

## The Whip in the House: Rituals of Social Control in Parliament and in Society

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### Abstract

This paper will attempt a comparison of the role of the Chief Whip or its equivalent in Caribbean, British and Canadian Parliamentary systems of government with similar offices in the US legislature. This office originated with the need to 'whip in' members of parliament from wherever they might be to save a crucial vote in a divided house. This office has since acquired the connotations of the disciplinarian who whips members into the party line even while managing to keep the party cohesive through persuasion and rewards for loyalty and rarely exercising the option of excluding members who often resign by themselves or even change allegiance although most of the rebels lose at the next election. The paper will explore the role of the whip from country to country and the implications of such differences and analogies for theories of power and social control.

**Keywords:** Whip; Parliament; Deviance; Social control

### Introduction

A search of academic journal articles databases on 'Chief Whips' throws up hits on slavery especially when the search is narrowed down to the Caribbean, with a comma. Such is the powerful connotation of the word whip that it is amazing that British Parliamentarians ever chose it as the title for one of the most powerful officials in the House of Commons and even more surprising that Caribbean, African and Asian parliaments retain this inheritance or imposition uncritically. Other parliaments adopted the whip uncritically from the mother of all parliaments. In the Caribbean as elsewhere, the symbolism of the whip as a disciplinary fetish is part of popular culture and parents as well as children defend its legitimacy as a correctional tool. Even after corporal punishment was abolished, the whip has remained as a symbol of authority in the halls of government in Britain and many other states around the world.

This suggestive term, whip, is what attracted my attention to the topic of dissension, discipline and party cohesion in the parliamentary system of government. As a sociologist with special interest in social control, such issues are relevant to the ideas of law and order politics at the street level and I am interested in finding out the extent to which the law makers themselves are subject to the whip. My goal in this paper is to find out if the methods used by the Chief Whip to attain or attempt cohesion in the face of dissension and discipline and in the face or threat of indiscipline could be borrowed for the construction of theoretical explanations of the problems of deviance and social control in general.

Classical social theory will help to frame the problem of rebellious deviance and social control generally before we examine the specific examples of how different parliaments deal with this problem. For instance, classical criminology with its emphasis on free will and just deserts would suggest that parliamentarians who breach rules of discipline are asking to be punished by their party leadership and that they will get the disciplinary measure that fits the seriousness of their deviation from party solidarity. This is a novel application of the classical school which focuses on criminal behaviour rather than on political dissension by elected parliamentarians.

However, once the classical philosophy is turned back on the law-makers who crafted just desert laws, it is not surprising to find how analogical dissension is to deviance and how relevant the more lenient

and more permissive 'whipping' of law-makers appears when they have to deal with their own members compared to when they have to deal with the poor street criminal. The strange thing is that the punitive measure might be directed at the party leadership by rebel members who might be able to bring down the leadership or the government despite the efforts of the Chief Whip to suppress dissension and rebellion directly and indirectly, thereby challenging the assumption of classicism that it is only the government or the state that exercises a monopoly over corrections in a modern polity.

Conflict theory would suggest that a better way to understand the role of the Chief Whip in dealing with party discipline is to see it as an aspect of class struggle, albeit an internal class struggle among members of the ruling class. It is the emphasis on conflict as an inherent part of the political process by conflict theorists that appears most relevant in any analysis of the role of the Chief Whip in parliamentary social control over members. The conventional idea is that the whip is there to enforce consensus among party members in parliament but the fact that the whip is always there is an indication that dissension is never completely absent as the conflict theorists would insist.

In sharp contrast with the conflict theorists are functionalists who insist that a parliament could be likened to an organ in an organism which fulfils important prerequisites for the survival of the social organism or social system by working in tandem with other organs to maintain homeostasis or equilibrium despite the constant threat of chaos from the socio-economic-political environment. The Chief whip would be seen from this perspective as working to maintain harmony, collective conscience, consensus and cohesion within parliamentary parties, otherwise government business would not be successfully handled by legislators. This makes the role of the Chief Whip close to what [1] is identified as the democratic, participative or liberal leader who relies on the concurrence of the led.

