Ethnicity and crime



Name

Specification Content:

What you need to know for **Crime and Deviance**  in your Paper 3 exam.

* crime, deviance, social order and social control
* the social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, gender and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime
* globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes
* crime control, surveillance, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Questions may be based specifically on the following areas:** | | Do I have completed Notes? | Have I made revision Notes? | Have I memorised this info? | Have I practised exam style questions? |
| What the exam board want you to know | The social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, including recent patterns and trends and different explanations for these, eg ethnicity and criminality, racism and the criminal justice system and victimisation. |  |  |  |  |
| Sociologists you must know | * Patel and Tyrer * Williams and Clarke. * Bowling and Phillips * Gilroy * Hall. |  |  |  |  |

Exam Structure:

|  |
| --- |
| **These topics will appear in paper 3 of the A’Level.** 2 hour written exam 80 marks in total (50 for this bit)   * 33.3% of A-level   Crime and Deviance: short answer and extended writing, 50 marks (4 marks, 6 marks, 10 marks, 30 marks) |

**Case studies to be aware of**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Stephen Lawrence** |
| 1. **Macpherson enquiry** |
| 1. **Jean Charles de Menezes** |
| 1. **Mark Duggan and London riots** |

**Social distribution of crime by ethnicity, including recent patterns and trends and different explanations for these.**

**Section 1**

**Patterns and Trends:**

In 2008, the Ministry of Justice reported that, compared to white people:

* Afro Caribbeans were:
  + more likely to be arrested for robbery;
  + three times more likely to be cautioned by the police;
  + three and a half times more likely to be arrested; if arrested, more likely to be charged and face court proceedings than to receive a caution;
  + more likely, if found guilty, to receive a custodial (prison) sentence;
  + five times more likely to be in prison.
* Asians were:
  + twice as likely to be stopped and searched (mainly for drugs);
  + more likely to be charged and face court proceedings than to receive a caution;
  + more likely to receive a custodial sentence if found guilty;
  + more likely to be arrested for fraud and forgery.
* In 2007, 26 per cent of male prisoners and 29 per cent of females were from black and minority ethnic groups (they make up about 9 per cent of the general population).

These patterns, shown in contemporary official statistics, reflect a pattern that first emerged in the 1970s, suggesting what appear to be higher levels of criminality among some minority ethnic groups, particularly the black population.

A green bar graph with text

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

A graph of a number of people

Description automatically generated

A graph of a person and person

Description automatically generated

 What do you notice and how might you explain this?

**Possible explanations for statistics above**

Higher crime rates might reflect that compared to white people, minority ethnic groups tend to have higher proportions of young people, those suffering **social deprivation**and those living in **deprived urban communities**, rather than greater **criminality arising from ethnicity**itself.

**Explanation 1 A Neo- Marxist explanation Black crime as resistance**

These explanations claim that black crime especially in the 70s was a form of political action, representing a culture of resistance to inequality and oppressors due to police racism. They also claim that black crime is exaggerated by the ruling class to deflect from other problems in society. So in two ways the state were causing the high crime figures for black crime.

Using the Brown book p 482 can you copy the mind map summarising this view from figure 6.7

**Policing The Crisis (Hall et al, 1978) –**Hall examined the moral panic over “mugging” in the early 1970s, using **Marxist** insights. **Selective and stereotypical reporting**represented young black men as potential muggers and given the role of folk devils. In fact, mugging (not an official category of crime in any case) was not increasing dramatically.  Hall explained the moral panic in terms of a crisis of British capitalism: the state deflected attention on to a small group who could be **scapegoated** and on whom the state could be portrayed as cracking down firmly, using new repressive policing which would be useful in tackling future unrest. Young blacks were suitable for this role because of their visibility and powerlessness in the sense of lacking organizations or representatives to speak on their behalf. This reasserted the dominance of ruling-class ideas and re-established ruling class hegemony in general society as the public shared their concerns over black criminality.

