like they would a business career. They are constantly on the lookout for new business opportunities, and often mix legitimate and illegitimate enterprises.

Just as Fordist mass production has given way to post-Fordist flexible production in the formal economy, similar changes have taken place in organised crime. The large criminal organisations of the 1960s (such as those of the Krays and the Richardson brothers in London) have largely disappeared.

As part of their study, Hobbs and Dunningham carried out research in a depressed post-industrial town, which they called Downtown. They found no evidence that there was any large criminal organisation in the area. Instead, individuals with extensive criminal contacts acted as 'hubs', connecting the diverse activities of different loose groupings of criminals.

Nevertheless, Hobbs and Dunningham see criminal activities as being firmly rooted in local contexts. Criminal entrepreneurs develop their careers, at least initially, in local areas. They rely very much on networks of contacts to find opportunities to make money. Eventually, some become involved in wider networks – for example, those involving drug smuggling. They may even emigrate, but generally they retain strong local links.

Thus, Hobbs and Dunningham do not believe that organised crime is increasingly dominated by large multinational or even global criminal organisations (such as the Mafia). Instead, it works as a **glocal** system. That is, there are some global connections involved, but it remains locally based.

Hobbs and Dunningham particularly studied criminals with contacts in Downtown, the run-down area in which their study was based. They illustrate their claims with a number of case studies.

Case studies of 'glocal' crime networks

> **Bill and Ben started their careers separately as burglars. They ended up in prison together, and on their release started working together, stealing from building sites. They quickly progressed to stealing plant machinery from sites and developed a close relationship with building workers and contractors in the local area, to whom they sold most of the stuff they had stolen. This proved profitable and, after about five years, Ben diversified into property development, arranging fraudulent mortgage deals, and the importation of cannabis. However, disputes with business partners led to the collapse of the cannabis business and, faced with financial problems, Ben had to go back to being a small-time crook.**
>
> **Bill was more successful. He bought a share in a pub which proved very profitable. He made a lot of money stealing from lorry compounds. He would drive a lorry equipped with false number-plates into a secure compound and pay for the night's stay. He would then leave, but a number of associates would hide in the lorry. When the security guards had gone, they would proceed to break into other lorries and move goods from them into their own lorry. Bill would return at opening time and drive away with the now lucratively laden vehicle.**
>
> **Bill also built up contacts with local businesses and criminals through his pub and started supplying imported amphetamines. He also got involved in selling stolen designer clothes and CDs.**

> **Dave Peters was one of the most successful criminals studied by Hobbs and Dunningham. He started his career by collaborating with various criminal organisations that imported cannabis. He soon progressed to running a team of burglars and became involved in managing a chain of pubs. He made so much money that he moved to the Costa del Sol from where he ran a shipping business. Among other activities, the shipping business supplied Dave Peters's growing chain of clubs, which he bought throughout Europe. Despite these international connections, he also kept a warehouse near Downtown, which acted as a centre for the disposal of stolen goods.**
>
> **Ned was another successful criminal. To those who did not know him better, he was a successful local businessman who drove a Mercedes, lived in an expensive house, and spent much of his time at a local leisure club. However, Ned had made much of his money by fixing greyhound races, dealing in cannabis through a local network, and disposing of stolen goods. He was given a nine-month prison sentence when the police found him in possession of stolen whisky. After that, he changed to a career as a plumber and was able to secure large contracts by using bribes.**
>
> **Ned became involved with a gang who carried out armed robberies, but he feared another prison term and took to acting as a police informer as insurance against further convictions. His legitimate business interests flourished, but he continued to have occasional involvement in activities such as drug importation, disposing of stolen goods, and selling counterfeit currency.**

Conclusion

Hobbs and Dunningham believe their study shows how legal and illegal businesses become intermeshed in local entrepreneurial networks. While they tie into broader networks, local contacts and knowledge remain crucial to these criminals. Local dimensions of crime are therefore just as important as global dimensions.

The criminals described in the case studies are in many ways exemplary entrepreneurs. They are very flexible and are constantly looking for profitable openings in various markets. They are products of a 1980s and 1990s enterprise culture, which has opened up illegitimate opportunities in some of the areas where legal paths to success have become severely restricted. (See also Simon Winlow's study *Badfellas*, discussed on pp. 409–11, which reaches similar conclusions.)