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Contrary to the above macro theories, phenomenological symbolic interactionists would say that what is more important for us is to understand the meanings that members of parliament attach to the significant symbols like the whip which they employ in interaction with others. This perspective suggests that the meaning of the whip should not be taken literally to stand for the whip in everyday discourse without taking into account the meanings attached to the office by the parliamentarians themselves. A different group of adherents to this perspective, ethnomethodologists, argue that meaning is never fully collective or fully shared in interaction but often contested and contentious and so what we should be more interested in are the methods employed by actors to create the contested meanings of social action, in the Weberian sense of inter-subjectively meaningful action.

A brief examination of the role of Chief Whips in parliamentary procedure in specific countries will enable us to say which of these theoretical perspectives comes closest to explaining the enigma of the whip in the house of honorable members. British, Canadian and US examples of the whip in the legislature are better documented than their counterparts in the Caribbean and so more research will have to be done in the Caribbean to complete an in-depth comparative analysis of this curious office in democratic systems of governance. For instance, this paper will not go into why most whips are male with few countries recording women mainly as Deputy Chief Whips. The conclusion will look at the office of the whip more critically and question its punitive connotation with a view to contribute to its decolonization and demystification especially in post-colonial locations like the Caribbean, African and Asian Commonwealth where the tools of the former slave/colonial masters should not be copied or transplanted uncritically.

## The Chief Whip in the British Parliament

The Right Honorable the Viscount Gladstone [2] observed that 'the flock had to be herded in the fullest strength possible'. You would be forgiven if you thought that he was talking about sheep farmers with their shepherds' rods of correction that are rarely used in anger against a sacrificial lamb which would end up on the dinner table sooner or later. The term was said to have been first used by Edmund Burke who borrowed the term from fox hunting where whippers-in were assigned the role of whipping straying hounds into the line of the hunt. Burke alleged that this was exactly what government ministers were doing when they brought their colleagues together for a particular debate [3]. It is surprising that elected parliamentarians are being referred to here as a flock to be herded or that a term used to refer to the whipping of hunting hounds would become acceptable as a reference to the social control of 'honorable' members of parliament. You would have thought that they were among the political leaders in their countries but of course there is always 'The Leader' of their party to whom they are expected to offer support on crucial issues even though liberal democracy assumes the right to dissent as a fundamental right. Yet to call members of parliament a flock might be going too far given the history of defeats for the government on sensitive votes where members vote according to their conscience or under pressure from constituents. For instance, Jackson [4] documents Labour Party revolts between 1945 and 1950 on Domestic issues (8 revolts) and Foreign Affairs and Defense (31 revolts). The Conservative Party government of 1951-1955 suffered fewer rebellions – four on Domestic and two on Foreign Affairs. While in opposition, Labour Party rebellions for the same period were almost exclusively in Foreign Affairs (14 rebellions) with only one in Domestic Affairs.

What is crucial here is not the number of rebellions or even the issues

involved but the fact that the governing party did not always punish the rebels especially if they were representing popular sentiments such as increased welfare for pensioners or the abolition of corporal and capital punishments, or over colonial issues such as the Irish question, or the extradition of Chief Anthony Enahoro back to Nigeria to be tried for treason, the Suez Canal or the independence of Sudan. When punishment was given to rebellious members of parliament, it did not affect all those who rebelled against the government on a specific issue.

What is surprising is that the severest form of punishment for rebel members of parliament is referred to as the withdrawal of the whip from the concerned members, a metaphor for their expulsion from the party, whereas the application of the whip to members is a symbol of approval. As Nigel Nicolson put it, 'The Whip's function is not to stifle genuine dissent, but to canalize it as far as possible along channels hidden from the public [4]. For that reason, the severe penalty of withdrawing the whip is rarely used because of the negative publicity for the party and the fact that the local party might still support the member of parliament during the next election, although such victory by party rebels is rare.

Gladstone explains the origin of The Whip as follows:

Doubtful members had to be persuaded and absentees brought in. This required some organization and led to the appointment of "whippers-in," who, on official occasions, acted as tellers. Gradually the House of Commons became divided into the two great parties – Liberal and Conservative. When the government majority was small, organization and discipline became increasingly important. So a chief "whipper-in" was appointed by the party leader, with assistants. The opposition made similar appointments [2].