**The political nature of black crime (Gilroy) –**Gilroy, a **Neo-Marxist**, agrees that young blacks are targeted by the media and the police, but argues that black crime is different in that it is a conscious continuation of anti-colonial struggles in the West Indies, just in a new context. It is therefore black crime is political and potentially revolutionary, a political response to inequality and discrimination.  
Rastafarianism, for example, is not just a religion; it contains a set of revolutionary political ideas about overthrowing white authority (“Babylon”), and tends to bring its followers into confrontation with the police over, for example, marijuana use.

How helpful are neo-Marxist explanations?

**Explanation two – Left Realism – black crime is generally higher but there are specific reasons for this.**

**Lea and Young (1984):**High levels of crime really do exist in inner city areas where there are often high numbers of members of ethnic minorities, and draw attention to the fact that those who live here are the main victims of crime as well.  Their explanation of crime is based on the concepts of:

* ***Relative Deprivation.***
  + Minorities suffer relative deprivation not only in areas shared with sections of the white working class (high unemployment and poor environment), but also racial discrimination and racially motivated attacks.
* ***Marginalization***
  + Young unemployed blacks are marginalized in that they are unorganized and have few pressure groups to lobby on their behalf, so their frustrations are more likely to be expressed in illegal activity.
* **Subculture**.
  + Subcultural responses include the **hustling** subculture described by **Pryce** in his ethnographic study of St Paul’s in Bristol, with young blacks involved in petty street crime, drug dealing and prostitution, getting by from day to day.

**The British Asian experience**

**Bowling and Phillips** agree that higher levelsof robbery by black people could be linked to poverty and social exclusion, which black communities are more likely to suffer from. BUT poverty and social exclusion affect Asians as well, especially Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who are among the poorest groups in British Society. Explanations for the low levels of Asian criminality have looked at the **strong religious and family ties**within the Asian culture which help them to cope with the disadvantages and discrimination they might face. So desire to commit crime and opportunities are reduced.

**Explanation 3 – Police racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system: Institutional Racism**

The over-representation of Afro-Caribbeans in crime statistics is a **social construct**, created as a result of **discrimination** towards blacks and Asians by the police and other criminal justice agencies. ***There is considerable evidence of racist views held by police officers.***

Black and Asian offenders are more likely to be:

* charged rather than cautioned,
* remanded rather than bailed,
* given prison sentences rather than probation/community punishment.

This suggests that they are treated unfairly by the criminal justice system.

Labelling stereotyping and racism in the CJS

Are official crime statistics socially constructed?

Link to earlier in the course?

Labelling theorists and Marxists would both agree that law enforcement is likely to be selective. **Reiner (2000): Canteen culture** amongst the police, including: suspicion, macho values and racism, which encourages racist stereotypes and a mistrust of those from non white backgrounds.

***MacPherson Report and ‘institutional racism’.***

After the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, the Macpherson Inquiry claimed that the police are characterised by ‘Institutionalised Racism’. This is racism that is not necessarily intentional but that the day-to-day activities of the organisation are based upon racist ideas and practices i.e. Racism is ingrained in the system.

‘The Police operate by procedures, practices and a culture that tends to exclude or to disadvantage non-white people’

**Bowling and Phillips (2002):** Higher levels of robbery among black people could be the product of labelling that arises from the use of regular stop and search procedures, which in turn leads to the self fulfilling prophecy.

They see racism in the police in two ways

* + 1. Indirect discrimination – ethnic minorities may mistrust the police and are less likely to co-operate that white offenders and less likely to admit offences during interview or before trial. This means they are ineligible for reduced sentences. The also suffer from a worse social position as do not display the social characteristics which make them likely to be granted bail as they are thought more likely to abscond. This may be due to poor housing or lack of community.
    2. Direct discrimination
* stop and search – Black and Asian people may fit stereotypes where they are more likely to be stopped and searched. This can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy and resentment of the police.
* Institutional racism
* Arrests without evidence
* Discrimination in sentencing.
* Over representation in prison. Phillips and Bowling show that black and Asian prisoners face a more brutal regime in prison than white prisoners. Violence and discrimination, disproportionate disciplinary action and stereotyping.

