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**Assignment 2: Background and Sociological Theory and Faith-Based Analysis**

* Research and write the Background of the Problem section.
* Choose and apply a sociological theory and at least one action research theorist to understanding the problem.
* Analyse the problem using NT Wright’s “7 universal human longings.”
* Relate these longings to the problem in a faith-based context.

Tamika:

What you have submitted is pretty good. It is going to help you immensely with the writing of your final paper if you follow in this exercise the sections in order that it is asking for.

For example, below should be the sections in your paper for this exercise:

**Background of the Problem**

**Sociological theory**

**One of Wright’s 7 Universal longings**

**Relate Longings to faith-based context (biblical theology and passages in the Bible)**

Tamika: Overall this is a good assignment. I am giving you an A-.

When you write up your final project in SR 920, I will be looking for your report to have the correct sections identified like the above. You should have the Prospectus template for the final assignment in this course. Please let me know if you need it.

In Trinidad and Tobago (TT), particular communities and demographics are perceived as the country’s significant perpetrators of crime and deviant activities. An offshoot of symbolic interactionism, labelling theory is the most aligned theory that addresses the issue of crime in communities that may be considered “hot spots”. Formulated in the 1960s by American Sociologist Howard Becker, Becker’s labelling theory argues that individuals only become deviant when a label is applied to them; they then adopt the label by displaying behaviours, actions, and attitudes associated with it. Labelling theory holds that people become deviant because others force that identity on them [(Popa & Iurchevici, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?EklZBK). Unfortunately, this process occurs due to the stigma attached to the label.

Knowledge of the theory allows us to conceptualise how the past behaviours of deviant labelled individuals can be reinterpreted when considering the label that may have been placed on them [(Popa & Iurchevici, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?qULwNo). Labelling theory emphasises that what may be regarded as deviant is determined not so much by the behaviours themselves or the people who commit them but by the reactions of others to these behaviours. As a result, what is considered deviant changes over time and can vary significantly across cultures [(](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?gNwdQG)*[Introduction to Sociology](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?gNwdQG)*[, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?gNwdQG). In TT, it is common for young Afro-Trinidadian males to be considered criminals based on the area in which they live. This phenomenon is known as territorial stigmatisation, where the othering of people is normalised, and the negative construction, representation, and governing of specific geographical communities and places is perpetuated [(Meade, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?5WSp3m). Unfortunately, territorial stigmatisation is reinforced via state policy, social service delivery, policing, and political programmes, and through a myriad of everyday cultural practices or sayings, places are dismissed as ‘slums’ and ‘problem neighbourhoods’ in both popular or traditional media discourses [(Meade, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?2qICWg).

In his book Broken Signpost, NT Wright names justice as one of the markers human beings display as a universal longing. Within the frame of youth development, this longing can be observed when considering the aspects of crime that occur within our male youth population and adequately addressing the grievances they cause. Many countries have established justice systems, and while these systems should be restorative, they may present further problems to the societies in which they occur [(Wright, 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?ycJHj3). According to Wright, although we know that justice matters, it is sometimes difficult or impossible to achieve. Biblical justice is characterised by radical generosity, universal equality, life-changing advocacy, and asymmetrical responsibility [(Keller, 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?wTYxI4). God’s justice is both retributive and reparative; he punishes evildoing and restores the victims of injustice. In scripture, God’s restorative justice is much more prominent than his retributive justice, which establishes justice for those wronged and mistreated and meets punishment for those who have perpetrated those wrongs [(Keller, 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?9oIdDY).

Howard Zephr, the founding father of Restorative Justice, developed the concept based on his study of the theology of “shalom”. His concept of restorative justice was an opportunity to bring people to a state of shalom, the ideal condition God originally intended. Restorative justice does not let the offenders be off the hook; it requires them to be accountable for their actions. In the process, they will learn the implications of their offences to the victims and how to make things right. Justice is not served by punishing the offenders but by restoring shalom. Injustice is the absence of shalom [(Effendy, 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?UEC3g6). “Restorative Justice is a process whereby parties with a stake in a specific offence collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future (Tony Marshall, 1999, p. 5) [(Kirkwood, 2022)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?eMDoxc).” Restorative justice involves persons who committed a crime and those who have been affected by the offence. It can also include those indirectly affected by the offence, such as family members of the person who committed it or those harmed by it [(Kirkwood, 2022)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?R88coW).

Ultimately, an effective restorative justice system needs to be implemented to affect change in the lives of these young people who are seduced by a life of crime and delinquency. The Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS) is the governing body responsible for young people ages 10-35. It is strategically placed to be an arm of government that addresses restorative justice and diversionary practices for young people at risk or in conflict with the law. Developing a programme that addresses the needs of young people and simultaneously deters the crime rate is imperative for effective youth development initiatives.

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