Gladstone went on to describe The Chief Whip as the right hand man of the party leader in party administration and is expected to know everything about all important members of the party and to have an insight into the activities of the opposing party, provided that his fellow party members have confidence in him. Stated as such, the office started with a modest intention of serving the party by helping to rally members for crucial votes with resources to find them when they are absent and resources to 'persuade' them to toe the party line on some issues. For those absent, it served almost as a chauffeur service to work or a clerical reminder of the importance of being present for a special vote in the parliament. In the early Victorian period, the 'in-session notes' that were later dubbed whips frequently looked like this (Jenkins, 2000: 264) [5]:

### Most important and certain division

Your attendance is most earnestly and most particularly requested in the House of Commons this day Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 1840 on Sir John Buller's Motion for a Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government.

Copies of such notes are probably sent by e-mail in these days of e-governance. The powers of persuasion in the form of carrots and sticks available for the control of parliamentarians by whips would make an interesting international comparison. In the case of the British Parliament, Gladstone writes about the powers of the whip thus:

It was his duty to scent dissatisfaction, the formation of disloyal cliques, and, in short, any danger to the party arising from dislike of particular measures, personal jealousies and ambitions, irritations caused by personal inefficiencies of ministers, and all possible causes of mischief arising from complexities of human nature. In the formation of the government he was the adviser of the man (or woman) chosen to

be prime minister. The Chief Whip might be in a position to warn his leader that the appointment of a particular man, or a particular man in a particular post, would be risky, dangerous, inadvisable [2].

Today, it could be argued that the job of such an official is made a lot easier by a vocal press through investigative journalists who expose the minutest affairs of members of parliament. Many times, the journalists are the first to sense disloyalty or dissatisfaction while party leaders frequently deny any such divisions in their party until the crack becomes a gulf that could no longer be ignored or denied. What is puzzling is that if the representatives of the people undergo such micro management in the exercise of their votes, how democratic is the parliamentary process?

Max Weber [6] observed how bureaucratic organization excels in efficient administration and perhaps the appointment of the Chief Whip is part of what Weber called the rationalization of authority which Weber saw as capable of producing the unintended consequence of an iron cage due to its inflexibility and impersonality. However, Weber himself used the examples of English Common law to illustrate what he called irrational administration of law – based on tradition or precedence. Weber dismissed it as denying justice to the poor due to its methodology of empirical justice rather than rationalism. The way that the office of the whipper emerged through customary practice in parliament before the formal appointment as a Chief Whip is an indication that it is influenced by the common law tradition of following precedence. And the way the powers of the Chief Whip are loosely defined and all embracing, breaching the walls of executive, legislative and judicial separation of powers is an indication that it was not based on the principles of the rational ideal bureaucracy, as Weber defined it.

Perhaps what the office of the Chief Whip offers is a service to an oligarchy rather than to a democracy as [7] implied with the idea of the iron law of oligarchy in modern political parties and organizations. Weber would talk about leadership almost as if there is a supreme leader in a bureaucracy that makes people to do things even against their will but The Chief Whip is a demonstration that even the leader might be under the influence of some subordinate officials in such a way that it might be impossible to clearly identify which influence is the influence of The Leader. 'In short', said Gladstone, 'the Chief Whip held the position of general manager of the party. But he was responsible to his chief, and not to the cabinet or (in Opposition) to any conclave of ex-cabinet ministers or other leading men.'

The rise of the power of the Chief Whip was traced by Gladstone to the crystallization of the organization of the 'two great parties' in the House of Commons. In those days, candidates were selected after private consultations and the candidates were expected to fund their own elections personally or through family and friends. The electors, who were propertied men, were glad to be presented with candidates that they would find attractive without personal costs to themselves. There was corruption in the sense that funding provided was secret and the person who collected the 'bags of money' from no one and distributed them to no one was known as the mythical 'man in the moon'. Members of the Whig and Tory parties saw donations to their party as personal investments from which they expected to gain when their party gains power. However, many gave also out of loyalty to a particular party and its principles [2]. It is within this era of what Weber would call traditional forms of authority that the office of the Chief Whip evolved to also serve as the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury. According to Gladstone, the 'Patronage Secretary administered a secret service fund of 10,000 pounds a year until its abolition in 1886.'