'Race', ethnicity and crime

The issue of 'race' and crime

Hazel Croall (1998) argues that an interest in 'race', ethnicity and crime dates back to the 19th century, when 'the Irish were portrayed as part of the "dangerous classes"' and were therefore sometimes seen as likely to be involved in crime.

Coretta Phillips and Ben Bowling (2002) argue that the issue of 'race' and crime returned to public attention in the 1970s because of interest in the 'consistent pattern of over-representation of African/Caribbean people in prison in Britain'. This raised important questions about whether the over-representation was caused by British African Caribbeans being more criminal than other ethnic groups, or

was the result of discriminatory treatment by the criminal justice system.

In the 1990s the relationship between racism, ethnicity and victimisation became a new focus of attention. This was partly in response to the murder of the African Caribbean teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993. He was killed by a gang of white youths who stabbed him to death, having first shouted racist abuse at him. Despite the existence of substantial evidence about the offence, it was only in 2012, more than 18 years later, that two people were convicted of the murder. An inquiry was set up into the incident – the Macpherson Inquiry (Macpherson, 1999) – which found serious failings in the police and accused the Metropolitan police of 'institutional racism' (see pp. 187–8). The report raised issues about the way the police dealt with racially motivated attacks and the extent to which criminality by different ethnic groups might be racially motivated.

The next section will examine the relationship between 'race', ethnicity and offending, and following that we will return to the issue of 'race', ethnicity and victimisation.

Images of minority ethnic offending

According to Phillips and Bowling (2002), 'in the 1970s, a quarter of a century after the onset of mass migration from the West Indies and Indian subcontinent, there was an official consensus that the settler communities offended at lower rates than the majority population'. A House of Commons Select Committee Report in 1972 found that African Caribbean crime rates were no higher than those of whites, while Asian crime rates were substantially lower. However:

> *This position dramatically altered in the mid-1970s in the face of increased conflict between the police and the African Caribbean communities, and the accumulation of police statistics which documented higher arrest rates – particularly for robbery and theft from the person – among African Caribbean youth in London.* Phillips and Bowling, 2002

As a result, 'black criminality' began to be seen as a problem. In contrast, in the late 1970s, Asians were still considered to have low crime rates. The general image of Asian communities was that they were close-knit and well regulated by family ties, so that Asian youth tended to avoid involvement in crime.

However, Phillips and Bowling argue that, by the 1990s, Asians too were beginning to be seen as a problem because of their apparent involvement in some types of crime. In 1994 a group of young Bangladeshi men murdered a man in King's Cross, London; in 1995 there was urban disorder in Bradford involving Asians; and there were 'riots' involving Asians in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001 (see p. 224). Parts of the media began to develop an image of the 'Asian gang' (see pp. 202–3 for a discussion of the 'Asian gang'). This emphasis on growing Asian crime rates has more recently been overshadowed by discussions of terrorism. Phillips and Bowling (2012) say that the London bombings of 7 July 2005 'served to cement the image of minority ethnic groups as a security threat'.

From the 1980s onwards, though, some social scientists began to challenge the idea that members of minority ethnic groups were any more prone to criminality than their white counterparts.

The 'myth of black criminality'

In an early contribution to the debate about 'race' and crime, Paul Gilroy (1983) argued that black criminality was a myth. He rejected the view that black criminals belong to an 'alien culture' or that minority ethnic groups are poorly socialised and therefore become criminals. Instead, he sees minority ethnic groups as defending themselves against a society which treats them unjustly.

Both British Asians and African Caribbeans originate from former colonies of Britain and the original migrants to Britain carried with them 'the scars of imperialist violence'. The anti-colonial struggles against British imperialism allowed these ethnic groups to learn how to resist exploitation. Once they arrived in Britain they used the same techniques they had first developed in Asia and the Caribbean: marches, demonstrations and riots. In areas such as Southall, Toxteth, Brixton, Handsworth and St Paul's, Bristol (all scenes of inner-city rioting in the late 1970s and early 1980s) they hit back against police harassment, racially motivated attacks and discrimination.

Although Gilroy sees minority ethnic crime as part of a political struggle, he denies that minority ethnic groups are any more prone to crime than other groups. He claims the myth of black criminality has been created as a result of the police having negative stereotypes of African Caribbeans and Asians. African Caribbeans are seen as 'wild and lawless' and more specifically as potential 'muggers'. Asians are also regarded with suspicion and are often seen as possibly being illegal immigrants.

