and they're not going to enquire". Despite her reluctance, she went and found that "they were very nonchalant about it," barely looked her in the eye, and forced her to make her report in front of other officers without offering any form of privacy. After giving a report she was cut off by the officer when:

> "he laughed, he said, 'kidnapped? Almost kidnapped?' And just laughed. And I walked out the door and just kind of went to cry for a little bit." (Anonymous)

The above described nonchalant attitude of the police officers and details of this attempted kidnapping taking place in a location where police enforcement and other community members were visible evidence the inadequate infrastructure in place to deal with violence. It also highlights how trauma can be reinforced by structures put in place to stop violence in the first place from the silencing, minimising, and belittling of authority figures. This is in juxtaposition to the interviewees' work to support victims of abuse in a very different approach, one that is very public and calls out perpetrators of violence by their face and name. A method that authorities with power refused to do for her in that meaningful encounter with violence. Interestingly, while one interviewee juxtaposed her survivor-victim identity with work that humanises perpetrators for the purpose of social reintegration. On the other hand, the other interviewee who identifies

as a ‘survivor’ juxtaposed her experience into activist action that uses public shaming tactics against perpetrators to build community awareness.

Another example from the interviewee above who described her near-kidnapping described how her early life before becoming an activist was based working at a call centre. She stated that people would constantly call and sexually harass her on the phone. Due to company procedures, she was forced to endure the harassment because her job did not allow her to not hang up on ‘customers’:

> “There was nothing **protecting me at work**… So, I had to sit there and wait until the allotted time. I think it was a minute and a half before I could hang the phone up, and someone **sexually harassing** me saying what they're going to do to me this time of masturbating and also just so I could hang it term because my job and **I could lose my job.**” (Anonymous)

Here we see how the risk of financial insecurity (see chapter five Navigating identity and power) can have a stake in creating or exacerbating identities of becoming a ‘victim-survivor’ of violence. This interviewee was forced to endure sexual harassment or risk the loss of her main source of income. This experience importantly highlights how structural violence plays out in professional environments (see chapter six Compounding vulnerabilities and professional violence) and contributes to exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities that women in the Caribbean can face. It also demonstrates how experiences of violence that occurred before her anti-violence activism may have inspired her to take action and foster a work environment where she is protected (leading her own activist movement online) and work to protect others who may be at risk who would not otherwise find advocacy for themselves (something she also noted experiencing).

Other examples that highlight women as insider/outsider to domestic violence were gathered in response to my interview question: “do you feel that your personal identity has any impact on your work?” In response, all four interviewed women witnessed their mothers or personal family members suffer from domestic abuse:

> “I myself came from a situation where **my mother was a victim of domestic violence**. I never realised the **impact it had on me personally.** There's a saying that people like to help, but then people like to help others. I thought **I was directed into this ‘help you’ profession** from my **childhood experience**…. I know it has **impacted me professionally** where I am very empathetic. I am non-judgmental because I, I feel like I have walked the road in order to an extent. I can relate to an extent if you get me correct. It has really made me want to make a change and be **impactful…**. Probably having that experience as a **child,** I want to say, has impacted me professionally.” (Zari)

> “So, **my mom is actually well, she's a survivor of domestic violence.** Okay. She was married twice. And her first marriage, **it was extremely upset**…. maybe she would have had the support and the resources to be able to possibility that really….then was, there was nothing.” (Julissa)

> “... **I've seen my mother basically be in a domestic dispute** with her partner was not to the extent of where I've seen. It's something that was happening consistently all the time. **I did not experience that,** you know? OK. I think in terms of let me see this economy abuse in owning one. OK, in terms of emotional abuse, the more I've seen is on more than one.” (Breeny)

> “As someone who has friends who are LGBTQ+, as someone who has family members, friends and **I have seen their lived experiences.**” (Dina)

This highlights a key finding that suggests bearing witness to violence can have a stake in positioning these very women to be future leaders, advocates, and experts in the field at a later point in time. In other words, being exposed to violence can often inspire later work within the ‘international development sector’ and focus on anti-violence work/activism. Ultimately, there are evident ties that link personal experiences and

professional work when it comes to GBV. In the words of Rose, she confirms her work to be somewhat of an extension of herself:

> "So, **it** started off as a **personal thing**, and then it became a [name of organisation] thing, which is how a lot of my work has gone." (Rose)

Throughout the interview she indicated how her extremely personal focus and prioritisation of topics relating to femicide for her is an issue that is "kind of hard to escape" especially "in the Caribbean region because it's so endemic". This indicates that aside from the "personal thing" that she did not detail but what drove her into this field of work, in conjunction with data, statistics, word of mouth, media stories, etc. that demonstrate high instances of femicide in her country helped concretise her entry into this sector. While she did not refer to 'it' to anything in particular it can be inferred that 'it' refers to her dedication to mitigating violence based on a 'personal thing'. The non-descript, unspecific use of 'it' and 'thing' in addition to my feelings of discomfort during our interview indicates the possibility of a personal encounter with violence that Rose has had (either directly/indirectly) that she did not wish to disclose. And I was not in the position to prod for further details on that topic. What was not mentioned or explained further by Rose draws larger questions around the relationship, and inevitable ties that each interviewed woman has to the work that she is committed to: a defining experience of (in)direct violence.

In light of the large number of instances where interviewees indicated they were victims of / bystanders to violence, the level of explicit detail revealed to me of their experiences varied. For example, one woman suggested that I should listen to a podcast where she

speaks about her experience of violence instead of her recounting it to me to take up the interview space. I viewed it as an invitation to learn more about her personal life that I accepted immediately post-interview. Others recounted vivid details on the spot of their experience. Some mentioned what they had witnessed / experienced in passing and pushed past it. This encouraged me to consider if there was anything different that I could have done, said, or presented as the researcher, to encourage a more consistent level of openness amongst the respondents during the interviews. However, as the 'development researcher' it is important to critically acknowledge and confront the permeable, fluidity of the identities presented and the possibility of performativity of identity that provides me access (Giwa, 2015). This creates space to engage in reflexive discussion and allows the researcher to be "inside, outside and somewhere" in between the research, in other words, "knowing" creates self-reflexive research and awareness for how positionality can complicate belonging and implicate ethical development research (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Giwa, 2015, p.8). And, as outlined in my methodology chapter three, I intentionally aimed to foster an environment grounded in Caribbean feminist reflexivity to hold space for focused conversations related to perspectives on violence and identity. Considering this, the way that women responded to me specifically (e.g., identities presumed by my LinkedIn profile, Twitter profile, last name, physical appearance, age, accent, etc.) helped shape the fluidity of their responses, partly performing for the interview itself and to me as the audience (researcher). Equally, my impression of each interviewee pre-Zoom interview (i.e., their LinkedIn profiles, Twitter profiles if any) afford an exchange of self-discovery when discussing personal encounters with violence. For example, some participants treated

the Zoom space as if we were on a job interview and others went into very revealing monologues (i.e., my research questions or follow-up questions were not required) about intimate information of their lives and experiences.

In sum, my research is committed to self-reflexive understanding which has helped to foster a positive research space, considering the context of the research space that I held more carefully. It also has led me to the conclusion that the varied level of detail shared by interviewees regarding their personal encounters with violence (as a second layer to this concept of being insider/outsider to research[62]) was their response to the research, my own positionality, the tone I set in the interview/level of comfort with me as a person, but also how they have managed to personally interpret their experiences on their own terms and deal with them. In sum, I would also argue that there is a strong correlation between exposure to violence (directly or indirectly) and professional commitments to anti-violence work in Caribbean development spaces amongst the women interviewed.

4.4 Setting context: community systems

Considering the identities of victim and survivor that emerged quite prominently in the evidence, it is worth considering the surrounding context of violence that the

[62] See interpretation of my insider/outsider positionality within this research in section 1.4 and at my interpretation of interview participants holding insider/outsider positionality within their work at beginning of section 4.3

interviewees come from as critical to the issue - community systems and social perceptions of violence. In order to ground a more context-specific understanding of contributors that are argued by interviewees to foster environments where GBV is more prone to happen, this final section 4.4 will first discuss unique formations of community within Caribbean settings. I will then close by detailing the way public social responses impact realities of violence and reinforce the context of violence in the Caribbean.

In conversation with Lori on her work and personal life, it became apparent that in cases of domestic violence, Caribbean family structures can play a role in blurring boundaries between victim and perpetrators of GBV within a single household. Specifically, she contextualises incest as a manifestation of blurred boundaries that operates as violence:

> "We have a really **high rate of incest** in our region, throughout the Caribbean actually. So, I think **family set up, family structure** is something to consider…. when you have the introduction of **different men** coming to the space**, stepfathers, uncles** who are really maybe just other **community members.** In **poorer** situations where there's less obstacles to enter someone's home that **increases community space."** (Lori)

What I find interesting in this description above is Lori's depiction of a Caribbean community context where she argues that it is quite common to find the boundary between the public and private sphere (the community and the home) to be blurred. She argues this can be more so prevalent in poorer households that are made vulnerable to porous boundaries between the home and the public space, creating opportunities for dysfunctional family outcomes such as incest. This indicates that the role of community can take quite an active role with regards to risk factors that may make a woman more

vulnerable to violence. According to Noxolo (2018) these types of “creative forms of community” can produce a false sense of security, gendered insecurity, and fractured concepts of Caribbean community and the family unit by men and women due to “destructive masculine and feminine roles” and the constant threat of violence (pp.41 and 43). In tandem with the opportunity for blurred lines between family and community, Lori voiced concern over topics of polygamy and incest that can further contextualise violence. She noted that through her work with community-based approaches to mitigating violence through restorative justice for perpetrators of violence, there is often a ‘revolving door’ of community members (identified primarily as extended male family) in female-led households that produce higher risk factors of violence occurring:

> “This idea of **community** driven approaches to violence, where victim or victim survivors can get real **personal** validation and of their experience, but then also have **offenders our community** learn or, you know, disrupt the stereotypes and narratives that we have our own who **sex offenders** are that they're not kind of random persons lurking in the corner but actually they're, **they’re our brothers, our uncles, our sisters**.” (Lori)

She argues that community approaches to tackling violence is an opportunity to break misconceptions of who a perpetrator can be (e.g., an unknown individual versus known person or family member to the victim). While the community actively creates a sense of familiarity amongst its membership, individuals who are violent or sex offenders for example have the opportunity to be read by the community with these identities. Here we see an alternative ‘development’ approach to victim justice whereby naming someone’s uncle, father, sister as a perpetrator to violence through the community is an opportunity for justice to be sought for victims seeking validation in their experience that previously may have been ignored due to that level of familiarity. Ultimately, the

community becomes aware and accountable of who their community members actually are.

The complicated role of community that emerges in my research can also be found in Noxolo's (2018) work on gender in/security in the Caribbean where she argues that when it comes to gendered violence, Caribbean communities have the ability to be simultaneously "complicit in silencing it and powerful in recognising it" and can be a solution to the violence by using creative community discourses that can discourage violence (p.41). In light of the porousness, we see within households where presumed protectors of the home can oftentimes function as perpetrators of violence, the church was drawn in as an example as having somewhat of a complicated, nonlinear role in her community:

> "The **church served as a source** for Black women in terms of **dealing with the violence.** Some churches were **empowering**, some churches were not and basically told them, **just pray and stick around**…. but the church…is **a community resource** for Black Christian women, especially if you don't have access to other services…related to welfare. No, you may not find a therapist, but you definitely can find the church in any community…it's an **important resource.**" (Paloma)

While I do not have the space to go in depth to deeply examine the role of the church in this thesis, it is worth acknowledging the way Black-led Christian religious communities in the Caribbean have a history of providing welfare services, community support, and empowerment for survivors of violence but also can encourage women to overlook violence (i.e., "stick around") to uphold the image of a traditional family structure. Adding to this brief discussion on the ties between Christianity/the church and violence, Breeny

brought up the role of her being a Christian woman has had in her work dealing with violence:

"It is part of my **purpose**, you know, to **advocate** on behalf of others." (Breeny)

Here we see Breeny's interpretation of faith as a driver of her work, her service to others, and her community. Soares (2006) argues that some applications of Caribbean feminism have a history of ignoring and negating the role of faith and do not "value the role of religion", assuming it harmful to the women's/feminist cause and rights (p.192). Countering this, Soares (2006) adds that Christianity in this particular context can "help one to understand one's role as a supporter of women in every aspect of our lives" (p.195). While there is evidence to suggest that Christianity for Black Caribbean women in particular can have varied ways of dealing with violence, there are also descriptions where Paloma witnessed the religious rituals (praying) as a means to endure violence privately. We also see lived examples from Breeny that highlight how faith can be an "important resource" for those seeking community, direction, and ways to serve others.

4.5 Setting context: social responses to violence

While the evidence in the previous section contextualises violence through the lens of examples within Caribbean community structures, such as the home and church, public social responses on violence importantly reinforce understandings of violence and circle back to earlier discussion in this chapter on what is perceived to be a very 'real' "culture

of violence" in the Caribbean (which I have intended to problematise in this thesis[63]). In discussing social responses to gendered violence in the Caribbean, DeShong and Haynes (2015) have found there to be severe “institutional challenges at the government level” and “media representations [that] frame women’s agency negatively and reinforce harmful, hetero/sexist gender ideologies” (p.11). They also found obscured “underlying ideas and practices that support violence” which can reinforce violent acts and reinscribe “gendered and sexual asymmetries” (Haynes and DeShong, 2017, pp. 123 and 125). In a discourse analysis of media rhetoric of violence reports in Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados scholars found the media to produce understanding of the “contextual possibilities for women’s use of agency” (DeShong and Haynes, 2015, p.8). The media can also produce “common sense ideas” about violence that can fuel “intense public engagement with discourses on gender, violence, and intimate partnerships” (Robinson, 2011, p. 204).

Putting this in conversation with the evidence below, I would argue that public social responses have the power to not only ground understandings but perpetuate ideas on which bodies are (un)deserving of violence and create additional layers of victimisation. For example, two research participants Rose and Julissa detailed very public examples of GBV to demonstrate how violence is consumed and responded to by her community. In Autumn 2021, there were two very public cases of murder of two young women (one Indo-Trinidadian, and one Afro-Trinidadian). In describing their concern for the way

[63] See section 4.2 for more.

violence was consumed in Trinidad and Tobago, Rose and Julissa both individually voiced concern over how the murder of the Indo-Trinidadian victim named Andrea Bharatt who came from upper middle-class family transformed the entire nation into a period of 'national mourning', with public vigils throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period:

> "The most **unprecedented national response** to the murder of Andrea Bharat, who was an **Indian** woman, young, who was university educated, worked… And when I say there was an **unprecedented response,** I mean, there were vigils, I would say over 50 of them just held for weeks on end, all over the country. And during that, it was the most overwhelming and shocking response because as an activist, I'm like: **What the fuck. We have literally been talking about this**…And this one woman…put **the whole country in mourning**. And I don't think we really **understand why** that happened." (Rose)

> "The headlines were calling her an **angel**. And then there were a lot of search parties… When they found her body, first of all, the **entire day was tense**…the **air was heavy**… there were **nationwide protests and vigils**. When I say **nationwide**, I am not exaggerating. And places that have never run protests before, they're like, oh, my goodness. People came in **droves**…I've never seen so many people at the protest. People came from deep South to come to North Trinidad…. They have put bright lights up on them…. Pictures on all the vehicles. There were vigils for a week. Every night." (Julissa)

In response as to why this occurred, both interviewees were similarly positioned: first the community wanted to bond, escape the national lockdown, and be outside of their homes after months of social isolation. They also concluded that the way both murders were consumed by the public (e.g., Andrea as the 'perfect angel and innocent victim' versus the 'other' victim Ornella Greaves):

> "[Andrea] obviously also looks like a **child**, but she's also 23, and everyone knew she was 23, but they kept calling her a **child…**. People were posting things about her, like knowing that she liked **pink**, knowing she liked the **butterflies**." (Julissa)

In comparison to the second murder of an Afro-Trinidadian woman, both interviewees noted the stark contrast in response by the public and harmful victim-blaming narratives. For example:

> "Look at the response that her death received versus Ornella Greaves, who, again, was a **poor Black woman**, you know, from **Beatham Gardens**. …Even prior to Andrea Bharatt's, death, Ashanti Riley was murdered in a similar way…And even then, Ashanti, right, we received some, attention from the media… still nowhere in comparison to what Andrea received." (Rose)

> "[I was] also **really sad** because there was **the issue of race**, did play a hand there…I remember people like on Twitter talking about, people **making this a race thing...**.. Race is a thread that runs through everything… [but it does] not exist in a vacuum. … Several aspects to it. I saw why it manifested…So **being Black.** Right. Being a **Black woma**n…. stewards' advantage for **how long the media portrays you** and **how important your case** is when it comes to a case **how the law enforcement sees it**." (Julissa)

I found it interesting that two separate interviewees who work within a similar context had the same concern: social responses and consumption of violence that are dictated largely by race and class-based valuations of women who are deserving and undeserving of violence. The meeting point of a woman's racial background and socio-economic status (e.g., neighbourhood) dictates 1) how seriously the public responds, 2) how seriously the authorities take the case, and 3) how seriously the public invests in the story. In line with this discussion on setting context of violence and deconstructing notions of a "culture of Caribbean violence", the public consumption of violence can problematically function to re-victimise survivors and victims of violence. For example, another interview participant stated that the frequency in which the media problematically positions race and class and the colour-blindness that occurs within her society needs to be addressed:

> "We see it **every day in the papers.** And that's what people get upset about when they see again, as a class thing, when I see kids, as they embark on a whole society that we're not, **we're not dealing with race issue because we're all majority Black**." (Ava)

Despite false ideas of the erasure of inequality because women exist in majority Black countries, Ava argues that there is evidence of the societal perceptions of identity and violence perpetuating violence. In further consideration of problems that fester beneath the surface of 'majority Black' Caribbean societies, the topic of colourism also emerges (see subsection 2.3.1). The consequences of colourism[64] takes shape differently depending on the context, even amongst English speaking Caribbean islands. The baseline effect it has on how individuals internalise it resonates more broadly as a "proxy code for an otherwise universal social dynamic" (Hall, 2018, p.2138). As a result of the way public portrayals and perceptions of race and skin tone relate to the experiences of interview participants, all ranged in skin colour/tone and thus related experiences. On this topic of colourism, I also noticed that a few of the women who were of a deeper skin complexion offhandedly mentioned that they probably lost out on certain experiences or opportunities due to their shade of melanin. While I anticipated a deeper discussion on colourism to occur[65], it surprisingly did not take a stronghold over these conversations throughout the interview process. As a result, the complexity of race and impact of public perception and valuation of a Black woman's life goes beyond stereotypical white versus Black dynamics (or in this diverse case of the Caribbean - Black versus Other) but impacts Black identifying women at different levels dependent

[64]I.e., the privileging of certain features over another as they align to whiteness/not.
[65] See subsection 2.3.1 in literature review for a discussion on colourism.

on their shade. In the words of interview participant Anna, she argues that due to histories of colonialism and slavery there is an obvious effect of internalised colourism:

> "There are a lot of, **light-skinned individuals** who also **identify as Black** because there are **other characteristics in society** and **society interacts** with you in a different way." (Anna)

The reality of skin tone and race-based features inevitably take a toll on the way Black Caribbean women are perceived by others and thus, a(n) (un)conscious value is placed on what attention they receive when it comes to reporting on their wellbeing with regards to GBV. In addition to the narrations of feminist critiques by the interview participants, there is also much to be discussed as it relates to a slew of tweets collected, all focused on similarly disturbing findings and complaints of how the media can perpetuate subliminal forms of victimisation against women and wider commentary on Caribbean society inclusive of justice and law. In the next Twitter example, we see how digital feminists generate an online public response to cases of violence from a critical discursive lens:

> "Let's talk about why crimes that disproportionately affect women are not given the same importance as other crimes of the same extent. While **analysing the impact** on the **reporting** of such incidents by survivors and why thoughts and prayers aren't enough." (Tweet)

The tweet sampled above is an argument that highlights the default practices of GBV/criminal reporting by media professionals to negatively reinforce a hierarchy of importance with regards to the need to protect Caribbean women. This critique of surface level journalistic attempts to sympathise with the victim for the public to have their "thoughts and prayers" with victims and the families are argued to be insufficient ways of dealing with a pervasive issue that affects more than just women and girls. This

cyberfeminist is ultimately demanding for the prioritisation and deeper understanding of published cases of GBV impacting women in the media to improve the public's consumption and interpretation of them. While it is not directly stated in this tweet, it could be inferred that the Twitter user feels not only are GBV news stories published and given secondary importance and offer shallow attempts to placate victims and their families, the consumption of these types of stories by the public harmfully exacerbate the issue at hand and create outcomes for women and girls as exemplified in the second tweet (see below). While Twitter conversations critiquing the media span various English speaking Caribbean countries, they can be put in conversation to demonstrate the relationship between public consumption of problematic media practices, popular public opinion, and questionable legal regimes that implicate perpetrators of violence. It also puts to the forefront a specific critique on how women's identities in cases can be overshadowed and trumped by popularised publishing of GBV stories that are not treated with the respect it deserves. For instance, the tweet below highlights just this:

> "If we needed any further evidence of how **fucked** we are just look at the silence of the normally **vocal defenders** on women on here who are muted because one of their fave was the **lawyer** on the case! Reduced from life to 15 yuh nuh! **Rape** mother, daughter (product of that **rape**) yuh nuh" (Tweet)

Here we see how this digital feminist highlights how "fcked" she feels "we are" (the use of 'we' I believe is in reference to the legal and justice system as well as journalists/the media that she is also a member of as a consumer), popular public opinion (as informed by the media and patriarchal gendered norms such as machismo) actually has a heavy influence on the sentencing outcomes of rapists. For context, the tweet above

specifically refers to a public trial in Jamaica that involved a former journalist turned defence attorney Dionne Jackson-Miller who faced backlash as she helped appeal a life sentence for a man who admitted to engaging in a complicated incestuous abuse in 2012 with his thirteen year old daughter and mother. The perpetrators original sentencing in 2015 was life imprisonment with hard labour. However, in 2021 “social media users have been infuriated by the decision of the Court of Appeal” and accused Jackson-Miller the popular radio/TV personality with the “skin as a tenacious journalist” to have helped to send a negative message to survivors of sexual abuse according to an article by *Loop News Jamaica* (2021). In response to questioning on the blurred boundary between her role as journalist and defence attorney to a guilty incestuous sexual predator Jackson-Miller tweeted:

> “In the same way that **as a journalist** I ask questions even when I am being pilloried for it, I do **my job as a lawyer** even if **the public does not approve**. Part of what the rule of law means is that **judges** must impose sentence according to law” (Tweet)

In sum, the above is an example of how the media and cyberfeminists on Twitter create an exchange that drives discussion on the context and critiques on the outcomes of cases of GBV. This produces an example of the power of digitised social responses to violence. In the next example we see a tweet published by a cyberfeminist calling for action against a perpetrator of violence. The tweet was in response to a *Jamaica Gleaner* news report of a thirteen year old girl who was violently attacked by a group of five people in St. Ann:

> “My **heart weeps** for this child. I hope that these **men suffer** the same and **worse fate**.” (Tweet)

Upon further investigation of the news report itself, there were no interview or eyewitness reports, but somewhat identifiable information was made available due to the size of St. Ann. I included this tweet to highlight the framing of the case of violence in the news article compared to the advocacy toned tweet above. In the text of the news article, the victim is defined as a “girl”, “student”, and “young girl” in contrast to the way the five perpetrators were referred to as “he”, “suspects”, and “four other persons”. Due to the lack of information on the case it is difficult to deconstruct the particular narration of violence however there is consistency in the way the victim was defined by her youth and innocence. However, in the description of the crime itself journalists used the term ‘alleged’ to suggest either an early stage investigation or a subliminal nod suggesting if the crime is fact or fiction at all based on claims by the “young girl”. In interpreting the tweet on this case above, I argue it has the tone pushing other readers/cyberfeminists to demand justice for victims and consequences for accused perpetrators.