The responsibilities of the Chief Whip started at a modest level when members regarded themselves as belonging to a proud House of Gentlemen who observed the courtesies that were common in their wider society. Any divisions in the House were fixed to the convenience of all and no one thought of tricks to defeat or obstruct the government, legislative business was light compared to later days, they sat for reasonable hours and rose on August 12 in time for the hunting season without any need to return for an Autumn session. All these changed following the Franchise Act of 1867 which gave 1,312,000 men the right to vote in the boroughs and brought in a new class of men in the first sweep of democratization of the parliament. The election of 1880 gave Mr Gladstone a slight majority and he entered into an alliance with the Radicals in the Whig Party who secured 40 seats and retained their own Chief Whip. Given the divisions within the ruling party, the role of the Party Chief Whip in parliament became a lot more important.

According to Gladstone, the role of the Chief Whip became more important during the Irish agitation for independence. Established procedures had to be drastically altered to 'foil Irish tactics and organized obstruction'. This role was important because the democratization process had swept away the gentlemanly agreements of the past. Rather, 'If a snap division was awkward for the government, it was taken.' The government had to keep loyal members constantly on duty and the Chief Whip briefed the Prime Minister every morning after breakfast on his plans for getting government business through in the House:

- The onus fell principally on him. He had to be ceaselessly vigilant and always in his place. He had to organize his secret intelligence department to get warning of all hostile moves and combinations. In all matters of tactics, the government depended mainly on the information and advice of the Chief Whip.

Gladstone was himself appointed as the Chief Whip of the opposition Liberal Party in 1899 and he recounts how important the relationship between the government and the opposition party in getting business done. The government whip consults the opposition whip daily and informs him of the order of business while soliciting the views of opposition members. To show what a good relationship he had with the governing conservative whip, he reported that the first present he got when he married in 1901 was an engraved cigarette box from the government chief whip. Being the opposition whip gave him more time to organize for a liberal majority by building local support around good candidates that he had to find and fund in more than 500 constituencies. He also sat in on all meetings of the Shadow Cabinet and served as a consultant to the party leader. He did not indicate when whips were first appointed for the House of Lords.

## The Whip in Canada

The Canadian system of government borrowed the office of the Chief Whip from Britain and named the office, Government Chief Whip. There are also opposition Chief Whips as in Britain and they provide essentially the same functions as in Britain. However, the Canadian Chief Whips appear less powerful than the British counterparts because of the fact that the Chief Whip in British government is also a member of the Treasury Department. Furthermore, the predominance of the two-party system in Britain means that rallying the votes is more important than in Canada with more possibilities of minority governments where alliances could hold a party in office but without a single whip who is able to command the loyalties of all the parties in the alliance. Hence the Canadians evolved the office of the House Leaders to fill the gaps in administrative leadership especially when the Prime Minister was

frequently away during World War II but communication with party members in parliament continued to be through the whips [8].

Canada has also recorded more women in the position of the Government Whip or Opposition Whip in parliament than in Britain where a rare notice of a woman in a similar position was the female whip in the House of Lords where whipping would be less useful due to the fact that members are there for life and so could not really be intimidated by a whip on any issue before the House of Lords. Emma Crewe [9] found in her ethnography of the Lords that politeness and good debating skills were prized so much that eccentricities were forgiven under the unwritten rules of the upper chambers that scholars have relatively neglected in their research.

This paper will not speculate on the reason why whips are predominantly male in governments and in oppositions around the world where such offices are recognized. Suffice it to say that parliaments are still dominated by men around the world, forcing Mary Honeyball, Labour Member of the European Parliament to opine in the *Financial Times of London* (Feb 20, 2008, p.8) that 'The Tories will shed their 'nasty' tag when they get some degree of gender balance in their elected representatives'. This unusual advice from a rival party raises more questions than answers and Tremblay [10] attempted to pose one such question by asking if women MPs in Canada substantively represent women. The answer was in the affirmative that although women's issues tend to be marginal, female members of parliament tend to be more involved in supporting such issues but not without the support of male MPs. The reasons why there are fewer women in parliament despite policies on gender equity include the following with clues on how to correct the imbalance and empower more female public officials:

- 1) Women continue to hold a disproportionate share of household and family responsibilities and, on average, have lower incomes (and hence less financial independence) than men. In addition, they may have been socialized to view politics as an unsuitable or undesirable vocation. These challenges are even greater for certain groups of women, such as Aboriginal and visible minority women.