Gilroy (1983) provides some evidence to support such views. He refers to a police officer in Brixton saying to a reporter: 'We are here to give our coloured brethren all the help we can – all they need to go somewhere else.' Gilroy also points out that the Police Federation magazine claimed that Jamaica had deliberately shipped convicts to Britain during the early period of migration in order to export its crime problems.

For these reasons, Gilroy argued that statistics that showed a disproportionate involvement of African Caribbeans in street crime could not be trusted. They reflected the prejudice of the police rather than any real tendency for this group to be more criminal than white British people.

Policing the Crisis – mugging, the state, and law and order

The views of Gilroy were supported to some extent in a study conducted by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts (1979) attempted to provide a detailed explanation of the crime of mugging in Britain. Although their argument was somewhat contradictory (at times they seemed to suggest that African Caribbeans were more criminal than whites), its main thrust was that African Caribbeans were much more likely to be labelled as criminals than whites. They argued that at least certain sections of the police were racist and that concern about street crime, particularly mugging, was an unjustified moral panic.

'Mugging', the media and moral panic

In the 13 months between August 1972 and August 1973, 60 events were reported as muggings in the national daily papers. Dramatic individual cases of such crimes were

highlighted in the media. On 15 August 1972, Arthur Hills was stabbed to death near Waterloo Station in London. For the first time, a specific crime in Britain was labelled a mugging in the press. On 5 November 1972, Robert Keenan was attacked by three youths in Birmingham. He was knocked to the ground, and had some keys, five cigarettes and 30p stolen. Two hours later, the youths returned to where he still lay, and they viciously kicked him and hit him with a brick.

It was stories such as these which highlighted an apparently new and frightening type of crime in Britain. Judges, politicians and the police lined up with the media in stressing the threat that this crime posed to society. Many commentators believed the streets of Britain would soon become as dangerous as those of New York or Chicago. The home secretary in the House of Commons quoted an alarming figure of a 129 per cent increase in muggings in London in the previous four years.

Hall et al. (1979) see these reactions as a moral panic. (A **moral panic** is an exaggerated outburst of public concern over the morality and behaviour of a group in society.) They try to explain why there should be such a strong reaction to, and widespread fear of, mugging.

They reject the view that the panic was an inevitable and understandable reaction to a new and rapidly increasing form of violence. As far back as the 19th century, footpads and garrotters (who half-strangled their victims before robbing them) had committed violent street crimes similar to those of the modern mugger. Violent robberies were not, therefore, a new crime at all – indeed, as recently as 1968, an MP had been kicked and robbed in the street without the crime being labelled a mugging.

Hall and his colleagues note that there is no legally defined crime called mugging. Since in law there is no such crime, it was not possible for the home secretary accurately to measure its extent. Hall et al. could find no basis in the criminal statistics for his figure of a 129 per cent rise over four years. From their own examination of the statistics there was no evidence that violent street crime was rising particularly fast in the period leading up to the panic. Using the nearest legal category to mugging – robbery, or assault with intent to rob – the official statistics showed an annual rise of an average of 33.4 per cent between 1955 and 1965, but only a 14 per cent average annual increase from 1965 to 1972. This type of crime was growing more slowly at the time the panic took place than it had done in the previous decade.

For these reasons, Hall and his colleagues could not accept that the supposed novelty or rate of increase of the crime explained the moral panic. They argued that both mugging and the moral panic could only be explained in the context of the problems faced by British capitalism at the start of the 1970s.

Capitalism, crisis and crime
Economic problems produced part of the 'crisis'. Hall et al. (1979) accept the Marxist view that capitalist economies tend to go through periods of crisis when it is difficult for firms to sell their goods at a profit. During the 1970s, they argue, the British economy was characterised by just such a crisis. There was a declining rate of profit, rising unemployment and falling wages. This crisis coincided with the mugging panic.

The crisis of British society, however, went beyond economic problems. It was also a crisis of 'hegemony', a term first used by Antonio Gramsci. **Hegemony** is the political leadership and ideological domination of society. (Gramsci and hegemony are discussed in more detail on pp. 597–8.) According to Gramsci, the state tends to be dominated by parts of the ruling class. They attempt to win support for their policies and ideas from other groups in society. They try to persuade the working class that the authority of the state is being exercised fairly and justly in the interests of all. A crisis in hegemony takes place when the authority of the state and the ruling class is challenged.