4.6 Conclusion

In sum, chapter four has introduced the empirical evidence to discuss some of the key drivers and ways that Caribbean women working within the international development sector in the Anglophone Caribbean contextualises violence in their specific geographies as well as their experiences, often as both an insider and outsider to violence. Their experiences with violence and being bystanders to it (e.g., social responses to how violence is read by society) in addition to the role of colonialism and

propositions of cultural violence helpfully bring context to defining what violence means and how it is interpreted by experts in the field. In sum, this chapter has used this evidence to de-centre arguments that define the Caribbean as an innately “culturally violent” geography to unearth more complex understandings of how violence manifests through insider experts. The next chapter five will discuss empirical evidence that contextualises the way Black Caribbean women navigate identity and power and how their complex identities can transform into what this thesis conceptualises as ‘compounded vulnerabilities.’ Then in the following chapter six, I will discuss how violence manifests within the international development sector to set up my two contributions within this thesis.

Chapter Five: Navigating Identity and Power

5.1 Navigating identity and power

The focus of Blackness and using race as a main category of analysis in this thesis has manifested in quite an unexpected way throughout my engagement with the interviewed women. For example, the interview questions posed were crafted to continuously circle around the concept of women's identities to unearth some of the role or outcomes (if any) that Blackness may have. In doing this, distinct themes of power and identity emerged. Blackness figured quite prominently in chapters within the literature review as well as unpicking my own racialised experiences working within some of the same development spaces as the interviewed women and perhaps my socialised biases due to my diasporic positioning (see section 1.4). Narrations of identity that were revealed to me demonstrate specific aspects of women's identities can be particularly marginalising (in both overt and covert ways) depending on the environment (a physical socio-cultural environment and/or an ideological environment that may be internalised and acted out) that a woman exists and manoeuvres within. These environments can include: the socio-cultural fabric that makes up Caribbean communities (Kempadoo, 2004; Noxolo, 2016), the theoretical and practical worlds of Caribbean feminism (Hunter 2017; Thomas, 2004), local activist communities (McDonald, 2016), 'international development' organisations (Crawford and Jackson-Best, 2016; Pargass and Clarke,

2003), and higher education (Gahman and Collins, 2019) as examples. This means that the relationship between race and violence emerges in a very nuanced, not straightforward way. In the words of a Twitter user, one must be open to nuance to gain understanding of Caribbean identity and culture:

> "People have to start **admiring** that the[y] lack the capacity to appreciate certain **aspects** of **Caribbean identity** and **culture** because they lack the range." (Tweet)

This tweet's critical tone introduces a perspective on the complexities involved in understanding what it can mean to be from the Caribbean to outsiders: highly open to misinterpretation. In other words, if cultural understanding is not approached with the utmost consideration for its complexity, it is because there is an inadequacy within that individual 'i.e., they lack range'. The concerns that arise in this tweet are grounded from a sense of what it means 'to be Caribbean' - to embody diversity, range, and not one single thing but many things. The use of the term 'admiring' is interesting because it not only works to set a slightly sarcastic tone, it subliminally takes a jab at individuals who are not Caribbean, or individuals who have simplistic understandings of 'the Other' (i.e., stereotypically parallel the Caribbean with all-inclusive resorts, the allure of Carnival, marijuana, etc.). This highlights a critique of misunderstandings of what life in the Caribbean actually can mean or look like. Or as Nixon (2015) concludes, despite the diversity within the region, the Caribbean is "often imagined as a Black space" with "people and culture marketed to global touristic desires that sell paradise, culture, desire, and sex most often through Black and mixed-raced bodies" (p.155). This suggests that Caribbean identity and culture are deeply intertwined, instructing the other as a non-static process that impacts the region, island by island. It also highlights

connections to Hall (2013) and Angostini-Allen's (2016) work on complex identities as they argue racial identity to a production and product of complex representations (see section 2.3). Further, taking a deeper read on tone within this tweet illustrates the possibility that the Twitter user may have published in response to an encounter where her identity was misunderstood or type-casted in an offensive way paralleled with an unfounded stereotype. In tune with the tweet's desire to defend the complexities of Caribbean identity, it also works to demand that the collective (for example cyberfeminists) who may be invested in the issue of identity to hold people/groups accountable who have undermined or worked to inappropriately redefine Caribbean culture outside of the people themselves.

Elaborating on this cyberfeminist argument focused on complex identities is also evidenced by another Twitter user's post on identity and the complexity of being Caribbean:

> "I wish I had the privilege to **sit on the fence.** In order for me to do that I would have to **strip** myself of my **identity** and that's **not** something I can do. It's not any of our places to pick apart claims of racism in order to make us **feel** more **comfortable**." (Tweet)

Here we see Twitter being used as a platform to create a critique on the ability to have the privilege of removing oneself from her roots or be forced to manoeuvre around how she physically shows up in society. Interestingly, the user introduces the concept of power and privilege whereby identity is perhaps imposed upon her in certain instances rather than always introduced to others on her own terms. This incites a consideration for Bourdieu's (1989) work on power and the symbolic struggles of daily life i.e.,

"symbolic power relations" that reproduce and reinforce power relations, "constitute the structure of social space," and legitimise the social world (p.21)[66]. Here we see an example of how the virtual world of Twitter becomes a space where Black Caribbean women users make sense of their real-life experiences and symbolic struggles and reproduce their own form of resistance/symbolic power (Sobande, 2020). They do this by calling out the problematic aspects of the social worlds they live within (e.g., reinforcing the power of their unique identities, calling out how their experiences of racism are unacceptable, and de-legitimising claims of racism as unfounded / unacceptable).

In other words, the digitised social world curated by Black Caribbean cyberfeminists and the tweet above is an articulation of an experience of a symbolic struggle she has experienced (racism). And as she identifies power from holding identities that allow one to 'sit on the fence' i.e., disengage from, suggests that she could hold identities that may be inescapably marginalising for her and lacks the ability to remove herself from. The user concludes her tweet with a criticism of those who are not part of the oppressed group and their belief that they have the power to minimise Black women's claims of racism based off of an experience they could never have or understand because it puts their own privilege in an uncomfortable, awkward place. This relates to other narrations from interviewed women who work in development spaces where their identities have

[66] While I do not have the space to discuss symbolic power relations in depth in this thesis, please refer to: Bourdieu, 1991; Wolf, 2018.

been particularly challenged by certain groups. This will be discussed further in depth in this chapter.

It is worth noting the way the selected Twitter users present themselves online can be understood as a means of performance, where identities are enacted and “displays of cultural competence and knowledge” (Florini, 2014, p.223). Josephs and Risam (2021) elaborate on this notion of identity performance through digital technology and argue that “the performance of Caribbean culture using digital technology” allows Caribbean people to reshape and imagine alternative futures and “collective narratives” (p.129). More specifically, the internet provides a new moment in history to examine how Caribbean people respond and take ownership as a collective to hegemonic discourses and is ultimately “a heterotopia of resistance” where they “refashion traumas, visualise anxieties and transcribe apprehensions of displacement, invasion and violation” (Josephs *et al.*, 2021, p.125). It appears this literature considers identity performance on Twitter to function as symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1989) where Black women can use their voices to activate critical conversations around the importance of acknowledging the complexities and politics of belonging to their respective identities. Further, they both demonstrate a higher level of ‘cultural competence’ in comparison to forces that have worked to ‘Other’ their experiences, identity or diminish their sense of self.

On a related note, when it comes to the particular discourse around race and complex identities while having a conversation[67] about this research with Jamaican gender scholar Dr. Karen Carpenter based at the University of West Indies, Mona, she countered this particular frame of analysis (i.e., race/Blackness as identity in the context of violence) as perhaps an irrelevant angle because the understanding of Caribbean (Jamaican identity) and to identify as a 'Black Caribbean' could be viewed as an oxymoron. It is worth noting this counterargument that problematises 'Blackness' as a real mark of identity in the Caribbean in this research is a point of exploration in the evidence focused on how women identify their own complex identities.

The findings on this particular topic in this thesis demonstrate that Blackness can play a particular role in framing one's identity in certain environments, for example some professional encounters within the development sector. This points to interview evidence where "Blackness" or being of "African descent" was clearly noted as part of women's identities in Jamaica and other West Indian countries. For instance, in discussion with Lauren, she initially described herself as an "Afro-Trinidadian woman" and that her identity was inscribed from her childhood:

> "What's been interesting to me is growing up in Trinidad Tobago, I was very clear I was…**I knew I was Black**. What that meant in terms of dealings with **Africa** wasn't very clear, kind of fuzzy." (Lauren)

She then followed-up by describing how she resonates with the diasporic concept of "Caribbean-ness" as "half of us are travelling somewhere else." As an Afro-Trinidadian,

[67] This was a private conversation held between myself and Dr. Karen Carpenter on 10 June 2022.

the way she described her sense of self along ethnic, national, and international lines was clear. She coupled this with an understanding of the multiplicity of Caribbean identity, a sense belonging to everywhere and to no one place in particular as she described her diasporic ties to Africa, North America, the UK, and other Caribbean countries. She then explained further that while she identifies within a particular space of Blackness in Trinidad, she said:

> "What has started to **define Blackness** is **how other people perceive it**. And I kind of, I think that's the **power** of being a **middle class Black Caribbean woman** from Trinidad and Tobago." (Lauren)

Lauren's voice helpfully unpacks notions of identity because she brings up characteristics of identity that have repeated and cut across many of the conversations I had with the interviewed women. My interpretation of Lauren's response is that she views her Blackness as somewhat of a call and response between individuals and external influencing factors or in other words, a perception by society that is externalised and internalised by multiple stakeholders. This resonates with Tate's (2009) work on the idea and reality of 'becoming/being Black' as both a simultaneous individual and communal experience (p.53) (see literature review section 2.3). It appears that the reality described here is that 'to be Black' is to participate in a constantly evolving, non-linear process of identity-making that is fed by a combination of how others perceive you, how you perceive yourself, the ramifications of belonging to a racialised group, and how that racialised community experiences social processes.

Lauren's statement also introduces another layer of identity that resonated with the voices of several other interviewed women: class and socioeconomic belonging by

stating, “I’m also very middle class.” Similarly, Samantha extended her definition of identity by mentioning how she:

> “Grew up in a **lower income household**…and so I felt a very strong **need to give back** to my community….and so for me, **being Caribbean** has impacted how strongly I **advocate** for issues that directly affect the **Caribbean**.” (Samantha)

Here we see both Samantha and Lauren relate class and belonging together and that socio-economic dynamics are important ways they relate to more nuanced sub-communities in the Caribbean. As I reflect on my own ties to this discourse around class and regional belonging, I can also resonate with how my positioning within a particular class and my ability to identify as Caribbean has granted me privileges and direction in my life - where giving back to the region feels like a personal and professional duty[68]. As I am a scholar also contributing to work of feminist geography in the Anglo-Caribbean that interlinks autoethnography methods, relating my own positionality is a reflection of how Anglo-Caribbean women have a history of actively making sense of their material experiences and life chances of the geography they exist in (postcolonial, multicultural, ethnically diverse) (Gahman and Collins, 2019). This means that I share similar sentiments to Samantha's (and Dina’s, see below) attitude of: if it is not me to undertake this work, then who? While I have considered and reconsidered the relevance of my own position to this work (and the space it should/not take up in this thesis) it is worth noting that I too am drawn to work in similar spaces as the women I have interviewed for similar reasons. For example, Dina’s narration of justifying her work as it relates to her identity mirrored similar internal dialogue that I have with myself. Dina said:

[68] See more on positionality in section 1.4.

> “I just got into the things that I got into because I just really **felt so strongly** about them **personally**,” ... “I feel that because **I am a Caribbean woman**, that **I more so I care**.” (Dina)

This is an interesting narration that ties identity to the concept of ‘care’. As a Caribbean woman we can see how her personal politics may have influenced the direction of her work in gender advocacy against violence. In describing herself as a Caribbean woman she draws concern for their wellbeing and how her identity intentionally mirrors her work. Here she recognises the overarching category of identity that she resonates with (“Caribbean woman”), the intentional attention she pays to their wellbeing (“I care”) and the responsibility she feels (“I really felt so strongly…personally”). Here Dina refers to Caribbean women as “them” but also circles back to emphasise that it comes from a “personal level” and because “I am a Caribbean woman.” This indicates that through her work and professional frameworks she may be in environments that attempt to triangulate herself from the work by referring to this group of women as ‘them’ versus ‘us’ but then at the end of her explanation she underscores the community-identity ties of identity that drive her work.

Another repeating theme that emerges around this conversation on complex identities are power dynamics that can exist and emerge amongst specific groups of women within professional spaces itself. As mentioned earlier, Lauren stated: “the power of being a middle-class Black Caribbean woman.” Conceptualising power and identity, specifically with phrasing “the power of", ties to McDonald’s (2016) argument on how Caribbean feminist theory and Caribbean feminist activists have used their experiential knowledge of power structures (i.e., lived experience of being Black/mixed race/middle

class, etc. in certain societies and geographies) inform how their personal is political. For example:

> "I'm very **proud** to be a **Black woman** and a **dark-skinned Black woman** at that, and I acknowledge how this has affected certain things in my life." (Lauren)

I would argue that Lauren's choice of words indicates a notion of pride and understanding of where she comes from and how it informs her own sense of self. Another interviewed woman explained that part of her online signature is the best way she can summarise who she is and where the power of her identity resides:

> **"Caribbean woman. Black. Proud."** (Anonymous)[69]

The interview participant above concluded that she is "equally proud of all the things that I am." Again, we see a repeated sense of identity pride amidst the intersecting complexities that each label she identifies with means to her. It is worth noting Black Caribbean feminist contributions that have focused on "the intersection of different power structures" as a "product of their geographical and political locations – "because of the nature of the Caribbean: (Andaiye, 2003; Scott, 2004, p.202; McDonald, 2016 p.52). Lauren and Samantha demonstrate two examples whereby power (via pride) is asserted and fostered from the process of claiming and living with multiple identities and the consequences of those identities (Crenshaw, 1991) which contributes to their overall notion of identifying with a larger notion of 'Caribbean-ness'.

[69] I have left this interviewee anonymous to protect her identity.

5.1.1 Understandings of feminism and the politics of belonging

Critical understandings of feminism(s) and the politics of belonging was another key topic that was revealed by several of the interviewed women and in the selected tweets. While there is much evidence to suggest that the Black Caribbean feminist movement was created out of a period where Black Caribbean women felt unheard and developed a space for themselves, the politics of taking up space for a marginalised group inadvertently means someone will stay within the margins. I also encountered conversations with Black Caribbean women in interviews that critiqued the movement's ability to be wholly inclusive, operate in restrictive ways, and had the power exclude certain groups. This underlying sense of division also has historical roots. In the 1960's-1970's, the Black Caribbean feminist movement was largely affiliated with Caribbean academic institutions, a certain set of class privileges, and racialised divides including Afrocentrism and postcolonialism whereas the second wave of Indo-Caribbean feminism focused more on activism and the targeted oppression of women of Indian descent (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998).[70] In consideration of how waves of feminism were stratified by marks of identity, some of the Caribbean cyberfeminists on Twitter that are referenced in this thesis can be seen to mobilise feminist groups together in acknowledgement of broader issues that have the power to fray them. For example:

> "As I have learned from Black feminist movements - "Deep listening involves a political analysis that contends with **power** - **patriarchy, colonialism, imperialism**." #generationequality" (Tweet)

[70] For the purposes of clarity and specificity, throughout this thesis I use Caribbean feminism interchangeably with Black Caribbean feminism as shorthand and acknowledge that Caribbean feminism also includes other feminisms such as Indo-Caribbean feminism as mentioned.

> "As feminist movements we must not just listen to, but make space for and AMPLIFY those that **exist at the margins of our own feminist movements**. From the **margins** to the **centre**! #GenerationEquality." (Tweet)

The above tweets were a part of trending online discussions that occurred during my fieldwork period that coincided with the United Nations (UN) #GenerationEquality forum in 2021 focused on global gender equality. These tweets position feminism in the Caribbean as something that is active, rather than just an embodied identity, it takes more of an active role that includes "listen", "analysis", "make space" and "amplify". They also position Black Caribbean feminism as linked to international development discourse that encourages women's development, empowerment, and gender rights (i.e., #generationequality) and encourages a discursive exchange between those on the margins with those participating in the wider movement. The second tweet in particular suggests an underlying acknowledgement of how there is a history within the movement to marginalise from within as also argued by Baksh-Soodeen (1998). I would also argue that the repetitive nature of key words (in the form of a hashtag) emphasise a generally agreed notion of the development sector needing to hold space for particular voices. This leans into Andrea Cornwall's (2007) argument on development buzzwords and fuzzwords that are rendered visible in exclusively digital locations: the #generationequality hashtag that creates a following around and builds on the commonly agreed sentiment that we (the 'international community') all need to pitch in to meet the UN goal of creating gender equality within our lifetime/generation. It is worth noting that this notion of marginality and Caribbean feminism is a recurring theme that is explored later in this chapter.

Adding to this conversation on the politics of belonging, I expected that majority of the interview participants would verbally identify with the politics of Caribbean feminism in some capacity. This however was not the case. Although it was not made explicitly clear as to why direct labels of Caribbean feminist were not explicitly identified with across all interviewees, I would argue perhaps the label/term of '(Black) feminist' has deeper affiliation with academic theory deemed as inaccessible, versus simply being affiliated with simply having a passion to promote Black women's wellbeing. However, the interview participants who verbally identified with the label 'feminist' did so quite clearly:

> "**I am a Caribbean feminist**. And I mean one day we will stop saying intersectional to mean, to describe your type of feminism. Right. All feminism should be intersectional, but we know that, that it doesn't exist that way. So yeah, I **am an intersectional Caribbean feminist.**" (Julissa)
>
> "I would say that **I am a Black Caribbean feminist,** and I am a woman, and she/her." (Dina)
>
> "I felt identified very much as **an African and Caribbean feminist.** And I think that that has led to and continues to inform my life's work." (Maria)
>
> "I guess, I most, I primarily identify as **an intersectional feminist**. Okay. I mean, although that's kind of up in the air, not that I'm not intersectional, but I have identified with, by different names over the years, but I think that's probably the most **appropriate descriptor**…..And I kind of, you know, **I'm in the feminist activist space**, doing work around domestic violence." (Rose)

In consideration of Rose's response, her immediate affiliation of being an "intersectional feminist" is coupled with a justification of having a fluid, non-linear identity and that intersectionality is the "probably" the best fitting term that she affiliates with. Perhaps her initial confidence met with her underlying need to justify/explain why intersectionality is fitting for her in response to my question is because she felt a slight unease with leaving intersectionality unexplained due to its history of being mis-interpreted/misappropriated

or with ‘original roots’ in the Caribbean as an American concept. While at the beginning of the interview she did not indicate which identity marker takes precedence in her life (my interpretation is because perhaps it fluctuates depending on the environment in which she is immersed in).

While Julissa critiques how feminism inherently requires more specific subcategories of analysis, and that Caribbean feminism should have an additional layer of intersectionality applied, Dina gives indication of her association to the specific type of Caribbean feminism. Here in the case of Dina and Julissa, there is a distinct relationship they have to the work of Caribbean-specific feminists who have made inroads in terms of building an identity marker that is regionally specific and relatable. In another instance, my conversation with Maria demonstrates multiple feminisms at play, specifically as she has ties to the African continent with African and Caribbean roots. Maria’s alignment with multiple feminisms has a stronghold in guiding and informing her “life’s work”. For context, later in the interview Maria described her work as centred on serving and improving the life outcomes of Black women from a justice-focused perspective (also as indicated in the focus of several well-known and internationally respected development organisations that she name-dropped that I will keep anonymous to protect her identity).

In further conversation with Maria, her standpoint on feminism became clearer and somewhat similar to the way Lauren later describes how identity labels such as intersectionality become ‘perverted’ due to overuse and misinterpretation (see next

section). During our conversation Maria alluded to the idea that (Caribbean) feminism has become academically politicised to the point where she often encounters other Caribbean women doing GBV advocacy work but feel that the label is inaccessible to them due to its roots that have been historically grounded with academia in the Caribbean:

> "...We are doing this work, but **we don't necessarily think of ourselves as feminist**…and many folks opt **not to self-identify as feminist** or **see themselves represented** in feminist politics...there's this perception that **feminism lives within the academy**….that doesn't take away from the folks that are really trying to sort of self-identify and move Caribbean feminism forward." (Maria)

Maria describes her bearing witness to how some groups of women find an irrelevance of identity labels. This plays out in the way groups of Caribbean women who would fit into this research's inclusion criteria as a 'Caribbean feminist' but in reality do not personally identify with that particular category of belonging due to perceptions of it being an exclusive space and they exist on the periphery. This suggests there is a distinction between Caribbean feminism defined as somewhat of an academic project versus something that is experiential, lived, and put into practice. Maria interestingly adds to this insight by referencing her affinity for the work of fellow Grenadian feminist activist Peggy Antrobus, who is well known to push for feminism in the Caribbean and connect it to people's lived realities (experiential), so that they "see themselves reflected in feminist politics and feminist ideals" (Maria). It is worth noting the possibility of tracing the historical trajectory of Caribbean feminism that indicates exclusionary politics (see section 2.3). During the late 1980's for example, a UNESCO project on cultural development and Caribbean women's organising around sexual violence found that

women criticised each other's groups in the Caribbean as "having pretentious procedures biased in favour of middle-class women" and "during this time most of the middle-class women were white or light skinned and so this power inequity came to be seen as a race issue" (Ford-Smith, 1988; Ford-Smith, 1997, pp.214 and 243). While race or colourism was not particularly extrapolated upon in the feedback Maria received from the women she has worked with, there is a history of belonging that can be rendered visible through class, race, shade, political alignment, etc. and has historical ties to the trajectory of Caribbean women's development.