- 2) Women also continue to be under-represented in the upper echelons of areas such as law, academia and the business world. They thus have fewer opportunities to develop the high-profile professional reputations that are sought by political parties, and to obtain easy access to the necessary networks and financing to secure nominations.

- 3) Traditional ways of working in political parties and other political institutions may discourage women from seeking political office through discriminatory attitudes and practices, and lack of attention to mechanisms that could support a balance between family and work responsibilities. It has also been suggested that women may be reluctant to run for parliament because of the adversarial and combative nature of the work [11].

Nearly one hundred years ago, Ogg [12] reminded us of the recent history of the admission of women into parliament by commenting on debates on the British *Representation of the People Act* of 1918 which made women eligible for election as parliamentarians which was amended to allowed women to enter many professions that they were previously forbidden from joining. He noted that one contributor to the debate had declared that the House of Commons was 'not a fit place for any respectable women to sit in' but the bill passed by 274 to 25 votes. Being more recent entrants into a work environment that was structured with men in mind, including unsocial working hours, it is not surprising that fewer women are in parliament compared to men

and given that in almost every profession, the top hierarchy remains made up of men, it is not surprising that women rarely get appointed as Whips. These are issues that deserve a paper or a book to fully tackle them and so this paper will not dwell on them.

## The Whip in the Caribbean

There is a need for more research in the Caribbean on the role of the Chief Whip in government and in opposition. The information available is mostly from newspaper reports on controversies concerning the selection or appointment of the whip or the resignation of the whip as was recently the case in Trinidad and Tobago when the Opposition Chief Whip resigned following a dispute with the Leader of the Opposition and even though he still enjoyed the support of the political leader of the Opposition Party at that time. The Speaker of the parliament told journalists that only the leader of the opposition party and not the leader of opposition in parliament had the power to appoint the opposition Chief Whip. The Leader of the Opposition disagreed with this and suggested that the opposition might end up with two Chief whips if the Leader of the Opposition appoints one and the Leader of the Opposition Party appoints another. In its editorial of 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2006, *The Trinidad Guardian* opined that the leader of the opposition was wrong because there could only be one opposition Chief Whip. It could be the case that given the small sizes of the parliaments of Caribbean countries, they do not have as many deputy whips and regional whips as the British parliament and the US congress have and so the office of the Chief Whip becomes more attractive to ambitious politicians. Discussions with colleagues inform me that the Chief whip is a very powerful figure in the Caribbean perhaps because of the small sizes of the parliaments, making it easy for a single whip to know the parliamentary party members intimately enough and to punish them severely or reward them with appointments depending on how loyal they appear to the party leaders.

Again, I call for more research on the powers and roles of the Chief Whips in the Caribbean to see if the roles are similar or strikingly different compared to the UK and other countries' equivalent. For instance, the frequency with which parliamentarians switch allegiance from party to party and the longevity of carpet crossers in successive parliaments could be used to measure the frequency of extreme rebellion by parliamentary party members. The Trinidad and Tobago example of a rift between the opposition Chief Whip and the Opposition Leader is rare and the resignation of the Chief Whip along with the Party Leader and some back-benchers to form a new party in Parliament is even rarer in politics and needs to be studied more closely for lessons in political sociology. Without reference to the Chief Whip, Gahny [13] notes that only the Constitution of the Dominica prohibits a member of parliament from becoming a Leader of the Opposition after being elected as a member of the governing party but he could continue to be Member of Parliament after changing allegiance.