In 1970–72 the British state faced both an economic crisis and a crisis of hegemony. From 1945 until about 1968 there had been what Hall et al. (1979) call an **inter-class truce**: there was little conflict between the ruling and subject class. Full employment, rising living standards and the expansion of the welfare state secured support for the state and acceptance of its authority by the working class. As unemployment rose and living standards ceased to rise rapidly, the basis of the inter-class truce was undermined. It became more difficult for the ruling class to govern by consent.

Hall et al. provide a number of examples of the challenge to the authority – to the hegemony – of the state:

1. **Northern Ireland degenerated into open warfare.**
2. **There was a growth in student militancy and increased activity from the Black Power movement.**
3. **The unions posed perhaps the biggest single threat: in 1972 there were more workdays lost because of strikes than in any year since 1919. The miners were able to win a large pay-rise by using flying pickets, which prevented coal reaching key industries and power stations.**

Since the government was no longer able to govern by consent, it turned to the use of force to control the crisis. It was in this context that street crime became an issue. Mugging was presented as a key element in a breakdown of law and order. Violence was portrayed as a threat to the stability of society, and it was the black mugger who was to symbolise the threat of violence.

In this way the public could be persuaded that 'immigrants' rather than the faults of the capitalist system caused society's problems. The working class was effectively divided on racial grounds, since the white working class was encouraged to direct its frustrations towards the black working class.

Crisis and the control of crime
The government was also able to resort to the use of the law and direct force to suppress the groups that were challenging them. Force could be justified because of the general threat of violence. Special sections of the police began to take action against the 'mugger'. The British Transport Police was particularly concerned with this crime and it set up a special squad to deal with violent crime on the London Underground. Hall et al. claim the police in general, and this special squad in particular, created much of the mugging that was later to appear in the official statistics.

Hall et al. give examples of police pouncing unannounced on African Caribbean youths of whom they were suspicious. Often this would provoke a violent reaction in self-defence by the youths, who would then be arrested and tried

for crimes of violence. Many of the 'muggers' who were convicted following incidents like these had only police evidence used against them at trial. 'Victims' of their crimes were not produced because, Hall *et al.* imply, there were no victims in some cases. Labelling helped to produce the figures that appeared to show rising levels of black crime, which in turn justified stronger police measures.

Hall *et al.* do not claim that the reactions to crime, 'mugging' and other 'violence' were the result of a conspiracy by the ruling class. The police, the government, the courts and the media did not consciously plan to create a moral panic about street crime; the panic developed as they reacted to changing circumstances.

Neither did the ruling class or the government directly manipulate the media: different newspapers included different stories, and reported mugging in different ways. Nevertheless, there was a limited range of approaches to the issue in the press. Most stories were based on police statements or court cases, or were concerned with the general problem of the 'war' against crime. Statements by the police, judges and politicians were therefore important sources of material for the press. Consequently, the newspapers tended to define the problem of mugging in similar ways to their sources: criminal violence was seen as senseless and meaningless by most of the press. It was linked to other threats to society, such as strikes, and was seen as a crime that needed to be stamped out as quickly as possible.

Black crime

Although *Policing the Crisis* concentrates on the moral panic about crime, Hall *et al.* also make some attempt to explain African Caribbean criminality. Many immigrants to Britain from the Commonwealth arrived in the 1950s and early 1960s. They were actively encouraged to come to the country during a period of full employment and labour shortage. London Transport, for example, recruited large numbers of West Indians to fill low-paid jobs which might otherwise have remained vacant.

The recession in the early 1970s hit immigrant groups hard. They became a 'surplus labour force', many of whom were not required for employment. Those who remained in employment often had to do menial and low-paid jobs, which some referred to as 'white man's shit work'. Some opted out of the employment market altogether. They turned to 'hustling' for money, using petty street crime, casual drug dealing, and prostitution to earn a living. Street crime was a survival strategy employed by an unwanted reserve army of labour.