In light of these points, it is also necessary to acknowledge this notion of ownership and accessibility that is associated with the label 'Caribbean feminist'. It brings into play the reality that there is a category of women who exist on the margins of a movement that was sought to be inclusive through academia. Caribbean feminism's use of reflexivity and auto-ethnography brings to the forefront the importance of the research methods that I applied in this thesis and acknowledging the possibilities of expanding this work for the future (see section 7.4) especially due to this described fissure between academically grounded Caribbean feminism and experiential Caribbean feminism. Conversations with the interview participant Maria also highlighted the importance of another limitation to academic work mentioned in the introduction of the empirical work: Caribbean women who exist on the other side of the digital divide but are active participants in anti-violent work on the ground. The interview findings suggest the importance of acknowledging women who do not identify with squarely defined feminist identities but work in practice towards similar goals. This suggests a divide between

feminisms in academia and how lived experiences are not black and white categories that orbit out of the context of each other but rather help work through this thesis' focus on identity politics through the lens of gender and development professionals from the region.

I also consider the extent to which there is a visible relationship that ties racialised identities to this thesis' consideration of IPV. The exclusionary politics of Caribbean feminism as Maria identified through her experience working within a development organisation at the grassroots level has worked to:

> "Kind of **grounding me** more as a **Caribbean feminist** and I think I work really hard. That impacts on my **personal political** outlooks….we're getting the idea that we need **a sector like Black women**." (Maria)

Above, Maria articulates her own consciousness of these issues considering her mixed perspective of being both an insider and outsider of Caribbean feminism through her personal politics and professional work. For context, through her organisation she occupies a position of power with access to resources that can prioritise Black women in development. As someone who occupies an insider space to the movement with access to the complexities (like women doing critical work yet define themselves outside of Caribbean feminism), Maria has made concerted efforts through her work and personal politics to make more inclusive definitions of feminism to push Caribbean women's progress forward (i.e., "we need a sector like Black women") to ensure development approaches are led by other Black women to effectively respond to their lived experiences of marginalisation and violence.

In another example, Paloma describes how civil society organisations in Guyana are primarily divided along rural and urban lines and that “the majority of it is women led, not necessarily feminist led, but definitely women led.” Here is another subtle example whereby the identity label of ‘Caribbean feminist’ does not necessarily resonate with some groups of Caribbean women even if their work and organisational missions actually fit within the scope and paradigm of ‘Caribbean feminist work’. This further exemplifies the complexity around Caribbean women’s identities because it problematises the inclusive nature of ‘Caribbean feminist’ as a mark of identity and label itself. It becomes clear that there are groups of Caribbean women that do not rely on the community ties accompanying the identity label of ‘Caribbean feminist’ to carry out their own ‘development work’, activism, or be grassroots leaders focused on anti-violence and gender in the Caribbean.

Adding to this, Baksh-Soodeen (1998) positioned the Caribbean feminist movement to be coalition building oriented, non-divisive, and embracing in nature between’ ‘traditional’ women’s organisations, government machineries, university programmes, and the NGO movement. However, in conversation with several of the interviewees I noted their views to more so resonate with McDonald (2016) and Andaiye’s (2003) position that suggests Caribbean feminism is no longer grounded on an analysis of different relationships of power but only paid attention to “collusive hierarchies” exemplified through hyphenated feminism (e.g., Afro-Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean, etc.) which ultimately stopped her from identifying as a feminist (McDonald, 2016, p.45). In the 1980s, grassroots Caribbean organisations such as DAWN and CAFRA attempted

to confront these “collusive hierarchies” in the Caribbean (2016). This suggests somewhat of an anti-feminist backlash during the 1980s and 1990s where fissures in the movement became apparent and transformed into labels as something perhaps non-Caribbean by those who felt marginalised within the movement.

Adding to this assessment on the friction of inclusivity in Caribbean feminism, another interview participant Ava added:

> “A lot of my work engages in **Caribbean cyber feminist** work because it is most **accessible** for a lot of people and it gives, you know, it has the **option of an immunity** for persons who are considered to be survivors and who are considered because some people don't identify as such. So, it gives them the **ability to participate**.” (Ava)

Here she indicates how Black Caribbean feminism can be read by some as inclusionary - especially the digital aspect while others argue that those on the other side of the digital divide are excluded from participation. For Ava, Black Caribbean feminism can importantly be inclusive by taking place online where digital feminist practices are about creating anonymous spaces for virtual participation that offers justice and support for women who have been victimised (see subsection 2.5.2).

Related to this conversation around academic feminism and experiential feminism colliding, surfaces in conversation with Lori’s commentary on her own consciousness of making an impact through her work in spite of the duality of her profession that spans both higher academia and the development sector:

> “I try not to **call myself** an academic because I think I try to make sure that **my work** as rooted in kind of having **real world impact**, and I'm not sure if that's all okay. So, I would **call myself** an **advocate** before I **call myself an academic or**

> **just a researcher**…But I'm quite happy to use my, I guess, expertise in a transferrable sort of **way to impact**." (Lori)

It becomes apparent that the effort behind Lori's work and impact is important to her, helps ground her sense of self/identity, and puts value on her work outputs which can be seen in her repeated use of "I try." She also attempts to distinguish herself from the academic world she described herself to live in on a part time basis (e.g., research, teaching, publishing, administration, grant funding, etc.). In interpreting Lori's perspective, there appears to be a distinct segregation between how she views labels attached to academic work versus the impact of gender advocacy work, despite her impressive academic accolades. In the above excerpt, Lori's emphasis on being "rooted", creating "impact", and using "transferable expertise" suggests the way the value she brings may be read in certain groups as an outsider/insider depending on the professional hat she wears.

On a personal level I also struggle with defining my experience outside of my academic trajectory and how it has so deeply fed into my perspective on the divisiveness between the world of grassroots activism and the development sector. With academic degrees and affiliations comes particular stereotypes and expectations that both Lori and I mutually found to struggle to fulfil. In other words, the diversion between the different ways one can live out their passions of supporting women impacted by violence i.e., by producing research findings (this is what could be classed as removed from the work by an academic institution) in comparison to face to face interactions with women in the form of a women's recovery programme for example (this is what could be classed as 'on the ground impact'). This concept of creating an impact within the development

sector ‘on the ground’ ties to literature about development volunteerism in the Global South. For instance, research on the impact of development volunteers on the ground Schech *et al.* (2015) have acknowledged that while it is difficult to measure the impact of this type of work, this type of ‘development work in practice, on the ground’ can reinforce global inequalities but also have relational impacts that determine what development outcomes are possible. This somewhat complicates earlier mentioned discussion between Lori and I on the need for meaningful action in our work by juxtaposing academic research against on the groundwork focused on gender and violence. Adding to Lori’s experience of being in unaccepting professional spaces that are more research/academic driven in nature, she describes that often she felt “a covert sense of we don't like the fact that she's disrupting this space.” I too have felt this in certain liberal and conservative professional spaces that are unwilling to understand alternative perspectives or the nuances to issues before applying ‘solutions’ and make meaningful change.

5.2 Compounding vulnerabilities

This section will contextualise violence by discussing some of the intersecting contributors of violence that have emerged within this data. The collected interview data drawn from the professional expertise of development practitioners has shown that there are repeating drivers and contributors to violence in the Caribbean based on interviewees' understandings of the inner workings of identity politics and GBV in a Caribbean context. It is worth highlighting that there is some contention on the concept

of focusing on intersectional identities and oppressions (see section 6.3), particularly when some interviewees like Lauren disapprove of the term intersectionality to describe Black Caribbean women's identity politics. This is because it often exudes a false sense of care/understanding for the needs Black women within the development sector that simultaneously attempts to grapple with violence and victims. Amidst the discursive misappropriation of the mobility of intersectional identity politics by international development forces who exist as outsiders to the day-to-day oppressions and joys of being a Black (Caribbean) woman, unpicking the concept of intersectionality brings value to this research. Despite critiques of the relevance, misappropriation, or contextual relevance of intersectionality as a concept to understand women's identities or GBV in the Caribbean (see section 2.3) my analysis of the data reveals its nuanced relevance as it draws out the politics of identity politics that have been specifically racialised for a particular group of people.

My primary data has demonstrated diverse, intersecting factors that may position a Black woman in the Caribbean at increased risk to violence exposure. For instance, interviewee Paloma quite easily listed off a host of factors when I asked her opinion on what would make a Black Caribbean woman more prone to violence based on her work experience at a VAWG crisis centre. Paloma immediately rattled off a list of indicators and said that depending on the location on the island where she was sent to respond to the domestic violence: "there was a lot of Black women". In addition to race, she identified the GBV victims she supported were often: married and/or in long term abusive relationships (ten to twenty years), mothers, educated up to secondary school,

victims of corporeal or sexual violence in childhood inflicted by their mothers, teachers, or immediate family members, disabled, from a low socio-economic background and/or face economic uncertainty, of indigenous backgrounds and live in areas with extractive industries, sex workers, from rural settings, seekers of divorce, victims of child marriage, from conservative religious backgrounds, and/or part of the LGBTQ+ community.

This list of key factors shows the diversity of lived experiences that a specifically Black Caribbean woman can experience in addition to instances of marginalisation that her Blackness may bring her. It also shows when women hold multiple marginalising identities there is a high possibility that these identities compound and work together to transform into vulnerabilities that often results in violent victimisation. And, according to Morgan (2010), Caribbean societies have struggled with the "intergenerational transmission" of entrenched legacies of poverty and violence being an outcome of failed Eurocentric ideologies on gender relations in the Caribbean (pp.1 and 7). In other words, there is a strong indicator that suggests a history legacy of poverty and colonial gender relations can intersect to produce violence[71]. In the context of some of the identities and pre-existing traumatic experiences (e.g., child marriage, financial uncertainty, etc.) listed above that can result in additional layered violence indicates that these identities do not exist in a vacuum but have histories that are tied to poverty and gender relations (Morgan, 2010).

[71] While there is not sufficient space in this thesis to conceptualise poverty from a critical development lens in depth, it is important to acknowledge that poverty is complex and multidimensional and is explored more in detail here: Ellis, 2003, in chapter six: Women, Gender, Poverty and Violence; and Kabeer, 2003 work on gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication

A woman who is Black and simultaneously belongs to a host of other communities and can experience a trajectory of circular traumas that inevitably increase her vulnerability to GBV. For example, a woman that Paloma could encounter at a crisis centre encounter may have been laid off or is a disabled mother facing economic uncertainty and turns to sex work. These complex, layered realities and compounded vulnerabilities of her complex identity:

> "...make it really, **really hard for women** to be **empowered to leave**, right, so they **feel trapped** in these situations." (Paloma)

This indicates how gendered power dynamics (see use of 'empowered') and financial control/risk poverty (see use of 'trapped') can emerge and dictate the emotional, financial, and physical ability to remove oneself from a violent situation. Based on Paloma's expertise, one cost of surviving economic uncertainty can often be prolonged exposure to violence. Interestingly, class status and access to resources have been recurring themes that relate to the way the GBV experts identified themselves with and to contextualise some of the backgrounds of victims to violence. Adding to this, scholarship from Jamaican feminists Eleanor Wint and Leith Dunn (1998) argue that institutional violence denies "Caribbean women equal access to economic structures and productive processes" and as such, "women have evolved their own survival strategies" (p.75). While there is a historical legacy (see sections 2.2 and 4.2) that feeds contemporary realities of violence whereby (Black) Caribbean women's fiscal contributions to the household have been marginalised, as a collective it is possible that despite this they have not lost their ability to survive, move on and thrive. Further, the

extension of institutional violence that is linked to expectations of capitalist productivity (i.e., ties between masculinity, 'breadwinners', and private household gendered dynamics), institutional violence also emerges in later arguments directly tied to entities affiliated with the Caribbean state/government. More recent studies on domestic violence against women in the Caribbean have found there to be an intergenerational, "coterminous layering of violence reproduction" that is fuelled by gender inequalities, as well as socio-cultural and structural factors that feed the normalisation of negative gender behaviours and attitudes sustaining domestic violence (Joseph and Jones, 2023, p.1018). Interestingly we see how Wint and Dunn's (1998) earlier work informs and foreshadows more recent work (Joseph and Jones, 2023) on the historical implications and replication of inequalities that can conflate with structural gender inequalities.

Along the argument of class vulnerability and identity, interview participant Zari indicated that as a DV responder, she rarely had reports of violence in upper class neighbourhoods because within this social strata there is an unspoken understanding of needing to "maintain the status quo of not dealing with those things." She added that in the middle and lower class neighbourhoods there is a "significant amount of violence" due to specific factors such as unemployment and drug abuse and often:

> "Women…would have come from a home, where they **ran away** from a situation in their home life and going into their adult life thinking it's a way out but ended up in a **worse situation**…A lot of these victims, in many instances are women who are **not working** - women **dependent** on their significant other for **financial resources**." (Zari)

In Zari's example she describes a woman transitioning from one vulnerability to another, resulting in the high likelihood of layered victimisation and compounding insecurities based on intersecting factors tied to her identity. Zari's example highlights how violence can be contextualised based on a snowball effect of a woman's vulnerabilities. In this case example, the possibilities of and locations where abuse could exist seem to be layered, circular and seemingly endless: the trauma of running away from one's childhood home (due to possible financial insecurity/forms of child abuse), the possibility of then experiencing homelessness (risking one's physical security), dropping out of school to make ends meet (risking financial stability), taking up low paying work or being introduced to more accessible work like sex work (risking exposure to financial insecurity and/or abuse), or finding a financially secure partner (risks economic dependency/and control) etc. In addition to these cycles of vulnerabilities, very practical, day-to-day things that could enhance a woman's insecurity even further were also highlighted such as the logistics of not having means to have a car and being forced to commute on public transportation through risky areas. In this case, Lori highlighted how a woman is "more likely to be walking rather than driving" making her more prone sexual assault (verbal or physical) from perpetrators both known and unknown to them whilst exposed on the street[72]. Here we see both Zari and Lori contextualise the nuances to some violences based on the critical importance of financial security and risks tied to layered socio-economic vulnerabilities that can live in places that are not immediately visible or obvious to outsiders of that context.

[72] See a detailed example of this experience happening to an anonymous interviewee in section 4.3

In another example of compounding vulnerabilities regarding the specific mark of identity between victims and perpetrators can be seen in Dina's work focused on justice systems in the Caribbean. She stated that the justice system at large has the unmatched power to mis-identify women as perpetrators and put them on death row, but in reality are more often victims of violence for acts of self-defence:

> "A lot of women who are on death row are actually **victims** of intimate partner violence and the **stereotypes** that come with that and the negative impacts of the criminal justice system on women who are not **victims…they** are the ones that are being **battered defendants.**" (Dina)

Based on the crime committed, in the eyes of the criminal justice system which then feeds public opinion and reinforced by socialised gender roles, Dina highlights her work that advocates on behalf of women placed on death row who were involved in a case of IPV. Dina's advocacy work helps women who have been misread by society as violent criminals when in actuality they are "battered defendants" and become publicly punished spectacles that have experienced double victimisation and a final fatal end. This highlights the importance of disrupting stereotypes and thinking through the boundaries of victim and perpetrator more effectively to protect women who are victim-survivors caught in embedded systems of power (in this case the justice system) that perpetuate cycles of re-victimisation.

Adding to this discussion on the blurred boundaries between victims and perpetrators, a tweet example suggests similar concern for the way we can understand and define identities involved in cases of IPV. In the example below, the tweet posted is a response

to a linked court case published in the *Jamaica Gleaner* news of a woman who was nearly stabbed to death by her partner but tried dropping charges against him:

> “B4 he **attempted 2 kill her**, he was her "**ex**". She was living w/ another man. Now the **attacker** is her "**partner**". A partner that needs to be out to help her with her edu and her child. He's "happy" she won't take the case further. There's so much to unpack here. But I cant…” (Tweet)

Upon further investigation of the news article linked to the tweet, the victim was quoted saying that: “she wants Jamaicans out of her business” despite the violent accusations made against her partner. This tweet highlights the complexity of how victimisation and perpetration can appear externally. For context, in the article the victim referred to the perpetrator as her ex-boyfriend when originally pressing charges, and a week later she referred to him as “her partner”. While there indeed is “much to unpack” in this tweet, the case of violence exemplifies the difficulty victims can find when the option to leave from abuse in an intimate partnership arises and the stake that the community can play in cases of violence, particularly communities in small island countries. As we see, the victim wants her community “out of her business” indicating a point made earlier by Lori in that the role of the community in driving outcomes of violence is one that has the power to empower victims if the community comes together to identify perpetrators for who they are.

5.2.1 Cinched spaces for queerness in Caribbean development

Belonging and violence within the LGBTQ+ community in the Caribbean was an unanticipated conversation topic that came up several times throughout my

investigation of the relationship between race and violence in the Caribbean. Although sexuality was not a main angle of my research analysis, it is a tenant of identity formation that is due attention as issues around violence and the LGBTQ+ community came up particularly in my dataset drawn from interviews (less so on Twitter). Haynes (2020) argues that recently there has been a thriving surge of LGBTQ+ activists and scholars engaged in visible advocacy, activism, and transformation of sexuality in the politics of Caribbean identity and feminism, rendering the region's history of silencing sexuality less prominent. She considers Tracy Robinson's (2000) questioning of Caribbean feminist work that theorises sexuality but also for the most part has remained heteronormative and silent on issues related to sexuality (Haynes, 2020). Kempadoo (2020) adds complexity to existing theories on queering in the Caribbean to focus on the "woefully under-recognition" of how Caribbean people organise and mobilise sexuality in relation to the economy (p.np). This leads me to ask, what are these women really trying to tell me with regards to sexual identity as it relates to my overarching research inquiry?

With regards to belonging within Caribbean feminist spaces, there are two instances where queer identity emerged. Kristine experienced that her:

> "**queer identity has helped me** get into this, which is **a weird thing to say** because **usually it doesn't**. It does the **opposite**. I got very **lucky**…. feminist groups think twice about it because a lot of **feminist** do not necessarily feel **comfortable with queer people**... I mean, that's a generalisation, but you see it." (Kristine)

For clarity “get into this” is referring to entering into the Caribbean development/feminist activist space. There are two conflicting things that one can observe from Kristine’s experience: 1) her sexuality positioning her to represent or speak on behalf of other queer people in a space that she experiences as closed off to LGBTQ+ community and 2) her minority position means operating in a Caribbean feminist environment means that there is limited space afforded to who she represents so if you are lucky to be selected, you can thrive and advance in your career.

Similarly, Rose described experiencing her queerness as somewhat of a negative tenant to her identity. She said:

> “being an **outspoken, Black, queer, feminist** with **dreadlocks** is generally too much to handle, I’m constantly receiving, you know, **pushback**.” (Rose)

Similar to the first point raised in Kristine’s explanation, the space in which one experiences their queerness is not necessarily positive, in fact what they represent equates to social discomfort and being “too much”. While speaking with Rose, she also identified herself as an intersectional feminist, as we closed the interview and upon reflecting on adversities she has faced during her career (describing discrimination for working in Caribbean academic settings, at prominent development agencies abroad and leading grassroots initiatives in the Caribbean) she circled back to identifying herself firstly as “outspoken” and “Black.” While being “outspoken” perhaps is a direct correlation to how she ‘practises Caribbean development’ through grassroots/domestic violence activism and advocacy, it can also describe how sexuality is regarded in this specific Caribbean context. In other words, as generally “too much to handle….

constantly receiving…pushback," indicating that within her community, there is a particular threshold of 'difference' that is socially acceptable and, if you fall outside of this threshold, you are deemed as a radical, deviant, or perhaps nonconforming. It appears that there is somewhat of a recurring social limitation placed on how different these interviewed women can be/appear to be afforded an opportunity to be accepted in environments focused on promoting Caribbean development. This interestingly ties to section 6.4 focused on resentment towards and taking advantage of embodying the position of being the 'Black Mascot' while working in paradoxical, white-led Caribbean development spaces.

Further to this point, Ava brought forth an interesting critique that is laced with a postcolonial frame that explains the social paradox faced by LGBTQ+ groups as she experienced it working as an activist and ally in Barbados for LGBTQ+ communities. Anna notes:

> "It was **very obvious** that this **society** was **very, very colonial.** Very. Despite touting itself as post-colonial and **very deeply entrenched**… **refusing** to recognise them as **human beings**, despite under the Constitution stating, you know… should not be discriminated against…. it was again justified by the Bible, by these laws as this thing since **our colonial past**." (Anna)

It is no secret that across the English-speaking Caribbean, societies have struggled with the legal, much less social, acceptance of LGBTQ+ groups as eleven (of thirteen) countries in the Caribbean "maintain laws which criminalise consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex in private" (Robinson *et al*., 2022). Amidst these pressing issues, it is evident that Kristine, Anna, and Rose all describe different occasions where they have experienced similar social setbacks when it comes to

outward displays of queer sexuality or affiliations with LGBTQ+ communities. It draws important conversations around how inclusive the development/activist space actually is considering inherited colonial regimes that influence what is considered sexually deviant/not. The above demonstrates the internal politics of queer relationships that internalise patriarchal patterns of behaviour resulting in a more public case of GBV, but nonetheless remain silenced, on the periphery of more traditional interpretations of the women's rights movement in the Caribbean. With that said, compounding vulnerabilities based on Black women's identities requires thoughtful consideration to underscore the nuances in order to effectively contextualise how violence unfolds.

5.2.2 Minimalist identities, nuanced meanings

In exploring some of the outcomes of compounding vulnerabilities of layered identities, I also discussed with interview participants identities that brings to light the role of religious belonging. My interview with Anna consisted of three questions on identity which directed our entire conversation (perhaps as a result of her being a really great fit for the research project in conjunction with a bit of pre-interview preparation on her side based off of the research topics via the interview consent form). In defining herself Anna said:

> "I am just **a human being**, right? I happen to be a **Muslim woman**. A practising **Muslim woman."** (Anna)

What is interesting is that despite her incredibly diverse, multiracial, and international background, she had a very particular way to define herself: through her religion and

belonging to the human race. In fact, at no time during the interview did she directly explain or reference her 'Blackness', her relationship to feminism, her Caribbean-ness, or her gender/sexual identity. Rather she clearly stated the opposite:

> "**My womanhood isn't a factor** that, you know, I'm constantly contemplating on. And I think because it's not the most salient feature as I move through the world. Okay. And it's not something that I have to **defend** in a lot of spaces." (Anna)

On a personal note, my own experience with my gender identity could be described as countering Anna's as I often find it rare to move through certain spaces without contemplating or defending the reality of my race or gender. Anna on the other hand has exemplified how it is possible to self-define and orient around other dominating factors of one's identity. It is also worth noting her use of the idea of needing to 'defend' the space she takes up based on her identity and how she has not encountered instances where she has had to defend her gender, much less her Blackness. Without directly saying so, perhaps this means she has had to defend how she moves through the world visibly as a Muslim woman, but this was not overtly stated. In other words, her focus on how she has not had to defend the space she takes up as a woman could be interpreted as that she may have had to defend her religious belonging in some cases as she later indicates being a religious minority in her country.