## Party Whips in the US

The system of government in the US is the presidential system but the attractiveness of the office of the whip has seen similar offices being appointed by the two main parties in the US both in the Senate and in the House of Representatives [3,14]. Reports indicate that although the US follows many of the traditions of the British parliament, they did not have the party whip from 1789 until 1913. This was due to the fact that political parties in America were relatively unorganized in those days with little differentiation and specialization in party leadership functions. There was the assumption that American senators did not need a whip to help them to form their own judgments. The first such

appointment was that of J. Hamilton Lewis of Illinois as the Democratic Party whip in the senate to help save a slight majority from being lost during the first Wilson administration. The Republicans followed suit in 1915 when they appointed Senator James Wadsworth as the first party whip. Very much like the British example which Weber dismissed for not being bureaucratic enough, 'Like other party leadership positions, that of party whip is not provided for in the standing rules of the Senate though beginning in 1955 the Legislative Branch Appropriation bill contained funds for two clerical assistants, one for the majority whip and one for the minority whip [3]. One important difference in the structure of the office of the whip in Britain and America is the fact that American whips do not serve as members of the executive cabinet in any guise because they assist the majority and minority leaders on the floors of the House rather than the President or the British Prime Minister as their British counterparts would. Another difference is that much of the work of the whips in America is done by policy committees of both parties and they maintain an 'institutionalized communications center' that provides the whips with at least some of the information they need. In addition, the American law-makers raise most of their campaign funds by themselves and so they do not rely on the Chief Whip to act as the paymaster the way their British counterparts do [3]. Perhaps not fond of the connotations of the whip or simply following the legendary pragmatism of Americans, the Republicans changed the title of the whip to that of 'Assistant Floor Leader' and the Democrats followed suit but both parties continued to appoint assistant whips and regional whips. There is evidence that the office of the whip is not as powerful in America as it is in the British or Caribbean parliaments. This may be due to the fact that the whip only assists the majority or minority leaders in Congress rather than being cabinet ministers or being assistants to the head of government. Lacking the office of Leader of the opposition, the US whips in the minority party also lack the powers of the opposition Chief Whips in parliamentary systems. A comment on Oprah Winfrey's web page illustrates how Americans think of this office – as the 'mean girl' who tells everybody that they had to dress in pink on a particular day and expects everyone to go along with that.

## Conclusions

The evidence indicates that the office of the Chief Whip is a popular one across different systems of government but more so in parliamentary systems of the Westminster variety. The questions this raises for us are three-fold:

1. Can any of the theoretical perspectives outlined in the introduction of this paper account for the popularity of the whip,
2. Can the symbolism of the whip be extended to ordinary social control tasks that affect citizens outside parliament? And
3. Does the office of the whip itself require a dose of democratization and decolonization?

To answer the theoretical question, I believe that every classical social thought has something to contribute to a discourse of the whip but conflict theory comes closest to explaining the popularity of the whip in parliament with the support of the popular imagination concerning the necessity for the whip hand. Contrary to the assumptions of functionalists and symbolic integrationists [15] parliaments are not characterized mainly by consensus but by conflict over almost every issue but these other perspectives do have a point that Parliament could not work without a large degree of consensus on major issues and procedures. With rebellion, conflict and divisions and real chances of

defeats for the government and the opposition alike, the whip is much more than a symbol of unity among members of the ruling class who have vested interests that make compromises easy to come by, the whip is more like the symbol of social control with the aim of maintaining unity in the face of divisiveness among the ruling groups themselves. As Karl Marx put this in his comparison of France and England:

What difference, then, does still remain between a British Parliament and a French *Corps legislatif*? In France, it is, at least, the presumed heir of a national hero who dares to place himself in the place of the nation, and who at the same time openly confronts all the dangers of such usurpation. But, in England, it is some subaltern spokesman, some worn-out place-hunter, some anonymous nonentity of a so-called Cabinet, that, relying on the donkey power of the Parliamentary mind and the bewildering evaporations of an anonymous press, without making any noise, without incurring any danger, quietly creep their way to irresponsible power. Take on the one hand the commotions raised by a Sulla; take on the other the fraudulent business-like manoeuvres of the manager of a joint stock bank, the secretary of a benevolent society, or the clerk of a vestry, and you will understand the difference between imperialist usurpation in France and ministerial usurpation in England! [16].