Policing the Crisis – an evaluation

Policing the Crisis provides a sophisticated analysis of the crime of 'mugging' from a neo-Marxist perspective. It suggested that the rise in African Caribbean criminality was largely the result of police labelling, but that some individuals were forced into crime in order to survive.

David Downes and Paul Rock (1988) criticised the book for contradicting itself. It appeared to claim simultaneously that African Caribbean street crime was not rising quickly, that it was being amplified by police labelling, and that it was bound to rise as a result of unemployment. According to this criticism, Hall *et al.* were trying to have their cake and eat it. They changed their view on whether these crimes were rising or not, according to how it fitted their argument.

Despite the contradictions in *Policing the Crisis*, the general approach adopted by Gilroy and by Hall *et al.* tends to see any over-representation of minority ethnic groups in crime as largely a product of labelling. It tends to deny that African Caribbeans are any more prone to criminality than anybody else. This approach has been heavily criticised by left realist criminologists such as John Lea and Jock Young, whose views will now be examined.

John Lea and Jock Young – minority ethnic criminality

John Lea and Jock Young (1984) argue that it is not entirely a myth that certain types of crime are more common among minority ethnic groups than among whites. They believe the official statistics on the ethnic background of offenders are not entirely fabricated. They are particularly critical of Paul Gilroy, but by implication they also reject the main thrust of the argument put forward by Stuart Hall and his colleagues.

Lea and Young attack Paul Gilroy for suggesting that the disproportionate number of black males convicted of crimes in Britain was caused by police racism. Lea and Young quote figures showing that 92 per cent of crimes known to the police are brought to their attention by the public, and only 8 per cent are uncovered by the police themselves. In such circumstances, they argue, it is difficult to believe that the preponderance of blacks in the official figures is entirely a consequence of discrimination by the police.

Lea and Young also make use of statistics on 'race' and crime produced by the Home Office researchers, Stevens and Willis. Lea and Young calculate that the differences in offending between ethnic groups found by Stevens and Willis could only be explained entirely in terms of police racism if the police had arrested a substantial majority of African Caribbean offenders but a small minority of white offenders. Thus, 66 per cent of all African Caribbean offenders and just 21 per cent of all white offenders would have to have been arrested for the figures to be explicable entirely in terms of racism. Lea and Young believe discrimination on such a scale was unlikely. They see it as more plausible to believe that there were real differences between offending rates, with African Caribbeans having a higher offending rate than whites for some crimes.

They also point to a number of aspects of criminal statistics that cannot be explained by police racism alone. The recorded rate for crimes committed by whites is consistently slightly higher than that recorded for Asians. Lea and Young maintain that 'police racism would have to manifest itself very strangely indeed to be entirely responsible for such rates'.

Furthermore, in the 1960s the recorded rates for crimes committed by first-generation African Caribbean immigrants were lower than the national average. Even today, the official statistics for offences such as burglary show the rate for African Caribbeans to be lower than that for whites. If these statistics were produced by police racism, then the police must have exercised positive discrimination in favour of some minority ethnic groups at times.

Lea and Young accept that policing policies and police racism exaggerate the minority ethnic crime rate. Nevertheless, they believe there has been a real increase in the number of certain crimes (particularly robbery) committed by African Caribbeans. They find it hard to understand why writers such as Gilroy (see p. 386) cannot

bring themselves to believe that unemployment and racial discrimination might result in minority ethnic groups committing more street crime than others.

Lea and Young are even more critical of Gilroy's claim that such African Caribbean crime as there is results from a continuation of the 'anti-colonial struggle' conducted in the former colonies. They point out that most young West Indians are second-generation immigrants who have lived in Britain since birth. Most of their parents appear, from the statistics in the 1950s and 1960s, to have been highly law-abiding. It is hard to see how they could have passed down the tradition of the 'anti-colonial struggle' to their children.

In any case, most of the victims of crimes committed by African Caribbeans are also African Caribbeans. How, Lea and Young enquire, can crimes committed against members of their own community be seen as a political attack on the white racist state? To them, it is far more plausible that street crime is a reaction to the oppression that African Caribbeans have experienced in Britain. They see their criminality as a response to relative deprivation (they have less experience of material success than their white peers), a sense of marginalisation (produced partly by unemployment) and the formation of subcultures that are supportive of some types of criminal activity in some areas. (For a discussion of the use of these concepts by left realists, see pp. 372–3.)