In another unique example of an interview participant describing her identity outside of this thesis' main areas of investigation (i.e., race and gender), interviewee Zari defined her identity as tied to her productivity:

> "I'm a **student**. I'm a **professional**. I wear so many different hats, but mainly I'll just be here **trying to be the best** that I can be and **contribute** positively because **it's hard for me**." (Zari)

I suppose the main reason I was surprised at this response was because all of the other women I spoke to articulate themselves with a specific vocabulary (even if their 'Blackness' did not come to the forefront) with key identifiers that demonstrated belonging to particular groups that have histories of marginalisation. In Zari's case however, I later find out that she is currently pursuing a professional degree to enhance her career. While I can fully consider the mental impact of being in a classroom with daily readings and coursework may make it hard to immediately identify yourself outside of work and school, I would interpret her response to the question on identity as tied to categories related to productivity. This resonates with another interviewee, Lori, and her how her own self-reflection was her work and the impact of that work (i.e., wearing different hats, contributions-focused, acting within a position or holding different work titles, etc.). Zari's description of wearing 'several hats', and how 'it is hard for her' also leads me to consider how she may have experienced intersecting components of her identity to compound and result in vulnerabilities. Later on in the interview she revealed that what was hard for her was her experiencing personal encounters with violence as inspiration for her work with GBV victims:

> "I feel like **I have walked the road** in order, to an extent. **I can relate** to an extent if you get me correct." (Zari)

While section 4.3 covers personal encounters with violence, it is worth noting here because despite her earlier defined identity as a student and professional, the familiarity we built over the course of the interview unveiled deeper meaning to her lived experiences that are tied to her history of having personal connections to GBV/the work she does: she was a victim/bystander to violence herself. However, when considering

how she articulates her own definition of self, it is not something she necessarily grappled with head on but expressed through her ability to be productive (job, school, etc.).

5.3 Conclusion

In introducing the data findings within the empirical evidence, this chapter has discussed the nuances and complexities tied to identity and layered violence. The first is that in considering the power of multiple identities of Black Caribbean women, it is critical to draw in discussion on the politics of belonging and exclusion found within Caribbean feminism. This has highlighted examples where silencing on certain types of identities such as sexuality and queerness and how some women do not always immediately experience a sense of belonging to the marks of identity that this thesis is focused on (e.g., Black, feminist, woman, etc.). The next chapter of this empirical work will discuss some of the realities of work within the Caribbean development sector whereby race can function as a dominant determinant of one's experience to contextualise new definitions of how violence can manifest in workplace settings.

Chapter Six Compounding Vulnerabilities and Professional Violence

6.1 Introduction

Chapter six outlines the lived experiences of work within Caribbean development professional spaces[73]. In order to define an argument on the realities of work as narrated by Black Caribbean women, it is worth highlighting key components of the inclusion criteria that I used to create a list of interviewees from LinkedIn with relevant work experience and categorise interviewee's types of professionalisation within the field of 'Caribbean development'. The types of work span the areas of: philanthropy, policy, legal advocacy, violence counselling, project management, feminist activism, civil service, and more. Upon reflection of these professions, while helpful to understand some of the day-to-day operational tasks and what constitutes the practical side of 'GBV work', the women's professional titles actually create false, and somewhat imaginary, boundaries around the realities of work in the sector. This is because there are many overlapping ways in which the interviewee's GBV expertise can take shape. This insight helps to inform analysis because by removing boundaries around types of work allows

[73] While this thesis is not about development careers in the Caribbean or covered in depth in my literature review chapter two, I have discussed examples of racialisation in the international development sector as a 'professional space' in section 2.2

for a more comprehensive understanding of what encompasses Black women's Caribbean development work to look like. It also allows for the lived experiences and voices to narrate what the work requires as told by women who are professionals in the field and have interestingly (and quite tragically) also for the most part become victims or bystanders to violence itself. This insight also complicates the process of categorisation for a woman i.e., classing women in simplified, somewhat reductive categories such as 'gender development practitioner' versus 'feminist activist' versus 'gender studies specialist' versus 'women's legal aid specialist', etc. In other words, my attempt to define some of the realities of work in this sector has highlighted how professional development titles and labels cannot encapsulate the nuances and as such ineffectively describe how enmeshed these women actually are within the work that they do.

The data also demonstrates a similar case in examining the label of Caribbean feminist and its relationship to digital activism on Twitter. For example, I categorised tweets gathered during the data collection phase of this work by interpreting the public facing profiles that resonate with 'Black Caribbean feminist' politics (see chapter two Literature review), even if the user or profile did not definitively state that this is how they define themselves in their bio or within the body of a published tweet. I also considered the work behind what each Twitter user presented (if any) as their professional work offline (e.g., 'lawyer' typed in bio). I found that while Twitter users who published content on the politics of Black Caribbean feminism, it did not necessarily mean their Twitter bios explicitly stated "Black Caribbean feminist" in any capacity. Each user presented a

varied level of engagement with explicit labels linked to Black Caribbean feminism indicating that there is a diverse spectrum of belonging when it comes to individual representations of self and their politics of belonging on Twitter. However, amongst the interviewed women and cyberfeminists on Twitter, there were some who did more clearly articulate their identities with terms tied to 'feminist,' some critiqued their own membership and participation to this group as being exclusionary/Othering to others, and others did not mention any combination of 'Black Caribbean feminist' despite their work being centred on components of the feminist movement and/or mitigating violence. It is worth noting that mitigating violence does not necessarily completely overlap with Black Caribbean feminism, however Caribbean feminist agendas have strong histories (see section 2.3) of pursuing social and gender justice, more specifically on topics like GBV (Pargass and Clarke, 2003; Robinson, 2011; Rowley, 2010).

Further, the data also presents some clear patterns of women's experiences in professional spaces which differed from their day to day lived experiences as 'raced' Black Caribbean women from English speaking countries. For example, several interviewees narrated instances where race as well as other markers of identity emerge in different types of professional spaces. It is worth noting, that to have access to resources, funding and influence from the Global North, these types of spaces could also be hierarchically classified based on status within the broader development sector. Although not an exhaustive list, I encountered three different types represented by the interview participants in this thesis. First, within small grassroots organisations that are predominantly Black led. Second, within international development agencies that have

diverse, predominantly white staff. Third, within government-backed (or state-funded) organisations that are led by Caribbean nationals / civil servants. The distinctions between these working environments emerged as somewhat coded language upon conducting discourse analysis to uncover the nuances within these working environments. These differences could be based on how they are funded, for example a government-backed gender initiative with sustained income from a third party donor based in the Global North that attach strings to outcomes, define the problem, solution and indicators of success, compared to examples of grassroots social media activist campaigns with less sustained income but a loud digital voice.

The collected data on violence in the international development sector as a workplace has also pushed me to think about how the women's perspectives and understandings of violence can be influenced by their work environment and vice versa. For example, different professional spaces prioritise and define different agendas like Lauren's earlier mentioned experience of navigating institutional campaigns targeting Black women and violence and how concepts like intersectionality have been made somewhat meaningless by the sector (see section 6.3). It is also worth noting that in addition to different institutional approaches that are framed as progressing Caribbean women's development (on a spectrum from state-led, foreign-led, and grassroots-led initiatives) the data shows how they can apply different approaches to achieve the same goal of mitigating violence. For example, intentional philanthropic giving to women led GBV initiatives, justice education, women's rights/policy programmes, LGBTQ+ advocacy

support, DV and family victim support, police reform, and incarceration advocacy to rehabilitate perpetrators of violence.

Another pattern that emerged in the data around conversations on work especially throughout interviews was the minimal mention (if any) of self-care or wellbeing practices while working within harsh professional environments (due to exposure to violence and Othering in the workplace for example). While I did not specifically ask about women's self-care methods or wellbeing management in high-stress work environments, when interviewees were given the floor to talk about whatever was important to them, it still did not emerge as a theme[74]. It is worth noting that there is substantial evidence to support the realities of Caribbean professionals and the uptake of self-care/wellbeing when working in stressful environments and exposure to vicarious trauma. For example, research findings on trauma education and the St. Lucian women's rights group (called HERStoire) argue that in Caribbean contexts there is a:

> "high disparity between high trauma exposure and sparse trauma-related resources" which acts as a "major barrier to meeting the needs of trauma survivors" and the "majority of the limited providers who do exist in these settings have not been given the opportunity to be trained effectively" (Asnaani *et al.*, 2020, pp.1-2).

While self-care and wellbeing is not an initial key area of investigation during the development phase of my PhD, it has become a topic of discussion after four years of searching for the nuances within literature, data, and conversations with individuals on violence. Vicarious trauma is a real issue that has affected me as the researcher and

[74] See section 7.4 for more on future areas of work.

the interview participants. I will later go into detail about personal encounters with this concept of professional violence (sections 6.3 and 6.4) to critique Caribbean development to highlight a common experience amongst the interviewees: none presented clear concern or put in place infrastructure to support the ramifications of consistent exposure to violence. I note this because personal wellbeing importantly ties to the scope of this research because as noted, the majority of the women working in development interviewed were also victims or bystanders to violence themselves. As such wellbeing management in this area of work will be made as a recommendation for future research in section 7.4.

With that being said, this chapter outlines four areas: first, I will discuss key professional experiences in the 'Caribbean development sector' specifically what development work actually looks like (section 6.2). I will then discuss how women deal with issues of visibility, performance, and competition in professional spaces, ultimately requiring women to self-regulate in specific ways (section 6.3). Then, I will discuss how violence can conflate with identities in the workplace (6.4). This chapter will close with a focus on an underexplored concern that festers within the wider issue of the sector: funding and resourcing anti-violence work pulled from examples of work environments that embody a unique power to exacerbate violence (rather than their intention of mitigate violence) on development workers themselves (section 6.5 and subsection 6.5.1). Ultimately chapter six highlights how the development sector in the Anglophone Caribbean can simultaneously subtly and overtly introduce violence in the development workspace.

6.2 A day in the life: centring women's work

The interview participants provided a unique narration of what working to mitigate violence actually looks like. The data revealed several repeating patterns found in the day-to-day work approaches towards the unified goal of mitigating GBV. For example, front-facing victim intervention, education, digital campaigning, justice/policy/rights implementation, and philanthropic giving. While this summarised list is not exhaustive, reductive, nor erase the nuances between them, the list should be used as a way to organise how we think through what work can look like for individuals in the field. I have bolded words in direct quotes from interviews to demonstrate the repetition of key themes, tones, and emphasis specific concepts referenced by interviewees. For instance, several interview participants provided harrowing details of the day-to-day expectations they are required to execute and interactions they must have. Zari's work with police enforcement and victim intervention includes a daily review of domestic violence reports with varying degrees of severity that require her to make challenging, life and death judgement calls. Her day starts with deciding:

> "Who gets the **immediate attention** and who doesn't. If we have to do referrals, if we have to do interviews, take those for medical…obviously they would get **priority** over people who may just have come in and said that they had a full-blown altercation…. they would **prioritise** on level of **severity** as to who gets the **immediate attention**." (Zari)

Here we see the high pressure that is placed on Zari is to work within an environment where snap-decision making and prioritising immediate needs based on a very physical consideration of violence (e.g., severity of physical abuse and bodily harm) takes priority. In Zari's government backed organisation, the state's understanding of violence

is largely catered towards physical violence, meeting visually immediate, physical needs (see more Pargass and Clarke, 2003 and chapter two Literature review). Zari's ability to work effectively however is downtrodden with her view of inadequate funding and government-backed infrastructure that are necessary for her to do her challenging job effectively and ultimately save more victims' lives. This is because in her description of some of the infrastructural challenges that she faces, the most prominent one described was her working and living in a country with a large population offset by only five women's shelters and a completely "overwhelmed" police and support office that is "not in a good place". As a result, domestic victims experience prolonged wait times and become increasingly vulnerable after their initial formal report of domestic violence is actually made, leaving both her and them with a general sense of hopelessness:

> "One victim said to me **it makes no sense.** Because when I went to see the person it was a month after [the initial DV report]. That's too long. **A person can die in one minute** literally. When they have to wait that long to wait for intervention for support in their minds **it's not worth it."** (Zari)

It is clear that due to a state-level prioritisation of what violence should look like (often violence that is proven physically) holistic support is not prioritised, victimisation persists, and barriers (childcare availability or financial instability of victims for example) are not resolved. This indicates there is somewhat of an inevitable cycle of helplessness where state services for domestic violence actually are internalised by victims as nonsensical and "not worth it." Further, we can see how Zari positions herself within the work in relation to power and identity. As the 'practitioner' who would normally occupy a position of power and agency to mobilise and access resources and visibly appear white due to the history of development workers from Global North countries - in the

context of the constraints placed upon Zari's ability to do her job as a Black woman, she in turn does not have much power and could also be considered a victim caught in a broken system of state support. This ties to DeShong and Haynes' (2015)[75] study of institutional challenges that exist within Caribbean states and how they can reproduce problematic gendered power relations and contradict a woman's ability to have agency with regards to cases of domestic violence. Zari's lived example working in a state institution has been described to fail DV victims / re-victimise them from inadequate support (e.g., low resourcing of shelters). This also then results in the victimisation of women like Zari (professionals) making them unable to find agency within their roles and overexposing them to solvable issues like the re-victimisation of DV victims due to low infrastructure to support them in the first place.

In another example, Paloma described how her introduction to VAWG started from working in a counselling crisis centre and shelter for battered women and children. From her experience providing direct intervention, Paloma described intentionally using a feminist theoretical framework because it made sense to her and pushed her to become more involved dealing with immediate crises. However, over time the direct work became overwhelming for her:

> "I was **directly working** with survivors and victims. That was a lot. **It was too much.** So, after a couple of years of that, I decided that I didn't want to **work directly**." (Paloma)

[75] See more: Literature review chapter 2

In Paloma's example of burnout, it was a remedial professional progression to switch from working as a counsellor to now, where she is more focused on community level work, (nationwide) policy projects and intervention, and legislative frameworks. While Paloma's identity demonstrated strong ties to the Caribbean feminist movement working as close as possible to the violence itself, in turn it transformed her into a bystander to violence victimisation. As a solution of self-preservation, she transitioned to working at the state and policy level to find new ways to approach the same issue. However, if we consider Zari's experience of victimisation above working at the state level, it appears that both the grassroot level and state levels of work can position Black Caribbean women in scenarios that victimise and remove the presumed power and agency as the 'practitioner'.

Another example from the policy, justice, and education side of GBV was exemplified by Rose who described her work to include developing informational manuals and improving domestic violence reporting mechanisms to support the most vulnerable groups. In this type of work, issues that come to the forefront include the need mitigate disinformation, specifically on femicide and provide accessible, public information on individual rights:

> "We work very close to this information, and it is really very emotional work……you know these women's lives…you know having to deal with these **stories**. These **figures represent a woman, her children**…. It's really important to keep their memory alive and first understand that you aren't just dealing with **statistics.** [They're] women who are no longer with us." (Rose)

Here we see another consequence of working closely to the victims of violence as being 'emotional work' but in this case, emotions drive Rose's intention of maintaining

authenticity around the lived experiences of the women she works with. This was something that was similarly voiced on Twitter (see example in chapter four Introduction) where one user called for the development sector at large to acknowledge that women's lives, voices, and stories are not just reductive, quantitative data figures but are representative of real people. It remains vital to her work-ethos that GBV rights, policy research, and policy implementation rebuild and preserve the identities of survivors of violence instead of manipulating them for certain aims. Further, the way she presents her 'development in practice' also demonstrates how the individuals she supports as well as her own positionality as 'practitioner' can result in being doubly victimised which informs how she works: to stop overlapping victimisation. This sense of double victimisation appears to be a recurring pattern across several narrations of differently situated work that have the similar goal of supporting victims themselves whether it be through policy, education, state institutions, or on the ground shelter support.

For Ava, her rights-focused approach to 'development in practice' is initiated from a feminist activist standpoint. Similar to Rose, Ava focuses on the experiences of women coupled with a focus on political representation:

> "A lot of **experiences** that happen to women and that also **rights that are denied** to women and adolescent girls and they do not have the **space**..[or] **representation** in politics to be able to **effect change** for anyone to see especially as it relates to GBV. We need to **accelerate these laws.** And we can't expect that just because a woman in politics that she has the same ideologies or that she has the same intention and **she speaks on behalf of all women.**..The feminist movement in recognising that **representation** was important to be able to to get the changes that we want to see, the issues that affect those nations that we care about." (Ava)

In both Ava and Rose's description of their professional preoccupations, there is a recurrent use of language that is focused on women's: experiences, memories, representation, lives, and spaces. In other words, qualitative data and evidence driven by women for women, deeply informs their work approach to advocate against violence to make effective change at the crux of policy, education, and justice. It is worth noting that feminist geographer research from Kwan (2002) argues that tactics which combine methods of understanding (for example, mixing quantitative data with qualitative data) can be complementary rather than reductive as it can contextualise information especially when people in positions of power (such as researchers or practitioners) implement reflexivity tactics that help locate themselves within the work as it impacts the lives of marginalised groups.

This is in contrast to insider information revealed by Zari who indicated that her country's government was pressured into putting resources behind a gender focused department. However, this resulted in attitudes towards this department focused on GBV initiatives (on a national level) as not being effective, important, or respected, staff members are looked down upon and resource allocation is often stripped. Zari suggests this is the consequence of socially accepted attitudes of macho culture that become embedded at the institutional level:

> "Some of the units are seen as more **effective** than others, so you'll find based on the societal level, let's say, the **perception of crime and violence** and anything **gun related.** You would find that officers and tactical sections, they **don't have respect** for officers who work in units such as **community** policing, **gender-based violence**…because [here] we have a **macho culture,** and many many people like to see marital issues as staying within marriage…. You find

> officers sometimes will **look down on** the officer there. Within the organisation itself other officers and other units would **not see the importance** of units such as this." (Zari)

The impact of these conditioned social perceptions at the very top state level demonstrates the false sense of seriousness to issues that pervade women and girls where Zari comes from. Much of the description of her work setting appears to suggest that socially there is a silencing and minimising of community issues around gendered violence and marital conflict in place of privileging more 'socially respectable' areas of work (e.g., replicating patriarchal belief systems, gun related crime / violence). The privileging of issues like gun crime and masculine violence correlates to findings from Sørbøe (2020) on how macho policing culture in Brazil can enable violence. Specifically, she found how police officers patrolling armed drug traffickers implement a "militaristic warrior ethos" in their policing culture that is tied to masculine performance, honour, and "physical or psychological attack or humiliation" (Sørbøe, 2020, pp.68-69). Here we see perceptions and belief systems held within 'more tactical' work like policing in Zari's context suggest patterns of patriarchal professional culture that can privilege masculine performance in ways that downplay layered issues that pervade society such as GBV. Zari's example within her workspace suggests the professional attitudes that function to minimise the importance of pressing GBV issues within her own workplace can actually work to exacerbate the issue of GBV in the first place. This ties to a later discussion on definitions of this thesis' concept of 'professional violence' (see subsection 7.3.2).

In consideration of activism as an important approach to progressing Caribbean women's development in practice, this data also demonstrates how both on and offline forms of activism work towards similar aims. Another interviewee Ava argues that in her work that blends both digital and face to face activism, she uses unifying digital tools on social media to speak out against GBV. She argues that this approach is functional in the Caribbean due to the scattered geography of the region, finding it:

> "Really **unifying** these women to speak out on these experiences and create a **safe space,** we're able to lend the **support**, you're able to track what is being said…reach out to all these different women speaking out about their different experiences…it's gonna be **revolutionary** in a sense it's not limited, and **accessible** for any woman or any person who has this lived experience." (Ava)

Ava's work largely applies an advocacy approach which is underscored by a need to generate "swing support" in order for real change to be prioritised, otherwise division and inequalities persist and GBV is exacerbated. It is important to note however that while accessible digital forms of advocacy will lend support to some, there will inevitably be women who are excluded, caught on the outside of the digital divide. This was particularly brought to light in my conversation with Maria who challenged the inclusivity of digital practices and the necessity to count something as 'feminist activism' when it is not engaged with in a "virtual Caribbean feminist space":

> "Different people are located and have **access** in different ways. There is a very **significant digital divide** in the region that adds to these dynamics…There's definitely organising that brings together Caribbean feminists as a whole, but there are also pockets of folks that are **organising tied to particular identities.**" (Maria)

In light of the rise of digital activism that has so helpfully bridged distinct geographies across the Caribbean where women and girls can now connect with one another through social media and tools of community building such as hashtags, it has also

deepened pre-existing divides that are defined by socio-economic class with access to internet argues Haynes in Black Women Radicals (2020)[76]. While digital activism is championed as "revolutionary" in unifying communities across the region, digital activism also can highlight how access for those who exist on the margins can be an issue. As a result, there are pockets of women who do not identify with the Caribbean feminist movement despite having a similar vision of ending the prevalence of things like GBV.

To close this section's analysis on the realities of work and also touch on a future discussion point made in section 6.5 on the concept of resourcing problems, philanthropy within the development sector is another approach worth mentioning because it can be seen as:

> "Effectively **mobilising** opportunities, **funding**, build relationships for African and Caribbean feminists." (Maria)

Money remains an important component within the sphere of Caribbean development because there are clear examples where power can be amassed, drive agendas and reinforce a particular type of sought change. For context, Maria has co-founded several organisations with similar aims geared towards: "shifting power within philanthropy", "supporting Black women's leadership in philanthropic spaces" and "ensuring that Black women have access to dollars." Her focus interestingly adds to discourse that frames the international development sector as a neo-colonial enterprise that regurgitates dependency between the Global North and the 'subaltern' (Spivak, 1988; Wilson; 2012,

[76] See more: Literature review chapter two

2017). Maria's pointed work focus fiscally supports Black Caribbean women leaders who have their own grassroots initiatives that help other marginalised women suggests that grassroots activists, budding leaders, and 'development practitioners' originating from marginalised communities. Beyond the operations of using philanthropy to strategically elevate Black women's voices in development, Maria's work presents as an attempt to detach Caribbean women 'the subaltern' from cycles of dependency and discrimination that live within the sector. It seems that what also drives the philanthropic focus of her work is that Black women leaders/feminists "all operate on this scarcity mindset, often in our movements, that we're trying to get money" because "0.1% of foundation dollars are going to Black women." This is an example of a Black Caribbean professional woman uplifting other leaders from her community indicates how deeply entrenched power relations can be within the sector. It also appears that there is a history whereby both regional leaders from the Caribbean committed to making change for marginalised people and marginalised people themselves both struggle to find space and autonomy within a sector dictated by financial decision-making powers that remain out of their hands.