If conflict is pervasive in parliament as it is in the wider society, then, should the wider society benefit from the kid's glove with which whips treat indiscipline and rebellion in the house where issues of 'national interest' are debated and decided? For instance, the most severe punishment in parliament was the infrequent withdrawal of the whip from a member, signifying that the member had been expelled from his or her party. Yet the member continues to sit in parliament at least until the next election. This model of punishment without a prison sentence or a death penalty, without corporal punishment or a fine, without community service orders or the fear of arrest and trial could produce better social control than the punitive methods that are reserved for the poor in the criminal justice system. What if children are punished in the family by withdrawing the whip from them instead of whipping them, what if non-violent offenders are never sent to prison but are allowed to remain in the community, what if victimless offences are decriminalized and managed as social health problems rather than as a military threat, what if international disputes are resolved by at most withdrawing the whip from offending nations?

The counter argument is that street crimes are more violent than the rebellions of parliamentarians and so they should be treated with more severe punishment than the indiscipline of parliamentarians especially when such indiscipline is in the form of not supporting your party when the party appears to be going against public interest. However, non-violent offences could benefit from the whip model of social control by using dialogue, persuasion and positive reinforcement to produce more desirable conduct among the citizens rather than relying on the prison industrial complex.

The third question raised above refers to a sober reflection on the symbolism of the whip for people in the Caribbean and Africa who have had a most painful experience in their history at the receiving end of the whip as Bob Marley and the Wailers remind us in *Catch a Fire*. Britain as an old slave trading and colonial power could afford to retain the terminology and symbolism of the whip which Burke allegedly applied from the brutal sport of fox hunting but it was really a metaphor for the African holocaust at its height when this title was adopted. The image of the hunter's dog is really the image of a chattel slave and like the slave, the dog catches the game after a sweaty chase but the dog will only be lucky to get the bones of the catch after the master ate the best

morsels. As Trinidad and Tobago rewrites its constitution, for instance, should they retain the image of the plantation overseer with his cat-o-nine or should they look for African, Asian and Native American ways of describing the role of the person called the whip?

What Africans gave to the world is the philosophy of non-violence that Gandhi learned during his fourteen year long sojourn in South Africa. He wrote in his autobiography that although he was a trained lawyer, he still believed that colonialism was a civilizing mission that was good for the colonized. So when the Zulus embarked on an uprising against British rule, he volunteered to help the British put down the uprising and was commissioned a Sergeant Major in charge of the nursing unit that treated the wounded Africans. It was during his treatment of the Africans that he struck up conversation, asking them why they sat there taking the beating without fighting back like men. They told him that they were fighting back all right, that they were fighting back non-violently by refusing to pay taxes to a government that did not represent them. Gandhi learned this lesson and later took it to India to aid the struggle for independence. Martin Luther King Jr. applied the same principles to the struggle for Civil Rights in America and from Kwame Nkrumah to Nelson Mandela, this method of nonviolent struggle is the favored method of African anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles despite the armed struggles at some point and in some parts of the struggle.

This philosophy of non-violence is currently being developed in criminology in the guise of criminology as peacemaking. This perspective would frown at the use of the whip even at a symbolic level and rather prefer dialogue as a way to make peace rather than wage war. For instance, instead of calling the office that of the Chief Whip, what if the office is called Party General Manager as Gladstone defined its essence? Probably nothing would change if it is only a change of words but if this is pursued by deliberately deepening democracy in parliament and in the general society by treasuring transgression and rebellion as parts of healthy societies, the way Durkheim [17] saw it. In *Black Women and the Criminal Justice System* [18] the campaign by Patrice Lumumba against the use of the whip or corporal punishment in Congo by Belgian officials was analyzed. The painting that prompted that analysis, 'Colonie Belge', later formed the cover of *Counter-Colonial Criminology* [19] in a way that suggests that parliaments which retain the office of the whip are operating under the logic of imperialist reason and therefore needs a dose of decolonization. Tony Benn [20] would go so far as to state that Britain is its own last colony in need of a national liberation movement. There is no evidence that law makers are better behaved in parliaments that have the whip compared to parliaments that have no whips and so dropping the whip with all the connotations of sado-masochistic rituals of domination would be contributing to the project of decolonization that needs to be continued non-violently in post-colonial conditions.

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