Evaluation
Unlike Lea and Young, Phillips and Bowling (2012) believe the differences in the criminality of African Caribbean and Asian people could be accounted for by police racism. This is because the perspective of Lea and Young 'overlooks the evidence that modern racism has, since its origins, constructed very different images of particular ethnic groups and these have inspired markedly different social responses' (Phillips and Bowling, 2012).

From this point of view, the differences between ethnic groups may well be explained, at least in part, by racial stereotypes and discrimination within the criminal justice system. Furthermore, these stereotypes can change over time. Phillips and Bowling say that

British officials were convinced in 1972 that black people were no more likely than their white neighbours to be involved in crime, but four years later it turned a hundred and eighty degrees. Similarly, in recent times the communities of the Indian subcontinent, hitherto portrayed as law-abiding and self-contained, have now become the focus of the police. 2012, p. 392

Whatever the merits of this argument, it is certainly true that the dispute between writers such as Gilroy, Hall et al. and Lea and Young over the real incidence of criminality among minority ethnic groups was based upon very limited evidence. It was only in 2000, in response to the Macpherson Inquiry (concerning the handling of police investigations into the death of Stephen Lawrence), that the government first started publishing detailed statistics on ethnicity and crime.

These statistics and recent empirical studies provide more detailed evidence than was available in the 1970s and 1980s about the extent of both minority ethnic criminality and racism in the criminal justice system. The general evidence relating to ethnicity and patterns of crime will be examined below. First, however, we will look at specific types of crime that have sometimes been associated in the mass media with African Caribbean ethnic groups in the UK.

Gangs, guns and homicide
Phillips and Bowling (2012) argue that 'Recent years have seen increasing public anxiety about gun crime within black communities in the UK.' They cite the case of Charlene Ellis and Letisha Shakespeare, two teenage girls who were shot dead in 2003, caught in the crossfire between two groups of black men.

Research by Bullock and Tilley (2007, cited in Phillips and Bowling, 2012) found that of 32 people found guilty of shooting offences in Manchester, 22 were black while just eight were white and two were Asian.

Gun crime is often associated with involvement in gangs. Simon Hallsworth and Tara Young (2008) argue that the media often emphasise both the danger of gang crime and its association with minority ethnic groups. They say:

The monstrousness of the group is certainly bound up with perennial fears the adult world has with its young, but there is an ethnic dimension to this fear in so far as the gang is always seen to wear a black or brown face. Hallsworth and Young, 2008, p. 185

As we shall see, Hallsworth and Young believe both the concern about gangs and the association with ethnic minorities are exaggerated and misleading; but homicide statistics do suggest that some ethnic minorities are disproportionately involved in serious violence.

Phillips and Bowling (2012) note that there is a high detection rate for homicides compared to other offences. This suggests that statistics on the characteristics of offenders might be reasonably reliable. Ministry of Justice statistics for England and Wales for the period 2007–9 estimated the homicide rate per million at 11.8 for whites, 18.3 for Asians, 49.7 for blacks and 24.7 for other ethnic groups, with an overall rate of 13.9 (Ministry of Justice, 2011).

There are however a number of reasons for questioning the widespread view in the media that gun crime, gang membership and homicide should be seen as interlinked, associated with young black men, and central to the crime problem in general and violent crime in particular.

First, gun crime remains a comparatively rare phenomenon. In the three years up to 2010/11 just 140 homicide victims in England and Wales out of a total of 1,884 were killed by shooting (Smith et al., 2012).

Second, homicide is very rare and rates of homicide in the UK are relatively low by international standards. Other evidence does not suggest that other types of violent crime are disproportionately committed by black or other minority ethnic groups (see pp. 394–5). Furthermore, it should be remembered that ethnic minorities, particularly 'black' and 'other' minorities, are most likely to be the victims of homicide (see p. 419). Most homicide is intra-ethnic. Phillips and Bowling quote Home Office figures from 2005 showing that 92 per cent of white victims of homicide, where the offender was caught, were killed by a white perpetrator, while 56 per cent of black victims and 66 per cent of Asian victims were killed by an offender from their own ethnic group.

Third, recent research does not suggest that gangs are largely or disproportionately a problem of black youth.