6.3 Visibility, performance, and competition: covert and overt violence in the workplace

Both covert and hypervisible examples of violence emerged throughout the interviews, specifically within narrations of how Blackness can be read in professional spaces. For

example, Kristine revealed that although she currently works in a unique environment where her colleagues look like her she also acknowledges that in other experiences she felt that:

> "There's also **pressure, of course**, because **Black women**, especially **Black Caribbean women don't** usually have a **seat at the table**." (Kristine)

In this short statement, Kristine makes it clear that there is an evident, negative force that impacts Black women in these types of professional settings as a result of low representation. The use of 'pressure' and 'of course' indicates the experience of an obvious, expected pressure, anticipated outcome, and expected reality when working in this particular type of development space. Similar to Kristine, Lauren criticised the seemingly forced conversations ongoing in her organisation on diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality. Particularly with the adoption of the concept of intersectionality:

> "You know, **intersectionality** has been **overused** and **unfortunately**, you know, kind of **perverted** somehow." (Lauren)

While theoretical and conceptual affiliations with the idea of intersectionality have been more commonly made in reference to Black feminism (Crenshaw, 1991) that is deeply rooted in a North American context, Lauren quite clearly critiques how it has been abused as somewhat of a discursive band-aid that has taken on the meaning and life of something else. In effect, Lauren largely is arguing that its overuse has resulted in its redundancy. Equally important to Lauren's initial distaste for the over-application of intersectionality, her argument brought to light another phenomena worth exploring as it impacts both myself as the researcher as well as the interview participants. For example, Lauren's use of the particular term 'perverted' I found to be unexpected when I first heard it during our interview - not because it is untrue, but because of the dual

meaning/usage of the term ‘perverted.’ Initially I understood ‘perverted’ to mean something *ugly, dark, or sexually distorted* when I heard her in the interview. However, in context, Lauren’s use of the word perhaps leans towards its secondary definition: *something that has been corrupted from its original meaning*. In light of the duality of this term, the second definition did not immediately come to my mind. In consideration of the first definition that connotes violence in the context of our conversation, I also noted her discomfort with this usage, by repeating several qualifying words/phrases around what she feels ‘intersectionality’ has become such as: “you know” twice and “kind of” and “somehow”. These terms suggest her thinking through and justifying the experience of intersectionality in the workplace as a Black woman. The way this is described suggests that the process of what intersectionality has morphed into for Lauren has been somewhat of a violent one. In other words, a concept created for and by Black women has been stripped from its original context, reshaped externally, and enforced institutionally in Lauren’s professional world. This pushes us to think through what that process might feel like for her. In this case, Lauren’s paralleling of intersectionality with perversion suggests a process where there was a forceful removal and non-consensual application to have occurred.

It is also worth noting the conceptual space that focusing on intersectionality can occupy in this work and the possibility of how Lauren came prepared to discuss it with me in our interview (as intersectionality was touched upon in the research brief sent prior to the interview date for the research participant’s review). Initially, I was uncertain where Lauren was taking the conversation on intersectionality’s ‘perversion’. I initially

understood it to be Lauren possibly challenging the focus/importance of my thesis or consideration of intersectionality. However, this was not the case. As described above, and upon further conversation she explained that she took up issue with the discourse on identity that is ongoing in the Caribbean development sector because:

> "It is only looking at that one **aspect of your identity** in which you may not have equal access to power and exploiting that…you need to take it on, **unpack power** dynamics and **unpack opportunity**, access to resources." (Lauren)

It seems that in her professional experience, 'intersectionality' has taken up so much airtime it has become misused and misappropriated to the point of becoming redundant and ineffective. She also notes important points of power and privilege with regards to identity that I have also explored within my research (see section 5.1). In other words, the topic of intersectionality has amassed a particular meaningless, yet powerfully problematic status. Critical development scholar Andrea Cornwall's work on 'fuzzwords and buzzwords' in the sector would perhaps include 'intersectionality' on a running list of development terms that inevitably function as "a password to funding and influence" and is something that everyone generally agrees upon as an "abstract notion" but actually faces "endless disagreement about what they might mean in practice" (2007, p.471)[77]. To hear Lauren's distaste for the misplaced popularisation that intersectionality can negate and dilute its importance in acknowledging the particular way groups, like Black women occupy "difference and multiple minority statuses" (Harnois, 2015, pp.365 and 368).

[77] See more: literature review section 2.2

As a relevant aside, my thesis' use of Caribbean feminist reflexive methodology (see more in chapter three Methodology) to deduce findings from interview participant's professional experiences of identity and violence enables me to draw in some autoethnographic reflections on my own professional experience with the life intersectionality has taken on in the development sector. For instance, while completing this research I was working in a professional development space where I witnessed colleagues demonstrate problematically high levels of unexplored privilege and power and blindly push 'intersectionality' onto GBV programming to appeal to funders.
In light of both Kristine and Lauren's stances (and perhaps in reference to my own reflective, anecdotal encounter with the co-option of intersectionality for funding) there is a common thread of experience: Black women and their politics (in this case intersectionality) become invisible and hypervisible within the work. This means being invisible i.e., not having a seat at the table (as Kristine described earlier in this section) result of systematic exclusion and oppression faced by Black women, and being hypervisible i.e., the 'body politics' or commodification of Black women's bodies resulting in being the key to development funding or legitimise particular agendas for example (Mowatt *et al.*, 2013). This notion of legitimation will be explored later on in section 6.4 on 'Black Mascots'.

Another example where competing gendered and racialised dynamics amongst groups of women in the workplace manifest in professional settings - specifically working with non-Black Caribbean women on Caribbean focused gender initiatives was voiced by Lauren. She described her concern over the way trends of racism and patriarchal norms

have been internalised by her Southeast Asian colleagues and inflicted on Black women. She voiced serious frustration with the way this specific group of women often pushed their personal agendas to minimise key issues of intersectionality/Black Caribbean women-focused agendas. This resulted in anti-Blackness sentiment to fester in the workplace:

> "Southeast Asian women in my organisation, in particular, have had a real **challenge** with dealing with **anti-Black sentiment** when conversations are happening on **anti-Blackness.** They often try to **shift the highlight**, the **spotlight** to themselves." (Lauren)

Here we see an interesting consideration for racially segmented experiences of women's oppression that plays out in specific professional settings. This calls into question the relationship between Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean women (see literature review section 2.3). From a historical consideration, African women have had a strong history of feminist organising in the Caribbean whereas women from other racial identities such as Indian backgrounds have been argued to be "left out" of this process according to Baksh-Soodeen (1998, p.79). In other words, there is a strong historical trajectory of Afro-Caribbean women who have organised themselves since coming out of colonialism to tackle sexism alongside Caribbean men, leftist political parties, labour movements, and non-governmental organisation (NGO) movements (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998). In light of these realities and division, we can see Lauren's experience to play out in an NGO environment to somewhat mirror this described sense of exclusion and result in the over-compensation / silencing of some women's oppression more visibly than others. In this case, intersectionality as a concept is deployed by institutions to overcompensate the complexities of Black women's

oppression which inadvertently becomes a reductive, meaningless process. We also see an experience whereby tensions amongst women's groups play out in a competitive manner making raced, gender identities hyper-visible within professional development settings.

Further, Lauren's justified frustration towards intersectionality's hyper-placement within her work environment and how it has been truly perverted also emerges in the evidence. Despite intersectionality's popularised sentiment and seeming requirement to legitimise a GBV mitigation effort within development, it can translate as a threat by non-Black Caribbean women in this case. In other words, when Black issues are at the top of agendas, other minority groups (e.g., Southeast Asian women in this instance) can feel threatened within the development workspace. As result, this can sabotage more 'inclusive' workplace demographics and efforts.

While Lauren boldly describes how Southeast Asian women attempt to corral her into participating in what she calls "Oppression Olympics", she uses vocabulary that paints them as proactively participating in a professional power struggle in a development funding environment that already is stretched for resources to support competing issues. While the tone of the conversation suggests her experience of competition in the workplace, it also could be considered to be appropriative, or in other words a shift. We see competition around which struggle deserves resources and attention to turn into a programme and a simultaneous appropriative attempt to apply a distinct experience of oppression to different groups of women. It is also no surprise that her frustration with

intersectionality and the hypervisibility of Black women in her organisation correlates to her experience of her voice being 'Othered' by her Southeast Asian colleagues. In this instance, power dynamics in the workplace emerged between two historically minoritised groups of women. And, as discussed earlier, when there are intentional limitations placed around one's voice and representation this suggests covert efforts to minimise the space that Black Caribbean women occupy within this particular professional field. I would argue this to be a violent consciousness that lives within the sector and comes out on occasions such as when Black women's issues emerge as development agenda items when resources are limited. The result indicates internalised competition amongst oppressed groups to arise and development commitments to building inclusive spaces becomes redundant. This also relates to earlier described feelings of pressure in environments where the representation of Black Caribbean women are limited. However, in this case the pressure is the result of professionally incurred violence, or what this thesis argues to be 'professional violence.'

Related to this issue of complex, professional violences that manifests in specific workplace settings highlights the topic of performativity and self-regulation of one's behaviour. The pressures experienced by women working in the 'Caribbean development sector' indicate performativity over the representation required of them in their day-to-day professional lives. This can manifest as pressure or expectations to perform professionalism in a particular way when Black women are granted a 'seat at the table' (see Kristine's example in section 6.4). As such, the need to self-regulate one's behaviour is the result. This notion is further theorised in Rose-Redwood and

Rose-Redwood (2017) and Butler's (2015) work on performativity as it applies to representation within the activism space. These three scholars mobilise a discussion on the way that performativity and representation function around a collective subject (such as a protest). "The enactment of the people exceeds its representation" and results in a "dissonance between enactment and representation" (Butler, 2015, p.163). In other words, collective protest and action do not necessarily represent a unified singular identity but rather it is the performative political practice that holds the representation as the collective together. In light of this section's discussion on examples of professional performativity as a result of professional violence, there are connections to be made between the way interview participants continually describe experiences of what their physical bodies (representation) mean in professional spaces and behavioural adjustments (a performative political practice) that are required of them based on how the representation of Black women as a collective are read by development colleagues, institutions, agendas, etc.

Another example where professional hostilities (I would define as an experience of institutional violence) described by interview participants to have its own set of visibilities and obscurities can be seen in the personal adjustments that Samantha has made whilst working in Caribbean development policy. Samantha recounted making a concerted effort to maintain a stable emotional demeanour in the workplace. She did this specifically by enforcing a level of hyper-awareness on how she comes across to colleagues by monitoring her voice in environments that covertly "create bias" and "allow for things like discriminatory policies and policies that aren't competent" to be

implemented despite how inappropriate they may be. During instances where Samantha encountered development agendas or programmes that focused on issues disproportionately impacting Black women (such as GBV), she reported that her colleagues often dismissed them as:

> "Not being important...because it's very specifically linked to [Black] people" and "suddenly [there] becomes this need for a **generalised discussion**" when "it really is that statistically this group of people would be disproportionately affected." (Samantha)

While she described herself to be a victim of marginalisation, sexism, misogyny, and sexual harassment, she ultimately concluded that based on these experiences, she has a "voice that feels ignored and overlooked because of how people may perceive you and how your message is received", and "passion can be easily skewed as aggression." Again, we see another example that reinforces this notion that Samantha's behavioural changes (her playing a particular role) exceeds the reality of what it means to be Black woman as Butler (2015) and Rose-Redwood and Rose-Redwood (2017) would argue, this creates an incongruity between forced behaviour (performance) and representation. It is no coincidence that another interviewee, Ava, described a similar experience of dissonance between performance and representation:

> "When you're doing this type of work… you know you as a Black woman, many times you talk about these issues that women of the society is going to **perceive** as you're **angry**, right?" (Ava)

It is clear that in the Caribbean there are spaces which promote anti GBV agendas, that simultaneously foster environments that can be deemed as somewhat toxic to the professional development of Black Caribbean women. Ava discusses how other people's perceptions of what she does and their reactions to them create a new identity.

This is particularly true when conversations or programme agendas emerge that ‘care too much’ about Black women and their realities resulting in the interviewed women feeling as though they cannot fully participate in work that directly impacts themselves and their community. For example, Lauren added that in addition to the described power struggles and ‘Oppression Olympics’ she encountered with her Southeast Asian women colleagues, she also encountered racialised experiences with white women colleagues:

> “[Race has] never been a barrier to me except with white women. With white women who are, who read **arrogance** or anything into your **confidence**, that you're **angry**.” (Lauren)

Here we see in her description a narration of how white women read her positionality. She carefully states that her confidence is read by this group of colleagues as arrogance and anger. According to literature on racialised power dynamics, Lauren’s experience reflects the tension between who is perceived as powerful and powerless. More particularly, Barratt’s work (2016, p.35) on how Black women in particular are seen as a “threat to masculine freedom but also must be controlled and denied self-actualisation” (Barratt, 2016, p.35). The positioning of Lauren problematically exemplifies the common trope of the ‘angry Black woman’ that is defined by white patriarchal power structures (e.g., masculine freedom) which in this case has been internalised and played out by Lauren’s colleagues - white women.

While working as a gender expert in a very well-regarded development organisation, with diverse staff, Lauren simultaneously deals with women who play out their version of what feminism means and what gender empowerment looks like (especially in the case

of Southeast Asian women she's encountered). Ultimately, this has led to contentious interactions that end up pitting her Blackness and expertise in a problematic competition with other types of oppression. This interestingly ties itself to literature by feminist analysts on identity who acknowledge how privilege and oppression are not absolute categories but actually shift and relate to one another within "different axes of power/powerlessness" (Friedman, 1998, p.40). In this case, there are competing axes of power interplaying between white women, Southeast Asian women, and Lauren's embodiment of the Black woman. While her confidence is read as arrogance and her expertise on subject matter relating to mitigating anti-Blackness, power struggles in the workplace ensue. This also relates to conclusions made by Crenshaw (1990) in her work on intersectional subordination where she states that allies can in fact reproduce intersectional subordination by adopting priorities or strategies of empowerment that disregard the needs of particular women, in this case Black women. In this case, Lauren's colleagues who would appear to be allies in the gender field inadvertently work to either uplift their own agendas (Southeast Asian hate for example) or attempt to debase her own confidence as a leader in the field (confidence transforms into her apparent anger for example).

In a related instance, Lori's work in the development policy and research space highlighted experiences of problematic gender dynamics and instances of infantilization occurred. Similar to another research participant, Lauren's negative encounters with white professional women in academic development spaces, Lori concluded that the "threat was really only felt by white women." For clarity in Lori's reference to 'the threat',

she means herself/her presence in development spaces. She further suggested that I avoid working closely with young white women when it comes to research because she concluded that there is a need to "kind of shred you to bits to make themselves look better." Further, when considering her experience of competitive work in predominantly Black Caribbean development settings, Lori described:

> "There is a lot more **competition**…it starts on a general level of **competitiveness** amongst Black women. That may be just the fact there are **limited opportunities**" and that they are "governed by a **predominantly white system** of young individuals so my capacity to contribute in a different perspective was welcomed if I wasn't trying to advance my own personal interests." (Lori)

She also added how her age became a factor in her work qualifications:

> "I was largely **overqualified** relative to every other person…I was still **treated** as though I was a **young girl**." (Lori)

These examples demonstrate varying levels of competitive microaggressions and blatant biases to particular types of professionals who can more legitimately work in professional settings focused on GBV (whether it be academic, research policy, on the ground development work or a combination of the three). This repeating sense of competition in the professional workplace across several interviewees' replies suggests a deeper consideration as this chapter focuses on the violence that lives within development practice, i.e., professional violence. While working in a professional development space that uniquely is intended to be mission-driven, benevolent, and humanitarian, competition (amongst Black women and between Black women and other groups within the professional space) becomes a defining characteristic of development in practice for several interview participants.

Relatedly, postcolonial feminists influenced by Foucault argue that “the production of difference is necessary to regulate individuals” (Wilson, 2017, p.6). In Lori’s case, a young, Black professional woman and violence expert, her identity was used as a mechanism to produce difference. Whether it be her youth, skin colour, gender, or other components that make up identity she described being ‘Othered’ and made ‘simultaneously knowable and irreducibly alien’ (Said, 1978, in Wilson, 2011, p.319). Here we see how a Foucauldian (1998) consideration of the production of ‘difference’ in turn drives a relentless cycle of competition and limited opportunities for career advancement in the development sector that are ultimately governed by a predominantly white system. This experience inflicted directly on Black women in the Caribbean, I argue, is a violent one.

This experience of regulation also comes into play in her description where as long as she played her regulated role “my capacity to contribute in a different perspective was welcomed” she faced minimal issues in her professional environment. Stuart Hall (1997) and Foucault’s (1998) work on the double-edged sword of ‘subjectification’ (being a subject and subjected to) draw out interesting considerations for the way modern organisational culture and management pushes the notion on employees that they should self-regulate and have a stake or shared ownership in the work ultimately making people ‘entrepreneurial subjects’ according to an interview with Stuart Hall by Martin Jacques (Statesman and Nation, 1997). Lori’s reality of self-regulation and the benefits of doing so effectively in the workplace are clear. This stems from an

institutional (development sector-wide) understanding that as long as she understands and accepts her 'difference', remains within her jurisdiction, does not attempt to 'advance her own personal interests' despite her over qualifications, she should be OK. Adding to this, she describes being welcomed in certain settings to add her contributions (Hall and Martin, 1997) as long as she accepts the non-verbal limits (competitive colleagues) placed on her participation. This leans towards earlier discussions on performance and representation in this section and further cements my thesis' argument on the implicit and explicit violence that festers within Caribbean development settings targeted against Black Caribbean women despite, amidst the paradoxical mission driven development work focused on mitigating GBV against Caribbean women in the first place.

One final example that demonstrates an explicitly overt form of violence[78] in the workplace at the organisational level comes from a discussion with Lauren on her professional career advancement. After she secured a high-profile job based on her skills, qualifications, and work history doing development work:

> "**Everybody** thought it was **funny**. **Everybody** thought I was **sleeping with the** resident coordinator at the time…..Because they had never seen anybody get it without any connections, and this was the first time also I had gotten a job without anything…. And I also quit in a year because **it was horrible**." (Lauren)

Lauren's reference to 'everybody' indicates a larger group (potentially including HR representatives, colleagues, patriarchal, sexist, and racialised norms) that supported rumours of Lauren's merit-based success, skills, and qualifications beneath her

[78] See subsection 2.4.1 for more on structural violence

presumed use of sexuality to advance professionally. While the rumour became a public facing joke and entertainment in her professional world ultimately dismissed her earned accolades and ability to be taken seriously. In sum, these examples are forms of covert and overt professional violence taken out against Black Caribbean women's visibility and professional performance.

6.4 The violence of identity politics in the workplace

Caribbean scholarship focused on gender and sexuality have revealed "gendered and hetero/sexist production of sexed bodies, gendered power relations, and exclusionary sexual citizenship in Caribbean legal systems (Alexander, 1991; Barriteau, 2001; Haynes and DeShong, 2017, p.109; Mohammed, 2002; Padilla, 2008; Robinson, 2011; Wekker, 2006). Thus, using an exclusively Caribbean feminist scholarship lens to understand GBV can risk reproducing "heteronormative theorising on GBV" and not "account for the multiple ways in which gender and sexuality are implicated" by diverse groups (Haynes and DeShong, 2017, p.105). While this research applies several frameworks (including Black Caribbean feminism and intersectionality) to understand the specific relationship between Blackness and violence through the voices of Caribbean GBV experts and digital feminists, sexuality, and LGBTQ+ membership also emerges as an important tenet of identity that can help contextualise professional forms of violence in the Caribbean development / international development sector. In consideration of the ties between sexuality, race, and violence through my empirical evidence, Jamaican cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter has previously argued that there are

direct links between exclusionary processes of racialisation experienced by Black people and heterosexualization for queer people:

> "The Black situation and the homosexual situation are parallel. We are the only ones who are socialised in such a way that we cannot trust our own 'consciousness'…..Only Blacks and homosexuals quite know the power of this because we have been socialised to experience ourselves in, one, negative sexuality; but the other one, goddamn it, in negative being!" (ProudFlesh, 2006, pp.3 and 17)

While this thesis' is not intended to provide a comparative analysis of the types of marginalisation experienced by identifying as Black and/or queer, the parallels drawn between the socialisation processes of these identity markers deemed as something 'negative' is worth noting. For example, in my interviews with Dina and Kristine, both women argued that:

> "You have to bring **those people (gay, trans, men, women, etc.)** along on your quest to gender equality..… A lot of times **those issues** are not necessarily focussed on in **mainstream** women's rights activism. In the Caribbean, when they talk about gender-based violence, they completely **disregard the experiences** of trans women, of lesbian women, of gay men who are also victims of intimate partner violence and their numbers, and their issues **aren't actually reflected in research** that is actually done by women's rights groups in the Caribbean because of the **stigma**." (Dina)

> "The **bigger feminist** groups think twice about it because **a lot of feminists** are **not** necessarily **comfortable** working with **queer people,** especially older feminists. I mean, that's a generalisation, but you see it." (Kristine)

Dina's narration on what she has noted in the women's rights and GBV/development sector echoes the critique Haynes and DeShong (2017) provided on the power of understanding GBV through a heteronormative, mainstream women's rights lens. This can even be seen in the way Dina describes the LGBTQ+ community existing on an entirely separate plane when it comes to understanding GBV through her use of "those people" and "those issues" in conjunction with "disregarded experiences", "stigma", and

"issues not reflected." Further, as a person who identifies as queer, Kristine has both personally and professionally witnessed the discomfort and segregation of feminist groups in the Caribbean from addressing the realities of queerness. As Wynter stated in an interview with ProudFlesh (2006), there is a process of socialisation in the Caribbean whereby those who exist on the margins (as Black or homosexual) often exist as a 'negative being.'