On the basis of self-report studies, **Graham** and **Bowling** (1995) concluded that people from certain ethnic backgrounds like Black (43%) and White (44%) had similar crime rates, whereas others like Asians had comparatively lower crime rates - Indians (30%), Pakistanis (28%), and Bangladeshis (13%).

**Sharp and Budd (2005):** Black offenders were most likely to have contact with the criminal justice system in their lifetime and were more likely to have been arrested, been to court and convicted. This is despite their lower levels of offending compared to white people generally and white youths in particular.

New studies added to the syllabus

Patel and Tyrer ‘Race, Crime and Resistance’

Look at the situation since the Macpherson report. They as how is crime racialised post Macpherson report? This reported problems of institutional racism and made recommendations. There are now systems for reporting, monitoring and combating institutionalised racism. However they focus on racial profiling.

They say race is still problematic and see race as social constructed.

For example the media paint a picture of black gangs, strict Asian parents who encourage forced marriage. The moral panic described by Gilroy leaves the idea that minority ethnic groups are ‘innately criminal’ a discourse of ‘racist commonsense is promoted’.

What is meant by this? Is there a place for this and what could be the problems?

Racial profiling by the police

*Terrorists are likely to be linked to sectors of the community that because of their racial, ethnic or geographical origins , are readily identifiable* (Lord Hope speaking to the House of Commons)

*We would not waste time searching old white ladies. It is going to be disproportionate. It is going to be young men, not exclusively, but it may be disproportionate when it comes to ethnic groups.* (British Transport Police 2005)

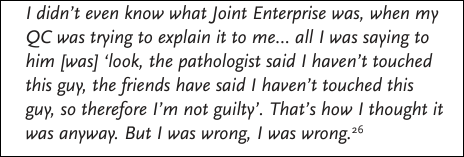
They talk about the fluidity of race and how mistakes can be made through profiling.

Jean Charles de Menezes was misidentified. Mistaken for a terrorist. Shows how race is constructed through and encounter.

Macpherson report has highlighted racism BUT it has not altered the nature of British society itself. Resistance among black and minority ethnic groups show that racism persists. Managerial reform is not going to solve racism. We need to move from anti-racism to anti-racisms taking into account the fluidity of race.

Williams and Clarke ‘Dangerous associations: Joint enterprise, gangs and racism

This report considers how Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are criminalised by ‘joint enterprise’. Joint enterprise is a doctrine of law which has been developed by the courts in cases where one person is to be prosecuted for the same offence. This applies even when suspects may have played different roles and a suspect was not near to where the crime was committed.



A letter to a police officer

Description automatically generated

A close-up of a document

Description automatically generated

A close-up of a newspaper

Description automatically generated

When prisoners are assumed to be in gangs, there is an element of racial profiling involved. The gang label is disproportionately connected to BAME people. Many defendants when interviewed disagreed with the use of the term ‘gang’ in court. This means that the JE doctrine is used more for BAME prisoners / defendant than for white ones. BAME individuals are far more likely to be on gang data bases which is racial profiling.

Victims

P 543 of Brown

Summarise the passage about ethnicity and victimisation

The risk of being a victim is higher for minority ethnic groups

Minority / Global majority ethnic groups make up 23% of homicides

With the exception of racist incidents we might explain this by material deprivation / relative deprivation – might mean you are a soft target or you may live in a worse area where crime is higher.

More young people in global majority groups.

Forced marriage & honour crimes are exclusively linked to minority ethnic groups.

Bringing it all together – some evaluation

The links between ethnicity and offending are very complex. It is difficult to discover whether differences between ethnic groups are a result of ethnic identity, age, social class or areas where they live. Ethnic groups have more young people. More people living in social deprived areas, more living in urban communities and suffering from social and economic deprivation. However self-reported studies would suggest that higher rate of crimes may be exaggerated created by racial stereotyping, labelling and discrimination.

Eye on the exam Close-up of a person's eye

Description automatically generated

Possible questions

4 mark

6 mark



30 mark

A screenshot of a question

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a white text

Description automatically generated