The following example below demonstrates another example whereby this notion of a 'negative being' is internalised and played out, resulting in cycles of violence within queer spaces:

> "A lot of **trans women welcomed violence** in their relationship because they felt that it'd made them **feel more womanly** because **a woman is expected to receive violence from a man** because **it's love.** It's how men **express love.** So, within queer and heterosexual spaces with woman identified people, many times **violence** is seen as a problem." (Kristine)

While there is a lot that can be unpacked from the above interview excerpt[79], a key takeaway relating to this section's exploration of identity politics and violence is Kristine's experience working with queer victims and perpetrators who participate and perform harmful heteronormative, patriarchal relationship dynamics that result in GBV. She further explained that due to the prevalence of public displays of homophobia on her island, she noted that to be a contributing factor to whereby a victim of violence in a queer relationship may be less likely to leave the partnership or find support for their situation because:

[79] See more for work on violence in LGBTQ+ interpersonal relationships and gendered dynamics: Haynes and DeShong, 2017; Skeete, 2010

> "Many times, they tend to be like more dependent on each other because of **homophobia generally**." (Kristine)

In pushing this chapter's argument towards an even more nuanced understanding of how the Caribbean development sector inflicts complex violence on Black women under consideration, this section highlights four unique yet divided realities of acceptance within the workplace. First, Dina's critiques of organisations within the Caribbean development sector, specifically Black-led women's rights groups, are focused on 'their' inability to wholly accept difference. Note the repeated use of 'they/their' that differentiates her position on the LGBTQ+ population relative to 'women's rights groups in the Caribbean':

> "In the Caribbean, when **they** talk about **GBV**, **they** completely **disregard** the experiences of **trans women, of lesbian women, of gay** men who are also victims of intimate partner violence and **their** numbers, and **their** issues aren't actually reflected in research that is actually done by **women's rights groups in the Caribbean** because of the **stigma**." (Dina)

> "There are lots of groups that decide to stretch this group of work to include **LGBTQ+** persons. But the **inclusion** that might just seem like a **side dish."** (Dina)

> "I haven't experienced discrimination in the field of work that I do because of **where I am. People look like me** and the **majority look like me**." (Dina)

There are many layers to unpack in Dina's critique of divisive acceptance of identity politics within the sector itself, which I would argue is the infliction of a violence against an already minoritised group (the LGBTQ+ community). Her perspective highlights an example of conditional acceptance when it comes to whether or not the sexual identity of victims has a history of being publicly stigmatised. It appears that while the LGBTQ+

community remains a key group impacted by GBV in the Caribbean[80], the historically rooted stigmas related to this particular group overshadow wider aims to completely mitigate violence against any victim. In this case, we see an opinion of when groups do consider LGBTQ+ inclusion in reality it is just a 'side dish' to the 'real work of GBV'. This suggests similarly described earlier experiences of how Lauren's work made organisational advances by making intersectionality a hypervisible discourse that in turn accomplished the opposite. Dina followed up by stating that although she does not identify as LGBTQ+ nor experienced race-based discrimination at work, she has witnessed her loved one's encounter sexuality-based discrimination and violence. Thus, tenets to Dina's identity and her described experience suggests that she has witnessed the violence of exclusionary identity politics when development organisations place limited definitions (ones that consider sexuality and queerness) on the types of people who should be prioritised as possible victims of GBV. This in turn can inflict subliminal forms of layered violence on minority groups based on sexuality-based identity politics.

Contrastingly, in another example of a professional environment within the development sector, one that is led by Black women, Kristine explains how her identities have been treated in a positive way:

> "I could be **Black**, I could be **Caribbean**, I could be **queer** … It's **embraced**. Not just **embraced** but my voice **matters**, what I have to say **matters…**I imagine that I would want to **be with Black people** in those **spaces**." (Kristine)

[80] While this thesis does not have the scope to discuss this in depth, please see further reading on violence against and within LGBTQ+ communities in the Caribbean: Bucknore, 2012; Haynes and DeShong, 2017; Tinsley, 2008

First, Kristine's use of 'embrace' and 'voice' point to two factors that she deems as important when working effectively in challenging and personally taxing workspaces (i.e., GBV oriented). This draws attention to Hall (1997) and Foucault's (1998) work on the concept of 'subjectification'. For example, in Kristine's description we can see how contemporary, Black-led organisational culture operates by placing emphasis on Black employees having a shared stake in the work (i.e., Kristine's emphasis on her voice having a place and making a difference) whilst she also becomes a subject of the work (i.e., the process of her voice being embraced/taken into consideration and embedded within the crux of work). This interestingly counters the previous section's discussion on how diverse/international (non-Black led) development organisations have embodied violence that negatively impacts Black women's professional mobilities, working capacities, and day-to-day experiences.

It is worth discussing that while both Dina and Kristine corroborate each other's experiences of not facing race-based discrimination in Black led development professional settings, they differ when it comes to gender and sexuality. Dina emphasises the false inclusion and possibility of secondary victimisation of LGBTQ+ victims of violence due to stigma. On the other hand, Kristine highlights that if she was queer, she is confident her sexuality would be embraced alongside her racialised Caribbean identity. These frays within Caribbean women's identity politics lend a conversation to this thesis' wider argument on the role of Blackness in Caribbean development and suggests that in certain professional settings, race matters more than others.

Adding another complex layer of identity that conflates in the world of a Black Caribbean woman professional is defined in Anna's description of working across racial lines which adds to the discussions with Dina and Kristine. Anna describes the unique opportunity of having a Black boss but also working in a predominantly white-led development institution located in the Caribbean:

> "There's a **mismatch** between who is leading the development system in a region…because if all you see is…**white, interactions** are [read as] **not culturally sensitive**. It's interesting to see, to hear about all of the dynamics and [how] they have nothing to do with that racial dynamic. **But there is a racial dynamic.** My boss happens to be Black... It is **amazing**. Um, you know, I have **zero complaints**…. **people can't relate to that experience.**" (Anna)

The first half of the above description of her workplace draws interest around the vocabulary she uses. Her use of "mismatch", "leading", and "interactions" are particularly telling. The relationship between the physical appearance of decision makers compared to what is culturally appropriate for individuals impacted by the 'development system' indicates a relationship with unequal power dynamics, something that is ill-fit or not thoughtfully designed for maximum impact. This argument was echoed quite loudly with other interviewees. The use of 'culture' further describes how interactions may play out and exacerbate unequal power dynamics between those who implement anti-GBV projects versus those who are on the receiving end of the project. While in conversation with Anna, it became clear that her religious identity presented the clearest tenant of her identity in comparison to the rest of the women interviewed instead of other key indicators mentioned by other women (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, class, etc.). As such, her nuanced use of culture to describe clear differences between

herself and her colleagues perhaps can be deconstructed as a more ‘politically correct’ way to describe experiences that have alluded to racist, sexist, and/or anti-religious sentiments by her colleagues. Nonetheless, Anna presented an important narration of issues emerging within her work, necessitating a consideration for cultural sensitivity when effectively supporting victims of violence in a Caribbean environment.

The second half of her narration suggests that despite institutional efforts to suppress bubbling sensitivities around the inadequacies seeped within white-led development institutions in the Caribbean, is her bearing witness to the said institution denying the impact of divided racial dynamics i.e., ‘there is a racial dynamic’. Aside from her defining her own religious and racial identity, she understands these divides to play out differently depending on your collegial dynamics. In her case, she understands how lucky she is the unique tenets of her professional life having a Black boss within a predominantly white professional organisation. While it is unclear at the end of her statement as to whether or not “people" who cannot relate to her experience are other Black women in her organisation who have non-Black bosses (and experience their own types of professional violence) or if they are just non-Black people in general (who lack self-awareness of what their representation in the professional workspace actually represents), both options suggest an alternative negative experience of working as a Black woman in this particular development space.

A final interesting perspective on the realities of work that adds nuance to this discussion is in Lauren’s experience whilst working in a predominantly white/non-Black

professional organisation in the Caribbean. As a means to shield and transform violent experiences inflicted by her organisation, Lauren describes how she mobilises her own Blackness as a career tool for advancement. To Lauren's advantage, she used her Blackness to her benefit: to subliminally challenge/shift power dynamics and climb up the ranks of the development sector as she describes this process to be: "or the most part, it's been beneficial." This manifests as opportunity and access for Lauren:

> "**Blackness also works for me** in that they're recognising if you have a whole set of women, white men telling people about developments because it could potentially be perceived to be **neo-colonial**….. With the NGOs like, Oh my gosh, I'm like, your, your what do you call it, **mascot**? …. I'm **the only Black woman** here. You keep **trotting** me out for every diversity or every other training. Or **look, we have a Black person**." (Lauren)

By allowing institutions to take advantage of her (as the face of programmes / a 'mascot'/ or bringing the 'local stamp of approval'), she has been able to remove previous barriers to accessing professional development training, building high level connections, and creating her own network. To her organisation's advantage, Lauren's Blackness is used as the 'mascot.' As the 'mascot' that is put on display for particular audiences, her organisation uses her physical appearance as an appeal for legitimacy. 'Mascot' becomes a problematic term particularly because while it can symbolise a person, it is often more commonly used to describe an animal or object that is adopted by a group to bring that group good luck. In this case, the 'group' requiring 'good luck' can be interpreted as the traditionally white-led, Global North development sector primarily composed of (white) women and white men operating in a climate of 'neo-coloniality'. Lauren further describes the way her organisation physically uses her body by being 'trotted' around. This is another term commonly used to describe the speed of

an animal. The particular use of language functions in a very intentional way. Instead of using a more common term like ‘tokenism’ Lauren’s interpretation of her treatment results in the metaphorical paralleling of Black Caribbean women to animals. This is perhaps in reference to the subliminally coded treatment she believes her experience to resonate most profoundly with.

Regardless to the extent in which Lauren has accepted this positioning as a mascot to her own advantage, her confidence exuded in describing herself throughout the interview suggested that she developed great skill in building her resume and positioning as an ‘insider’ to the development sector. As a consenting participant to the transactionary relationship her workplace has in exchange with her Blackness - she simultaneously uses their reliance on her physical presence/body to take professional strides that work in her favour. While Lauren’s Blackness has enabled her to rise to respected positions, she nonetheless has been personally taxed and challenged because of it. Further, this peculiar use of race lends itself to a more individualist view of Blackness can work for her as an individual in contrast to the harm it could cause for the wider ‘collective’ or even how Black women on the receiving end of the development work are viewed i.e., collectivist ideas around how Blackness commonly works against women who experience higher degrees of violence and lower levels of support.

Overall, the empirical evidence suggests that there is a variety of professional settings that lend different, complementary, and contradictory experiences for Caribbean women based on who their colleagues are. We see in predominantly Black-led development

institutions there to be levels of inflicted violence against certain marks of identity (in this case the LGBTQ+ community). In predominantly white-led development institutions, there is a high likelihood for a Black Caribbean woman to experience violence through the institution inflicted upon her. However, there is also the possibility for her to be slightly shielded by these instances in white-led institutions when surrounded by Black leadership/support within the same institution.

6.5 Funding violence: throwing money at the problem

Another topic that emerged when discussing the realities of work with interview participants was the issue of 'resourcing problems'. This relates closely to the problem of how development agendas are tactically prioritised as they relate to particular groups of people and problems as described in the earlier section 6.4. However, for clarity, resourcing problems can be defined as problematic cycles where funding for projects focused on mitigating GBV have (unintended) consequences of exacerbating persisting issues. A clear question that drives this section was raised by Rose, a Black Caribbean philanthropic expert with GBV expertise:

> "How do we resource solutions, as opposed to **throwing money at the problem**?" (Rose)

In Rose's perspective, donors, funding structures, and development budgets (i.e., power) often are designed to actually perpetuate long standing issues the region already grapples to deal with. Rather than "trying to **understand** what the **problem** is" she has found that decision-makers actually lack the ability to begin "thinking creatively

about what the **solutions** are." As a result, she described the following cycle to persist: Caribbean development issues such as GBV are funded through key development institutions who amass power by being resourced from outside of a Caribbean-centric context. This means that funding contingencies are put in place that require money to be put to spent in ways that disregard context and as thus, the issue of violence persists and remains inappropriately addressed.

Critical scholars who lament on this very issue and have been doing so for decades such as Ford-Smith's (1997) work on Jamaican women-led development work. She deduced that:

> "funding does not always contribute to social transformation… [but reproduces] the very relationships of dependency and domination between aid agencies and recipients" (Ford-Smith, 1997, p.258).

Instead of key organisations being supported with their context in mind, they are cornered in a way to rely on funding sources from institutions based in the Global North. It becomes clear that Rose's perspective over two decades later echoes much of Ford-Smith's experience as a leader of her own grassroots organisation in Jamaica in the late nineties. What connects these two different historical contexts is the unchanged and unsuccessfully challenged function of power that externally sourced development funding has over the lives of victims of violence and continued ability to perpetuate violence rather than eradicate it. This ultimately demonstrates how webs of power dynamics in development funding persist, dictate the lifespan of issues such as GBV, and can negate the effectiveness of experts like Rose in the field.

In reflecting upon my own professional fundraising experience in the international development sector, it resonates deeply with some of the empirical interview evidence under examination. I too have witnessed the blatant resourcing of development problems, particularly for projects that are aimed at helping women and girls affected by violence. It is worth noting that my personal encounter with this issue did not exclusively focus on women and girls in the Caribbean but women and girls from Global South countries more broadly. This is because mid-interview with participant Rose as she discussed these key issues, I immediately understood exactly what she was referring to. I have experienced being in an office or Zoom meeting as the only Black (Caribbean) woman amongst a group of non-Black (mostly white) colleagues and having conversations on how to acquire funding to do anti-violence work for girls and women in countries located in the Global South. I have seen colleagues pitch 'creative ways to solve GBV' that entailed a heavy reliance and profiteering on the persistence of violence itself. One memorable and highly problematic pitch made in the office was to generate income to cover staff salaries for an underfunded GBV programme for girls by packaging and selling an educational violence prevention toolkit to governments and ministries in Global South countries. In short, the combination of these institution's purchasing power, presumed little knowledge of GBV, and underlying hope that GBV persists in these countries would incur a need for the toolkit, generate income to cover overhead office costs, and in turn keep 'local staff' as unpaid volunteers. While this reflective experience occurred in a non-Caribbean development setting, it happened to me (as someone from a slightly different positionality compared to the interview participants in this research) yet demonstrates an example of the regularities that can

move across different contexts within the same sector. In other words, the way inequalities are expressed within professional development settings, the double violent victimisation of women and girls as a result of bottling up and selling experiences of violence as toolkit solutions. This is a key reflexive example of how 'resourcing problems' functions and can move across different contexts.

Aside from my personal encounter that resonates with Rose's experience, another interviewee Kristine raised similar examples of the problematic tendencies that can occur with development funding cycles in the Caribbean:

> "I didn't want to be a part of an organisation that just **gave groups money and then left…."** (Kristine)

In other words, development funding structures have "tremendous power over people's lives all over the world", and "shape the lives of the organisations they support" by implementing "processes and regimes of disciplines to which they require the organisations to adhere" and in reality, "the term 'partner' …. obscures what remains a very real power relation" and how "the power differential produces and regulates the reality of those who are funded" (Ford-Smith, 1997, p.256). While Kristine works within the funding side of the work, often focusing on Caribbean women's organisations to mitigate violence, her work ethos is intentionally grounded in vocabulary focused on partnership, collaboration, and prioritising context to ensure philanthropy is ethical and makes it into the hands of Black women doing the work. This suggests an effort to flip the script of what traditionally has been done as misleading 'partnership work' by institutions as described above by Ford-Smith (1997). Kristine also mentioned that

philanthropic development organisations have opted to lean towards a public awareness of what is actually needed on the ground but in reality these organisations actually doing this are “few and far between.” This process can reveal some of the power dynamics at play in these spaces:

> “If we are talking, like, about **funds** located in the **Global North** coming together to talk about **philanthropy** and also aside from being Black Caribbean because a lot of people are in North America. **You don’t really find a Black Caribbean woman** in a space like that.” (Kristine)

In a final example, Rose gives a compelling demonstration of the relationship between representation (specifically race and geographic context) and the power dynamics of resourcing problems with regards to GBV in the Caribbean. For context, Rose described her role(s) within Caribbean development from the position of a grassroots educator, leader, and activist specifically on femicide in the region. For example, in the wake of a publicised murder case of a young Indo-Caribbean woman on her island, she was invited to speak on a panel on femicide that was funded by one of her organisation’s donors. On the panel Rose spoke out against the problematically racialised and classist public media response that was applied to the murder of the Indo-Caribbean woman in comparison to another similar murder of an Afro-Caribbean woman on the same island. After speaking out publicly, Rose’s organisation:

> “Received a very **hostile** email from [the funder], basically saying that, you know, they were so **shocked** that we said these **racist** things…. They basically **cut funding** from us. [They] told us that they were no longer going to **donate** money to us.” (Rose)

As a result of speaking out against the racial injustice of GBV, their grantee-donor relationship immediately ended. I argue that this is “violent reaction” to free speech (Rose’s stance on a topic that highlighted racialised and classed privilege of who

was/not deserving of justice) further demonstrates how power relations and censorship are dictated within the Caribbean development sector by external forces that are fiscally backed. Olson's (2006) work on the complexities of development grantee-donor relationships practised by transnational religious organisations highlights how they can "implement development epistemologies" and can result in material development practice such as: censorship, the hiring/firing of staff, decision making, partnership development, silencing, and unaccounted change of protocol by staff, etc. Olson (2006) further found that when interviewing staff at organisations who were dependent on external funding in Peru there was a collective belief amongst the staff that it is "worse to get cut from a programme than to remain true to what you really feel about the quality and impact of your work" (p.400). Ultimately, foreign censorship rooted in power amassed from external/Global North funding structures more times than not works to the detriment of exacerbating and silencing very real issues where identity politics (specifically race and class issues) emerge within cases of GBV and femicide. It is clear that Rose's organisation had little to no "capacity for negotiation" and there is a need for stakeholders like herself to build their own "indigenous sources of funding" to avoid future "dependency traps" (Ford-Smith, 1997, pp. 256-7). Here we see another example of professional violence that manifests and is projected against Black Caribbean women in their workspace. This further reinforces this chapter's argument on the violence that festers within Caribbean development work against Black women professionals.

In another example of censorship and dependency, interviewee Ava bluntly describes the power dynamics of funding, identity politics, and defining the role of the 'international community' in the Caribbean:

> "There's very little support that's being **given**. You have to then **rely** on again these **white faces**…to amplify what we're doing down here or bring it to their attention and kind of pressure them into **giving** us support or funding, you know, to be able to achieve what we want to achieve..… but they wouldn't see it as that because as post-colonial societies… we're socialised to listen to **white voices** the **affluent white,** which is a **voice in authority position**. So, from a race lens, yes." (Ava)

In Ava's lengthy monologue she details key insights into socially internalised perceptions of whiteness, relationships of dependency emerge, and how it can perpetuate GBV. There is a particular way that power is reinforced when grassroots women's groups like Ava's are forced to campaign for attention and put pressure on decision makers to give them funding and achieve their aims. The struggle she faces is that due historically grounded socialisation practices that privilege a specific combination of whiteness and class (a direct exchange from colonialism), the practice of 'resourcing problems' becomes a reality. Postcolonial feminists like Audrey Lorde (1984) argue that these "cleverly arranged" experiences positioned as "repeating patterns imitate progress" are really the "same old exchanges, the same old guilt and hatred" (Hunter, 2017, p.263). Similar to these noted experiences of funding cuts and intricate layers of financial dependency is the public attention given to GBV when it impacts women of different backgrounds. In this case, the public attention for Indo-Caribbean women versus Afro-Caribbean women demonstrate violence impacting women who embody white adjacent privilege (such as a woman tourist from Hong Kong is the victim of GBV during carnival in Ava's example) receive different treatment. This

points to a conversation on how victims become valued differently and selective, timely funding development emerges:

> "All of a sudden they're **paying attention** to something that we have been **screaming** about for five years straight." (Ava)

Again, we see here the use of language in a particular way that highlights us versus them dynamics, dependency, and the power of resourcing problems that pervade the Caribbean. The reality that women's groups in the Caribbean such as Ava's are required to not only raise their voice, but actually 'scream' in order to be noticed but only when 'white adjacent privilege' is put at risk helpfully unpicks how decision making that takes place out of a Caribbean context, miles away actually exacerbates on the ground issues that have a directly draining impact on the emotional and intellectual labour that the women I interview put into their everyday work.

6.5.1 Perpetuating violence: Institutional violence at the state level

This subsection focuses on the active role of the state (defined as Caribbean government state entities e.g., police infrastructure, ministries focused on gender/women's affairs, justice systems, etc.) on GBV[81] and its impact on the lives of Black Caribbean women. In consideration of conversations on Twitter by digital Caribbean feminists, much of the discourse takes a heavily critical tone towards the presence of their government and low accountability taken towards women and girls.

[81] See subsection 2.4.1 for more on structural violence

The following tweets below can summarise the some of these sentiments and are highlighted with key repeating themes drawn out in previous empirical analysis:

> **“Elected officials** have a right to be held accountable and to **set an example** to the country, one that sees the **safety of women and girls a no joking matter**...displacement particularly due to a natural disaster, creates fear and vulnerability” (Tweet)
>
> - Themes: social practice of minimising trauma/violence, cycles of power and violence

> “PLEASE tell the **government** and the private sector to allocate resources and funding to community programmes and initiatives which seek to end violence and also assist the individuals who are affected by and reform the perpetrators of said violence” (Tweet)
>
> - Themes: resourcing problems and blurred boundaries between victim and perpetrator

> “I stand by the fact that many **Caribbean men** who have demonstrated a **lack of respect for women** go on to live full and productive lives with little repercussions for their actions. Many of them go on to be **Members of Parliament, political leaders and Prime Ministers”** (Tweet)
>
> - Themes: gendered tropes of Caribbean men, social practices of minimising trauma/violence, cycles of power and violence

> “This is a very **surface understanding**. Causes of Domestic Violence cannot be **reduced** to **men's feelings and frustration**. I really urge **people in leadership positions** to be more informed. This narrative is very **damaging** because it gives people a pass for being an **abuser**.” (Tweet)
>
> - Themes: gendered tropes of Caribbean men, cycles of power, and violence and blurred boundaries between victim and perpetrator

In consideration of the examples above, it is no coincidence that there is a repetition of discourse with regards to Twitter users repeating the identities of individuals within a Caribbean state infrastructure who play an active role in GBV. Above we see the use of terms to describe these individuals as: elected officials, government, Caribbean men, members of parliament, political leaders, Prime Ministers, and male leaders. In

consideration of the first tweet, it is worth noting that the common connotations of holding a professional position as an elected government official would ideally mean that the individual acts in the best interest of a wider group and bestows their decision-making influence appropriately. Instead, the tweet is in direct response to an unspecified instance where an elected official made use of comedy and social practices of minimising the safety of women and girls. In the second tweet, this digital feminist posted a very clear demand in critique of the effectiveness of funding and resources to certain agendas that do not necessarily consider ending GBV or perpetrator reform. This was a theme explored in the earlier empirical chapters four and five whereby the relationship of funding cycles highlights the inequalities within Caribbean development agendas from the top down. In the third tweet, the user takes issue with the concept of accountability and cycles whereby power and gender are used to mask, and to an effect reward, the problematic behaviour of men in high positions such as at the ministerial level. While it is unclear to whom she is directly referring to, the tweet relies on gendered stereotypes of Caribbean men to cast a narration of their value system in quite a damaging way as a means to highlight the double standard that is placed on women e.g., ‘many Caribbean men…. lack of respect for women’....’go on to live full productive lives’.

Finally in the fourth tweet, we see a focus on the gendered bias embedded with Caribbean political leadership and representation. It appears there is a public misunderstanding of domestic violence (DV) that is dangerously defined by a man’s overall emotional state e.g., ‘surface understanding’...’reduced to men’s feelings’. This

tweet also relies on stereotypes of Caribbean men whereby they are assumed to lack the range to have a deep comprehension of DV due to perhaps the previously cultural tendency to minimise violence e.g., 'give a pass for being an abuser'. Putting these tweets in conversation with my research's more specific focus on race, specifically Blackness, we see the use of gendered stereotypes as a discursive tool by cyberfeminists to highlight the damaging role Caribbean men who embody the state have on the outcomes of vulnerable women and girls in the Caribbean. In sum, we see the discourse on Twitter to highlight several key issues with regards to identity politics and GBV: resourcing problems, social practices of minimising trauma/violence, gendered tropes of Caribbean men, cycles of power and violence, and blurred boundaries between victim and perpetrator.

In consideration of the discourse published on Twitter that raises concern for several key, repeating themes, evidence from interviews with GBV experts who have direct experience working with the Caribbean state or for government backed programmes/projects, the listed themes above become ever more relevant. For example, discussions with Zari revealed the inner workings of a government funded entity dedicated to women and girls are rife with macho culture, a lack of respect and a professional culture that minimises violence[82]. This leads me to consider the consequences of prolonged exposure to working in a professional environment that downplays and disrespects the importance of your role and implements macho culture

[82] See end of section 6.2 for more details on Zari's workplace macho culture and policing.

yet expects you to make tough judgement calls with pinched budget funding that could result in the life or death of a woman. Zari harrowingly revealed:

> "We gained roads in terms of establishing a unit, but **we fail the victims** because **we still lack resources**….to help them...the way **forward is not in a good place**." (Zari)

While she gives kudos to the government who on paper appear to take on some of the aims and ambitions of Caribbean feminists, in her position the reality is clear: victims are failed, resources are scarce, the future is bleak. As such, this relates to previous discussion on the dynamics of power and funding cycles (see more in section 6.5) but at the state level where priorities and agendas are set, 'we gained roads…establishing a unit' however adequate resources cannot be allocated appropriately as mentioned in the second tweet above '*PLEASE tell the* ***government…*** *to allocate resources and funding…'* This issue also highlights the importance of the complex identity politics of victims and the role of the state. More specifically, Zari encountered many vulnerable women whose futures to be dictated by the state to be mothers and as a direct consequence of underfunding these women opted to stay in violent households and participate in social practices in the Caribbean that minimise violence:

> "If a woman, she has three children, but the shelter I'm taking her to does not accept kids. She's not going to stay. **She'll go back to that situation** because the only thing that's bad about her situation is that I'm being abused…So if **I have to just accept that the abuse,** the **abuse is minimal** compared to **what I could lose going into a shelter.**" (Zari)

In the above description, it was clear that in this example Zari was directly reflecting on possibly a recent domestic situation where the vulnerability of motherhood and poverty were exacerbated due to ineffective state intervention/funding and attitudes towards violent exposure: she would rather accept violence than lose her children while in a

woman-only shelter. As a result of these systemic gendered dynamics that play out in her workplace directly to a Caribbean government, both Zari and the women she intends to help are left in even more vulnerable positions:

> "Honestly these would just **break my heart** when they would ask questions and you would know that there is **nothing for them** there, there is **nothing there.** The **system is overwhelmed…**. The police service and victim support units, they are **overwhelmed**, too…. **One victim said to me it makes no sense…. A person can die in 1 minute** literally. When they have to wait that long to wait for intervention for support in their minds **it's not worth it.**" (Zari)

What was truly interesting was that during this monologue that detailed heart-breaking realities that both her and her clients face, is that she seemed to backtrack a bit. It was almost as if she had caught herself revealing too many negative details about her workplace during our interview. This is because after describing some of the dangerous consequences of underfunding (specifically for shelters/victim protection services) and the serious lack of professionalism embodied by her peers she said:

> "I want to **commend** [my workplace] for **establishing**. But, when we look at the other areas that are supposed to surround this process we are **not in the right place.** We are **not in a good place.** …." (Zari)

I was perplexed with her particular use of the word "commend" because it seemed to applaud her institution for taking an earlier described haphazard approach for a responsibility that falls within their duty of care (e.g., protection of its citizens). If you maintain exposure to an environment long enough like she described, you begin to internalise some of the problematic conditioned belief systems and respond with semi-robotic responses such as "commending my workplace" for contradictory responses to clear issues of GBV that need to be addressed. Interestingly, this aligns with findings from a study by DeShong and Haynes (2015) that found an "inconsistency of state

support and collaboration with state agencies" which "contributes to a landscape of multiple, fragmented and sometimes competing state responses to IPV" (p.5). In this case, Zari's descriptions rendered images of her conflicted position, enduring the stress of working for the government that operates somewhat like a 'boys club', maintaining loyalty to her role after working there for a prolonged period of time 'commending the establishment', and simultaneously understanding the bleak future of the victims she supports. What is clear, as a collective, the government's relationship to victims of GBV is "not in a good place" and at the trajectory that it is headed, women in her country under existing leadership will continue to experience the negative consequences.

While it is important to consider other perspectives on the role of the state, both Maria and Ava echo similar critiques to Zari's that highlight two things: socialised work practices that minimise violence (see terms used together 'cultural' 'serious grip' 'discouraged reporting') and the blurred boundaries between victim and perpetrator (see the discursive juxtaposition between emphasis on the 'broken system' and 'even when there are clear perpetrators'). This indicates that due to corruption/poor understandings of violence, violent perpetrators have the opportunity to operate above the law:

> "**Culture and cultural upbringing** has a very, very, **very serious grip** on how it shapes…I guess all women in the Caribbean…there is a culture of…you take what is given to you [and] **the man is not wrong"** which "facilitates an environment where if women are being abused and if women are experiencing intimate partner violence, then they're **not encouraged to report**." (Maria)

> "You know, this **entire system is broken.** The more stories you hear, the more you kind of realise that, yeah, this **system is really broken**. Even when there are people that are clear, there are the **clear perpetrators**." (Ava)

Further, Samantha and Paloma mirrored additional concern for the participation of the state in GBV and exacerbated gendered identity politics, exemplified in justice-seeking endeavours for victims. Specifically, this is the case for sexual assault charges that can be long drawn-out process that are often unsupported, minimised, or dismissed by state-backed infrastructure (e.g., police protocols, the courts, individual police officers) and society at large (e.g., gendered socialisation practices):

> "**Women are still not believed** when they go to the **courts**, to the police, or that their new perpetrator is in connection with the police at a high level of **power**. And so, we want to see that **you don't see justice. You don't receive justice**…. **you don't report it…we don't see it as a serious issue.** And that means that we continue to **socialise men wrong**. We continue to **socialise girls incorrectly.**" (Samantha)

> "The **police**, they're supposed to have a particular protocol to respond to domestic violence. So do the **courts**... You're trying to work with them…. they still **aren't empowering experiences.** So, we still have people who work in those sectors who have certain **biases or to excuse violence** and so they don't do their job as they're mandated to do. So, you know, a lot of times women go to the **police station,** and **they're turned away by the police officer**, [who] decides to counsel the perpetrator and the woman and **not take the report, not charges**." (Paloma)

In both explanations above, there is a visible trend whereby justice for GBV victims falls short due to the combination of socio-cultural practices that minimise violence that have been absorbed by and instruct extensions of the state responsible for citizen welfare - the police[83]. Similar to Zari's experience and the demands of cyberfeminists on Twitter, we see again how victims are failed, state establishments are ineffective, and leaders are prone to internalising patriarchal social tendencies that minimise and dismiss

[83] While this thesis does not have the space to discuss the intricate relationship between policing structures, violence, and gender, see more in: Flavin and Bennett, 2001; Magaloni *et al.,* 2020; Wallace and Neptune-Figaro, 2022.

violence. To further drive this point, interviewees provided two examples whereby young girls have been failed by the system. First, Dina describes high rates of underage sex and grooming in schools and its ties to legal policies on the age of consent. In this example we see the role of the state manifesting through legal regime (policy) and its ability to legitimise violence on young girls:

> "People would often go out of their way to **find the loopholes,** to **make it look OK**…In [name of country], **our age of consent is sixteen**…. their minds are still very much able to be **moulded and groomed** is a situation that shouldn't be happening. And a lot of men who are **predators take advantage** of that very low age of consent to take out **young schoolgirls**." (Dina)

The practice of finding loopholes directly indicates the use and application of the law at the expense of vulnerable young girls. The maturity required to partake in consensual sex contradicts with higher age limits (maturity) compared to what is needed to make other major life decisions (e.g., age to drive, vote, get married, etc.) establishes contradictory juxtaposition that utilises the legal regimes to encourage/protect predatory behaviour.

A final, shocking example below demonstrates the relationship the state has to identity politics (particularly class and race) and how it can incite secondary victimisation on vulnerable young girls:

> "We just had **a major explosion** last year, a campaign, where a girl, she was found **in solitary confinement naked** in the institution. And their excuse was well this is the regular intake process. **Solitary confinement. Naked.** And what was quite saddening about that thing was that they were right. It was part of the process, and **it triggered** a particular memory for me because **I've seen it** because I used to volunteer there. And I remember a girl, seeing the girl behind bars on the floor of her mattress. So, explaining it, I was like: Why am I remembering seeing this before? They were **wailing. Wailing**… **racism is not talked about.** So, for those girls, a lot of these **girls are from low-income**

> **households**…. There are white girls not seen the inside of those institutions…. That's that they are perceived to have a better family structure." (Anonymous)[84]

The narration above exemplifies many of the themes discussed throughout chapter six but particularly how existing at the crux of lower socio-economic class and being Black positions a young girl in more vulnerable spaces, in this case when the law is involved, these individuals become more vulnerable to state-backed mistreatment and violent policies. This interviewee explained how she was triggered from a personal encounter that she had with this violence as a volunteer at a juvenile facility witnessing 'standard' intake procedures for minors who were stripped naked in barred solitary confinement with nothing but a mattress. She argues that similar procedures would not be applicable to girls from different racial backgrounds or higher income households who could afford the support of a 'nuclear family structure': "there are white girls not seen inside of those institutions…perceived to have better family structures." Ultimately this demonstrates the role the state plays in mobilising identity politics to contribute to GBV.

6.6 Conclusion

In outlining narrations of development work, covert and overt manifestations of violence, countered experiences of workplace identity politics, and the violence of resourcing problems and organisational dependency, chapter six provided empirical evidence to support a key argument of this wider thesis: the reality of professional violence based on women's identities. In other words, the evidence suggests that while the professional

[84] See footnote number 42 on my process behind using pseudonyms and anonymity.

Caribbean development sector has explicitly and implicitly violent tendencies that are targeted against particular bodies that manoeuvre within it: Black Caribbean women development professionals. The next and final chapter seven will conclude with this thesis' two empirical contributions and recommendations for future work in this area.

Chapter Seven Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This research has explored the intersection of race, gender, and violence in the English-speaking Caribbean within the lives of professional women. I have identified some of the ways that violence manifests and interplays with the complex identities of Black Caribbean women working in the international development sector in the region. As outlined in my introduction chapter one and methodology chapter three, this research was guided by three key research questions: *How do racialisation processes within GBV form and, how are they negotiated by organisations and Black women? How does race and gender intersect to shape Black women's experiences of violence in the English-speaking Caribbean? And what is the impact of these experiences?*

In reflecting on the data and considering these three related questions, this work has relied on Caribbean feminist reflexivity as the epistemological framework to examine four things. The first is to ensure that this research has been contextually sound. The second is to treat the sensitive topic of race and violence in an ethically considerate way. The third is to honour the voices of Black women whose voices and experiences have been critical to the research. And the fourth is to acknowledge the important anti-violence work in the Caribbean that exists offline. While these women's offline voices

and experiences are important they could not be included in the scope of this thesis due to time and space constraints. As such, the intent of this research has been grounded on uncovering the possible ways that 'Blackness', violence, and gender in the Caribbean may intersect as defined by the voices of Black Caribbean women whose professional world spans the fields of (digital) feminist activism and the (Caribbean/international) development sector.

7.1.1 Discussion of the empirical evidence: Locating and defining racialised violence

In order to frame this thesis' empirical contributions, each chapter was carefully crafted for a specific function. Chapter one introduced this work from a Caribbean feminist reflexive standpoint by focusing on my own positionality that is tied to this research in a very specific and nuanced way: both insider and outsider[85], Black Caribbean feminist and Global North researcher, development professional and development critic, Vincentian national and diasporan. In chapter two, I paired cross-disciplinary scholarship and key theoretical debates together to drive an interdisciplinary discussion on race, gender, and violence in the Caribbean from the standpoint of GBV professionals. In chapter three I detailed the methodological processes used to conduct this research which included an adaptation of digital integrations (online interviews and discourse analysis of Twitter) to comply with changing social distancing regulations and

[85] See section 1.4 for more on my positionality within the research.

UK/Trinidad/University of Birmingham travel restrictions that manifested during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. While it was challenging to conduct fieldwork during this time, I maintained rigour within my research and my adapted methods allowed for sufficient depth of understanding of the topic under investigation.

In chapters four, five, and six I drove a discussion around evidence of the ties between violence and identity. This developed my theoretical argument that is based around two sources of data: discourse analysis of Black Caribbean women professionals who are GBV experts/activists (primary data) and discourse analysis of tweets from Caribbean cyberfeminists (secondary data). As such, three key themes emerged from the empirical evidence. In chapter four, A "culture of violence"? I discussed and then problematised concepts that drew connections between causes of violence and a Caribbean “culture of violence” based on interviews with Caribbean women. Rather than accept this concept as empirical truth, I deconstructed the idea of a “culture of violence” by using a postcolonial theoretical standpoint and critical development scholarship to historically contextualise the issue of violence and race. This led to a focused discussion in chapter four on how Black Caribbean women professionals can often experience being both outsider and insider to violence and how community systems and social responses to violence in their context frame their understandings of violence (on both personal and professional levels).

In chapter five, Navigating identity and power, I presented a discussion on the nuanced ways that Black Caribbean women have navigated, understood, and defined their

complex identities and how it plays out in professional environments. I found women to divulge consistent experiences of embedded power structures, gender inequalities, and ‘compounding vulnerabilities.’ This was due to the way different facets of their identities can put them more at risk to violent exposure in a work setting that is already fixated on mitigating violence. This could be for example, specific acts of exclusion based on identity that multiply with one another like her sexuality, her age, the lightness/darkness of her skin tone, etc. My nuanced concept introduced in chapter five of ‘compounded vulnerabilities’ brings a focus on the multiplicative meeting point of identities, in comparison to intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990) that has been critiqued for being diluted within the development sector and on the additive, intersecting layers of identity.

My empirical discussion that contextualised violence (chapter four) and defined the complexity of identity within the development sector (chapter five) leads to an in-depth discussion of ‘compounding vulnerabilities’ and ‘professional violence’ in chapter six. Chapter six outlined some of the functions and locations of when race and violence interact within professional development spaces and how Black women navigate these experiences in what this thesis’ calls ‘professional violence’. This is the covert and overt acts of violence in workplace settings targeted on Black Caribbean women are a result of their complex identities. And the manifestation and form of professional violence varied on a spectrum and was dependent on the type of professional environment a woman is immersed in on a daily basis (e.g., predominantly Black-led, mixed/diverse, white-led organisations). In sum, amidst the diverse, layered identities this group of

women embodied, what remained consistent from our discussions was the way the development sector most often interacted with their identities in a violent way i.e., 'professional violence.'

As such, this thesis argues that professional Black women in the Caribbean working in the development sector specialising in violence can experience their own complex forms of targeted, 'professional violence' that is largely racialised. 'Professional violence' is a direct attack on the visibility of the nuanced identities that Black Caribbean can embody. This process and experience of how nuanced identities interact with her professional world (i.e., the development sector) and the context of violence (i.e., her daily life living in the Caribbean) is what this thesis calls 'compounded vulnerabilities'. My findings suggest that professional violence is racialised and structurally embedded within the Caribbean development sector and can manifest and be masked as: the structures of dependency instilled within Global North philanthropic institutions, the intentional disenfranchisement (financial, infrastructural, social, structural) of GBV work/victim support, the competition for attention and for workplace resources, the negative social connotations of gender work, the mainstreaming of intersectionality in the workplace, the protection of victimisers in positions of political power, the strings attached to professional advancement/opportunities for career development, the violent silencing by donors on grantees/activists, and more.

Black Caribbean women professionals included in this research ultimately can endure three layers of violence that converse with one another. First, this group of women can

bring a history of violence exposure from their personal lives that occurred before they began working in the sector, positioning them as survivors, victims, and/or bystanders to violence. These violent experiences were often noted to be the inspiration behind becoming advocates against GBV. Second, this group of women can experience violence in the development workplace itself, often occurring as a result of women's 'compounded vulnerabilities' tied to their identities. The severity and form of violence in the workplace depends on the organisational demographic breakdown of (e.g., international, mixed, Black). Third, this group of women can experience violence as a result of their long-term, repeated exposure to work environments that consistently deal with cases of violence IPV, domestic violence, GBV, etc. In other words, the psychological consequence of being vicariously exposed to trauma[86] evident from working as a DV case worker, in women's shelters, posting about perpetrators online to build community awareness, leading workshops on femicide, translating women's lives into fundraising cases for support, lobbying for GBV policy, researching social rehabilitation for perpetrators, and more. Ultimately, there is a trifecta effect on women themselves who are inescapably enmeshed within layered violence in their effort to end violence themselves. This means they can simultaneously occupy the spaces of insider and outsider to violence, survivor, bystander, and victim.

[86] See more: Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995

7.2 In review of the literature, methods, and evidence

7.2.1 Grounding critical development studies, Black Caribbean feminism, violence, and emerging cyberfeminist scholarship

The theoretical framework that has grounded this research and my overarching thesis that was outlined in chapter two discussed four key components of interdisciplinary work that I intentionally wove together to make up my literature review: critical development scholarship, Black Caribbean feminism and feminist geography, theorising gender and violence, and theories on emerging digital identities. Pairing these four areas of literature together has helpfully worked to set up a foundation for my conceptual and empirical contributions to land.

For example, I first explored work that positions the 'key development issue' of GBV, its contentious history with colonialism and the role of development as a discourse as it pertains to identity[87]. More specifically, I considered the Anglophone Caribbean region's historical entanglement with violence due to colonialism that can result in localised instances of gendered violence. This led to a critical discussion tied to empirical evidence that related prevalence rates of GBV to the concept of a "culture of violence". Hall (1995), Kempadoo (2004), and Noxolo's (2016b) work that calls attention to the complex mobility of Caribbean cultural identities and need for relevant frameworks of analysis helped problematise the concept of a "culture of violence" in the Caribbean. I

[87] See more in section 2.1 The development issue of GBV, colonialism and the role of discourse

also reviewed critical postcolonial perspectives (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998; Crawford and Jackson-Best, 2017; Noxolo and Featherstone, 2014; Wilson, 2011, 2012, 2017) that highlight how violence can cut across time and space and inform processes of racialisation due to the Caribbean's historical entrenchment with colonial violence. In light of this, the development sector becomes a force that can intentionally render race simultaneously visible and invisible making race a "discursive smokescreen" (Ford-Smith, 1997; Wilson, 2017, p.432). This also ties back to empirical evidence in chapter six of detailed instances where implicit violence re-enacted in the workplace. Setting this groundwork to understand how colonialism has the ability to replicate systems of oppression masked as development and inform the debate on a "culture of violence" concretises my thesis' focus on instances of racialised violence in the Caribbean.

I also highlighted important arguments within Black Caribbean feminist literature in section 2.2 as it intersects with critical race theory (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017), identity and cultural studies (Hall, 2014 and Angostini-Allen, 2016), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990), and critical feminist geography (Noxolo, 2009 and 2022). Black Caribbean feminism functions as a driving force embedded throughout this research. It has informed this thesis's data analysis (chapters four, five and six), ethnographic reflection (chapter one), and methodology (chapter three) due to its' highly reflexive nature and emancipatory agenda (Baksh-Soodeen, 1998; Lazarus, 2013, p.10). This has called into a consideration for intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990 and 1991) and critiques from evidence of its overuse and dilution as a 'development buzzword' (Cornwall, 2007) demonstrating conflated significance as it pertains to Black (Caribbean) women whilst

also maintaining a useful “basis for collective social action” (Reddock, 2020, p.208) for those identifying as intersectional (Caribbean) feminists. Intersectionality theory is an important point of consideration when discussing my empirical contribution of ‘compounding vulnerabilities’ (see below), a nuanced consideration for the way women can experience identities that multiply and conflate into vulnerabilities. In working with these concepts and contributions, I also considered the way this work functions to support a gap in Caribbean feminist geography in Anglo-Caribbean academic spaces (Gahman and Collins, 2019) and the importance of scholars using a situated analysis when examining the everyday in/security issues Caribbean women face (Noxolo and Featherstone, 2014).

In section 2.3 I considered key work on gender and violence in the Caribbean, specifically intimate partner violence and vicarious exposure to violence (Chandra-Mouli, 2012; Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995; Schauben and Frazier, 1995; Tillyer and Wright, 2014). While some Caribbean feminists have drawn parallels between IPV, ‘failed Eurocentric notions on family’ in the Caribbean (Morgan, 2010), and historical circumstances of the identity of enslaved (Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2018), others have worked to understand the barriers to effective responses to IPV including underfunding by the state, reinforcing narrow understandings of survivor agency, and continued research gaps on power, women’s agency, and IPV (DeShong and Haynes, 2015). This ties to my empirical evidence (see chapter five) that discussed women’s personal encounters with violence indicating that the majority of interview participants were both victims and survivors of violence. I then closed the literature review with a discussion on

the way feminist geographers have conceptualised GBV as something with unfixed, porous boundaries that govern how violence is understood (Wilding, 2014), how it can manifest in a debilitating way (Hume, 2008), and result in coping mechanisms to overlook the violence (Valentine, 1989). This scholarship facilitated consideration for the porousness of violence and manifestation of it within the Caribbean development sector as described by the research participants.

The literature in section 2.4 outlined the trajectory of Black Caribbean digital feminist spaces, the porousness of Black digital diasporan connectivity (Sobande, 2020), and how Caribbean hybridities flow beyond borders (see Thomas, 2011). This drove my empirical discussion on the role of the digital in this thesis that considers how legitimate online community constituencies forges around women's oppression (Leid, 2017; Richard and Gray-Denson, 2018). While important to this thesis, digital research does not go without its noted limitations as it is unable to include women who are doing vital work but exist offline (e.g., not having Twitter or LinkedIn profiles). There are also critiques of the viability of using digital spaces for long term analysis or providing viable GBV solutions (Hosein and Outar, 2016; Leid, 2017; Sanatan, 2016 and 2017). While I considered the limitations of the platforms I used for data collection (see chapter three Methodology), the internet functioned as the single connective tissue between women doing work against GBV in the region. And contributions from this thesis were not set out to solve the momentous and critically important task of GBV, but to understand the role of identity and violence in particular professional development settings and its impact on Black women. However, the women who were not included in this research

were because they existed offline. As such, the missing voices of these women is a limitation of this work and urges future research on the ties between identity and racialised violence of development in both on and offline settings[88].

7.2.2 Reflexive feminist research methods in a digital world

Considering literature on digital spaces in chapter two, chapter three has outlined my methodological approach to complete this work online. Due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions that caused a surge in GBV cases and prevalence in the Caribbean meant that the relevance of my research substantially increased since I commenced this work. In light of violence that has unfolded in real time during this research period against the backdrop of COVID-19, it has become even more imperative to understand what types of violence are taken seriously and what forms have been made in/visible by the development sector as told by Black women professionals themselves. Considering how much discussion on GBV moved online during a time when violence was at a height globally and in the Caribbean, my research methodology primarily used the following three digital platforms to tap into these conversations: Twitter, LinkedIn, and Zoom. This thesis is informed by thirteen Zoom video interviews with Black Caribbean women with GBV and/or gender specialisations and activist backgrounds. This thesis also is informed by secondary data gathered from Black Caribbean cyberfeminists on

[88] See more in section 7.4 on limitations and areas for future research.

Twitter and autoethnographic reflections of my own positionality within the digital fieldwork space (i.e., Zoom).

The multiple methods approach that included content and discourse analysis and reflexivity became important to apply the above four areas of interdisciplinary scholarship. In using this approach, the goal was to gain a holistic understanding from both online activist and GBV 'development practitioner' perspectives as to how identity (race) and violence intersect. This became the most appropriate way to gather data because cyberfeminist activists and GBV 'development practitioners' work to mitigate GBV from two intertwined approaches: the former produce and engage with online documents and the latter work through wider organisational agendas/programmes. Both approaches offered complementary features allowing for unique insights and data to be drawn. Conducting content and discourse analysis of Black Caribbean cyberfeminist social digital practices on Twitter enabled me as the researcher to examine data on a social process (i.e., online GBV activism) as it unfolds and is debated about in real time (Airoldi, 2018). This approach offered new insights to be drawn, encouraged me to think even more dynamically about the research task at hand, and concretised my inspiration for this topic. COVID-19 also functioned as an unfortunate reminder of how there was an immediate research need to focus on GBV as rates increased throughout the pandemic according to the National Institute of Health (Ostadtaghizadeh *et al*., 2023).

7.2.3 The empirical evidence

The empirical evidence in chapter four, five, and six explored three key things. In chapter four, A "culture of violence"?, I discussed my positionality as the researcher whilst maintaining reflexivity in my ethnographic exploration of and interaction with the interviewees. My ethnographic reflections better equipped me as the researcher to understand and build an argument that contextualised what “culture of violence” actually means as it repeatedly appeared in the interview discourse analysis on the prevalence of violence. In doing this, I drew important consideration for critical development scholarship and postcolonial frameworks of analysis to understand, break down, historicise, and problematise the commonly accepted concept of a "culture of violence". This was coupled with my discussion on how Black Caribbean professionals working on violence often had their very own intimate ties to violence as bystanders, victims, survivors, and many voiced to me how their inspiration to work within this specific field stemmed from being both insider and outsider to the issue. This chapter also set several contexts of violence that are worth noting. First, how Caribbean community systems can often blur boundaries between the public and private sphere, where perpetrators within communities have the power to identify as family, making the private domestic space an open, vulnerable setting where violence has the opportunity to thrive somewhat openly. I also highlighted a second example whereby social responses to violence, specifically cases of violence that have clear racial tension built around the way they appear in public discourse, are defined and place specific types of value on Black women's bodies.

In chapter five, I held a grounded discussion on how women have navigated identity and power, understood the politics of belonging, and how the ‘compounding vulnerabilities’ of a woman's identity can position her to be a simultaneous victim and survivor to violence. I also focused on an emerging trend seen in both interviews and in Twitter’s cyberfeminist discourse on digital Caribbean feminist activism where there are largely cinched spaces for queerness and sexuality in Caribbean and Caribbean development spaces. While sexuality was not a main component of this research regarding identity (i.e., with my focus in this work has been grounded on racial identity), it has been an important part of this research process to fully draw in trending and repeated discussion points around identity that surfaced. The LGBTQ+ community and queer identities remained a recurring emergent theme and concern held by many interviewees. This is worth acknowledging because one of my thesis’ underlying aims is to underscore some of the emerging trends on identity discourse defined by Black Caribbean women. Other identities that were not as dominant but are also worth acknowledging because they brought meaning and purpose to some of the interview participants include religious belonging/identity and how the identities developed from women’s day to day activities (i.e., motherhood, being a student, working as a professional, etc.) can sometimes overshadow other compounding vulnerabilities that make up her identity.

Chapter five also explored some of the repeating drivers and contributors to violence described by digital feminist activist communities and from the voices of Caribbean

development professionals. The findings suggest that women are vulnerable to certain types of violence that build up over time[89], and the structures around them make them more vulnerable to racialised violence. These structures can be defined as the Caribbean development sector. And, if women were not within these racialised spaces, they would not be necessarily made vulnerable to this specific type of violence. While there is a diversity of intersecting factors that can put a woman at greater risk to violence exposure that work in addition to her Blackness, her race is not the only (or always the primary) driving component. However, when put in particular settings, professional development contexts that are racialised in specific ways depend on if they are for instance: predominantly white environments, multicultural environments, predominantly Black environments funded by white institutions, etc.)[90].

Chapter six, on 'compounding vulnerabilities' and 'professional violence' importantly discussed a final pillar of this thesis's exploration of race, violence, and gender in international development settings. There was an overwhelming amount of empirical evidence that suggested in centring Black Caribbean women's work specifically in this sector, experiences of violence are perpetually inevitable and plays out differently depending on the makeup of the professional workplace itself. This aligns with Kallman's (2019) research on NGOs and women of colour who that found that while women's experiences vary by region, Black women specifically are "rendered invisible

[89] See section 2.4 for more theorisation on violence and gender and, see more from Penados *et al.* (2023) on slow violence
[90] See subsection 7.3.1 on 'compounding vulnerabilities'

by the power structures" of development organisations that are unwilling to take on conversations about race which then reinforces racialised notions about who development workers are, alienates Black women, and 'Other's' them in their work (p.582). The evidence suggests that the Caribbean development sector can inflict subtle and covert forms of violence on women immersed within it (victims and survivors themselves deemed recipients of development and professionals who also fall into this category). In understanding the day-to-day complexities of working within development, specifically focusing on women and violence, issues from fragile state infrastructure to effectively support violence prevention, to the sector's contemplation of prevalence rates, to the use of numbers and percentages in place of women's actual identities were discussed.

This exploration also included concern for the violence of identity politics that can manifest in development workplace settings and how visibility, performance, and competition can result. This was exemplified by one interviewee in particular who made note of the 'Oppression Olympics' that plays out between different race-based groups of professional women and how intersectionality has become a beacon of hope for the sector. I then close chapter six with two examples of more explicit forms of violence that take place on a structural level. First, 'professional forms of violence' as the perpetuation of violence from a philanthropic/donor level with expressed power dynamics between Global North institutions and dependent institutions in the Caribbean

that foster fiscal dependency and the censorship of Black women[91]. The second example of professional forms of violence exists at the state level where predatory elected officials were described to use state infrastructure and the justice system as a playground to inflict further violence and rely on loopholes within state systems to cause further harm[92].

I will now discuss two key contributions that have come out of this work in section 7.3. The first is a conceptual contribution that focuses on the idea of 'compounding vulnerabilities'. I will then discuss this thesis' empirical contribution that focuses on 'professional violence' within the Caribbean development sector and conclude this thesis with recommendations for future work in section 7.4.

7.3 Contributions

7.3.1 Conceptual contributions: compounding vulnerabilities

While GBV can often be thought of as physical violence and/or coercive control discussed in tandem with domestic violence and intimate partner violence (Chandra-Mouli, 2012; Tillyer and Wright, 2014), other theories on violence[93] highlight additional forms and functions of violence beyond the physical including: exceptional violence (Thomas, 2011), structural violence (DeShong and Haynes, 2015; Pain, 2022),

[91] See Ava's example of censorship in section 6.5
[92] See subsection 6.5.1 on state infrastructure
[93] See subsection 2.4.1 on structural violence and subsection 2.4.2 on intimate partner violence

intersectional violence (Crenshaw, 1991), slow violence (Penado, *et al*., 2023), Caribbean in/securities (Noxolo, 2016a), 'Othered violence' (Valentine, 1989; Wilding, 2013), and more. In researching pre-existing work on violence within Caribbean feminist literature, I noted no particular focus on the development worker herself. Rather, I encountered extensive recent work that takes into consideration factors such as colonial violence (Medwinter and Rozario, 2021), sexuality (Haynes and DeShong, 2017), masculinities (Joseph and Jones, 2023), the experiences of survivor-victims themselves (Ruth *et al.*, 2023), and more. This means that there is an identified an opportunity for further exploration within existing work on Caribbean feminism and violence to focus on the specific experiences of development workers who tackle GBV in the region themselves in a variety of ways, specifically the experiences of Black Caribbean women with a high level of expertise and commitment to survivors of violence themselves.

With that said, my empirical contribution to this thesis is the conceptualisation of 'compounding vulnerabilities.' 'Compounding vulnerabilities' considers how individual vulnerabilities work in relation to each other and manifests as violence within the Caribbean development sector. It is the recognition that Caribbean development workers who are Black Caribbean women are relegated to being both insider and outsider to violence. Within Caribbean development settings, women can be made more vulnerable to certain kinds of violence that build up over time, supported by the structures around them making them vulnerable to racialised violence. This concept occurs within the development sector because the sector has been established by critical development scholars such as Kalpana Wilson (2017) as a racialised space. My

empirical evidence suggests that the professional women's experiences are largely racialised ones[94] despite the diversity of demographics they described working in (e.g., predominantly Black, international and/or white, and mixed-race demographics). It becomes clearer how depending on the work environment, Black Caribbean women may be made more vulnerable. And, while women made note of the vulnerabilities experienced by the victims/survivors/perpetrators they work with (i.e., 'clients'), I found that they too are possibly experiencing the same types of violences as their 'clients'.

I acknowledge that my proposed concept of 'compounding vulnerabilities' and the popularisation of intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990) have a close relationship. As Caribbean feminists Haynes and DeShong (2017) highlight, when discussing (physical) violence, representations of violence need to include the intersection and function of factors such as gender, sexuality, and age to demonstrate how women are made vulnerable. However, the evidence this thesis has provided proposes the idea that 'compounding vulnerabilities' has a specific form and function that takes shape in Caribbean development workplace settings, making it possibly more relevant when considering violence in an Anglophone Caribbean context, in comparison to intersectionality which is a term that has been (over)applied and now diluted in many Black and non-Black feminist discussions. Compounding vulnerabilities as a concept brings nuance to the very real overuse of intersectionality within development, particularly in the Caribbean, (e.g., what Cornwall (2007) calls a development

[94] See more in on their experiences in chapter six 'Compounding vulnerabilities' and 'professional violence'

buzzword). While intersectionality theory is foundational to conceptualising violence in this work and in the Caribbean more broadly and critiqued for its external application in Caribbean contexts, ‘compounding vulnerabilities’ takes account for the way Black Caribbean women development professionals and activists make note of the vulnerabilities of other women that they are analysing in a ‘client based setting’ but they are also in turn possibly experiencing the same type of violence. This then draws us back to my broader point of existing both inside and outside of the violence when immersed in Caribbean development settings.

7.3.2 Empirical contribution: professional, racialised violence

While it is understood that race, and specifically Blackness, in the Anglophone Caribbean is not the singular, nor necessarily the primary identifier that Black Caribbean women professionals in this research chose to self-define or resonate with, instances of racialised violence in professional spaces targeting race (in addition to other variables) was as a central empirical contribution of this thesis. Race-based attacks (both overt and covert) against Black Caribbean women professionals was a common thread that connected each interviewee together. This was the case whether or not they disclosed other past experiences of domestic violence to me in their private, non-professional lives. As such, the evidence suggests that Caribbean women are both insiders and outsiders to violence. While some of the women shared their very personal history of being survivors, victims, or bystanders to IPV as they recounted parts of their lives, there were interviewees who experienced violent victimisation as a result of their

Blackness. This suggests that while discussions on IPV remain important, this thesis highlights a move to transition the discussion from IPV to workplace violence.

In reaching this theoretical contribution and point in the thesis, I framed its three empirical chapters to build onto one another to contextualise violence (chapter four) and to contextualise the making of identity (chapter five) which ultimately positioned a discussion on racialised violence and 'compounding vulnerabilities' (chapter six). In chapter four I sought to frame and then displace cultural narratives of violence defined by women's understandings of violence in their geography and ground postcolonial frameworks of historical violence. I did this to deepen the context of some of the more commonplace explanations of violence and nuanced understandings of identity and violence that interviewees have brought to this research (both in spite of, and in light of their professional and grounded expertise of the communities they come from). This helpfully frames the ways women initially identified as both insider and outsider to violence, having intimately experienced violence in the private spheres of their personal lives, their communities and their specific home lives are continually socialised to respond to public cases of intimate partner violence. Having this chapter introduce the perspectives that participating women hold has helped move my theoretical argument towards a place where we can better understand the logic of how workplace violence pushes these women even further into the category of being an insider (e.g., victim or survivor of direct abuse) and outsider (e.g., positioned as the expert in things like prevention, women's welfare, etc.) of violence and then adds on another layer (and type) of violence exposure (in the very act of delivering different forms of violence

prevention work experiencing verbal abuse, minimisation, glass ceiling barriers, funding cuts, harassment, etc.).

Racialisation processes form within GBV in Caribbean development contexts that ironically set out to specifically target gender and violence issues in the Caribbean. This is negotiated by Black Caribbean women in several ways, for example there are instances where placing blame on a Caribbean "culture of violence" as explanations of violence become convenient and unchecked. This is also negotiated by women who also have defined porous community systems to blur what could be protective boundaries between people like uncle and perpetrator, the safety of the home versus the openness of the street. And oftentimes, social responses to violence were described by women to be a means to work through some of the ways communities have been conditioned to violence exposure, exposing things like racialised value placed on women's bodies in an example in Trinidad[95]. In turn, this can then be internalised and negotiated by women in their navigation of complex identities, power, and the way they can become compounding vulnerabilities that require them to navigate different aspects of who they are in complex and non-linear ways. And, due to the way problematic cultural explainers of violence that are tied to remnants of colonialism and present-day community systems and social responses that instruct and define certain types of violences the professional Caribbean development environment in which they work in (which was shown to vary significantly) is where women become racialised.

[95] See section 4.5 for the example of racialised violence in inflicted on Indo-Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean women

This leads this research to underscore the way that race and gender intersect to shape Black women's experiences of violence within professional development contexts, enabling them to simultaneously embody the nuanced identities of: victim, survivor, and bystander to violence. The Caribbean development sector, one that is largely grassroots activism but also heavily influenced by international institutions, priorities, and philanthropic funding structures from the Global North, becomes a force that frames Black women's experiences in the workplace. Ultimately, there are inherent white power dynamics at play which draw out women's Blackness in specific ways that are not necessarily experienced the same ways as living in Caribbean societies themselves. This requires them to navigate somewhat different forms of identity-based socialisation processes that are tied to violence depending on their context. This is significant because it demonstrates a nuanced way to understand the politics and dynamics of racialised violence and identity in the Anglophone Caribbean: through Caribbean development professional settings focused on mitigating GBV. In sum, the data I have collected demonstrates how Blackness for this particular group of women emerges when specific power dynamics are at play. This research has also shown how this sector can carefully create environments that ironically do the reverse of what it perhaps is now intended to do. While the sector exists to mitigate cases of GBV, it becomes an environment where women's experiences of violence and understandings violence / self-interact with the sector's own set of problematic history, structures, and people to target Black women and further violently (subliminally and overtly) victimise them in doing violence prevention work.

In light of both my conceptual and empirical contributions outlined chapter, they should be judged as developed by a Black Caribbean feminist with both insider and outsider status to the region and movement. And this thesis should be considered as a preliminary contribution that can be enhanced and further developed with in-person fieldwork. I intend for my work to be considered a part of the Anglo Caribbean feminist geography discipline with noted areas of research that can be built upon, particularly due to what can be gained from in-person fieldwork and research.

7.4 Recommendations and future work

In summarising this research, I have made note of where this work sits considering the variety of theoretical considerations used to drive this research forward. I conclude that it is important to consider interdisciplinary approaches when conducting further research in this area to deepen the existing theoretical contributions, especially within the fields of feminist geography, Caribbean studies, Caribbean feminism, and critical development studies. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis, I would argue that my empirical contributions sit well within Caribbean feminist geography studies - an area of scholarship that deserves more attention, research, and resources. This is important to acknowledge because Anglo Caribbean feminist geography allows us to confront and transform space in an undisciplined way despite obstacles the discipline has faced to be as robust as it could be when the ground is “fertile for feminist geography” (Ghaman and Collins, 2019, pp.997-998). In my use and making of empirical contributions to this field,

it has been important to reiterate how Caribbean women are the agents and ‘launch pad’ to this research process with a long history of feminist organising and intentionally making sense of material experiences/life chances across varied geographies (Ghaman and Collins, 2019).

Implications of this work indicate a further need to investigate the types of wellbeing management that Black Caribbean women working in the development sector are experiencing. This is important because I noted throughout the interview transcriptions and in my ethnographic reflections, there was a significant lack of discussion surrounding self-care/wellbeing for women who have identified themselves to be simultaneous victims, survivors, and bystanders to violence and have faced the stresses of preventative structural barriers (e.g., funding cuts, infrastructural limitations to service provision, etc.). In anticipation of my findings to focus more on processes and experiences of racialisation from everyday social contexts (which was not the case), the reality of racialisation playing out in professional settings means wellbeing management for professional women is the next step to expanding this research. I would argue the lack of focus on wellbeing management and self-care in this work is not necessarily a limitation but an important point to explore further. This could include, hosting a discussion on self-care, community care, and wellbeing practices in the wake of women experiencing professional violence, burnout, and fatigue. While this had made glimmers of appearance in my preliminary data, it is worth discussing the correlation between workplace violence and the existence of / types of self-care Black Caribbean women are practising (or not), what that may mean, and what they could look like. In furthering the

research in this way, I would suggest a possible element of practice that needs to be changed as result of this study to make recommendations for women in the Caribbean development sector to uptake self-care management plans as an imperative part of their professional survival kit in the sector[96]

An additional component of this research that functions as both a point of further study and limitation to the existing thesis is a consideration for women whose voices were not included in the interview process. Specifically, the women who contribute to the Caribbean development sector that may work in offline contexts, and those who may not even identify with Caribbean feminism but are advocates for women and gender equality in their own ways. As mentioned throughout this thesis (see methodology chapter three), social distancing and digital connectivity as a result of COVID-19 meant that women who existed offline (without LinkedIn profiles or a large social media/digital professional presence) were not accessible to the scope of the work. These voices who are missing would add great value to the scope of this research and build on key theoretical arguments around the implications of workplace violence in Caribbean development settings. And they would bring a critical focus to the way this group of women may conceptualise their identities, contextualise their identities, and theorise around the notion of a "culture of violence" in the Caribbean.

While there are several identified opportunities and areas of future work for this

[96] See more literature on wellbeing in international development, specifically in Peru by Copestake (2008); and the 'messy politics' of working as a woman in international development by Ferguson (2015)

research, the women who participated in my thesis bravely voiced personal and professional life experiences to highlight the contours of their identities and contextualisation of violence existing within their geography of the Anglophone Caribbean. I am grateful for their contributions to this work that have ultimately provided rich examples of how identity can compound into vulnerabilities and result in different definitions of violence, that is professional violence, within the international development sector.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Pan American Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A comparative analysis of population-based data from 12 countries* (Bott *et al.*, 2012)

- This publication is cited as the first ever comparative study that includes "nationally representative data on violence against women" with the aim of building knowledge on the issue and encouraging policy makers and programs to work towards eliminating violence.

World Bank Blogs, *Casting light onto the shadow pandemic in the Caribbean: Violence against women* (Sayed and Bland, 2020)

- This blog post published by the World Bank briefly covers contemporary issues related to COVID-19 and the shadow pandemic of violence and inequality in the Caribbean whilst highlighting key programmatic and financial investments the institution has contributed to across the region related to mitigating the issue.

UN Women, *Caribbean Women Count Ending Violence against Women and Girls Data Hub* (Caribbean Women Count: Ending Violence against Women and Girls Data Hub, 2021)

- This website is a data hub informed by a joint project put on between UN Women, the Caribbean Development Bank and CARICOM focused on prevalence rates of violence in Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Save the Children, *An Overview of Gender-Based Violence: Latin America and the Caribbean* (Flynn, 2020)

- This publication published by Save the Children highlights the impact of COVID-19 on GBV across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) covering key issues related to inequitable gender norms, child marriage, domestic violence, and sexual abuse, femicide, trafficking, violence against LGBTQ+ groups, and missing data. Interestingly, while this report focuses on the LAC

region, not a single Caribbean island or English-speaking country in the LAC region was referenced, studied, or considered.

UN Women, Caribbean Development Bank and CARICOM, *Caribbean Experiences with Collecting Data on Violence Against Women and Girls* (UN Women *et al.*, 2020)

- This is a joint research project hosted by UN Women, UN Development Programme, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Caribbean Development Bank focused on five prevalence surveys on GBV experiences in CARICOM member states using World Health Organization (WHO) methodology. The aim of the survey was to make information more widely available and help end violence against women.

UNDP, A Multidimensional Approach to Address Violence Against Women and Girls and Femicide/Femicide in Latin America and the Caribbean (Cruz-Osorio and Essayag, 2021)

- This post by the UNDP briefly covers key issues within the realm of violence against women by focusing on femicide in the LAC region, again we see specific examples drawn largely from Spanish speaking countries.