Research by Judith Aldridge and Juanjo Medina (2008), using ethnographic methods (including participant observation, interviews and focus groups), examined the relationship between gangs and ethnicity in an English city. They noted that 'UK surveys have failed to find a significant relationship between ethnicity and gang membership'. Furthermore, their own data showed that gangs in the city they studied 'were generally ethnically mixed, tended to reflect the ethnic composition of their areas, and also arise in predominantly white areas'.

However, Aldridge and Medina noted that only those gangs in predominantly black areas received much media coverage, and most of the law enforcement effort was concentrated in these areas as well. This was partly because there was more likelihood of these gangs being involved in serious gun violence, but gun use was associated with gang members from all ethnic backgrounds in those gangs.

The evidence therefore suggests that while black ethnic groups are more likely than other ethnic groups to be involved in gun crime, they are also more likely to be victims of such crime. There seems little basis for the association between gangs and black ethnic groups that receives considerable prominence in the media. Furthermore, evidence suggests that when a wider a range of crimes is taken into account, there is also little evidence that blacks are any more criminal than whites in the UK (see below).

So far, most of the discussion has focused on black/African-Caribbean minority ethnic groups. Before looking in detail at the criminal justice system, ethnicity and crime, we will examine some studies of criminality among British Asians.

Studies of British Asian crime

Ben Bowling and Coretta Phillips (2002) note that by the late 1990s ethnographic studies had begun to examine crime, among British Asians. They review a number of studies, including those by Desai (1999) and Mawby and Batta (1980).

Bowling and Phillips note that earlier ethnographic studies had generally portrayed Asian communities as '"inward-looking", "tightly-knit", self-regulating, passive and ordered by tradition with strong family ties'. These characteristics were assumed to explain low rates of criminality among British Asians.

For example, a study by Mawby and Batta (1980) examined criminality among British Asians in Bradford. Mawby and Batta pointed out that most British Asians in Bradford were relatively poor, of working-class backgrounds and living in inner-city areas. All these factors suggested they should be heavily involved in crime. However, the study found that they committed few crimes and those that they did commit tended to be of a minor nature. Mawby and Batta explained that the emphasis on *izzat*, or family honour, encouraged conformism among British Asians in Bradford. They were afraid of dishonouring the family name and they were therefore reluctant to commit crime.

More recent studies, such as that by Desai, have found 'groups of Asian males who were willing to take the risks of moving around town and were rebelling against their parent culture' (Bowling and Phillips, 2002). Desai found that some young Asian men were taking a more aggressive stance in combating racist attacks against them and were more willing to use violence to defend their communities against perceived threats from outside. According to Desai, some Bangladeshi boys were making a self-conscious attempt to counter the image of themselves as weak and passive. Some cultivated a 'Bengali Bad Boy Image' (Bowling and Phillips, 2002).

Not all ethnographers of Asian communities have reached similar conclusions. A study by Claire Alexander (2000) argued that the media image of a growing problem of Asian gangs was something of a myth (see pp. 202–3). Although there was some violence in the area of south London she studied, it was greatly exaggerated by the media. There were no clearly defined Asian gangs, and friendships and conflicts in the area could cut across divisions between ethnic groups.

More recently, Simon Hallsworth and Tara Young (2008) argued that the media coverage of an Asian 'gang' in London, the 'Muslim Boys', was 'an overly sensational exercise in journalism composed largely of unsubstantiated claims and stories'.

Conclusion

As in the case of African Caribbean crime, there is no agreement about the extent of criminality among British Asians. Nor is there any agreement about the extent to which differences between ethnic groups can be held to explain patterns of criminality. While it seems plausible that cultural factors might explain differences between African Caribbean and British Asian criminality, the research that has been carried out has mostly been small-scale and therefore inconclusive. Recent researchers have come to somewhat contradictory conclusions about the extent to which British Asian culture has been changing and could account for patterns of crime.

Patterns of criminality

If the evidence about the causes of minority ethnic crime is somewhat limited, there has been no shortage of recent research on the extent of such crime or the extent of racism in the criminal justice system.

Table 6.2 provides data on the representation of ethnic groups at different stages of the criminal justice process in 2009. The table shows that black ethnic groups are particularly over-represented. In 2009, black people made up 2.7 per cent of the population but accounted for 14.6 per cent of stops and searches, 8.0 per cent of arrests, 7.1 per cent of cautions and 13.7 per cent of the prison population (Ministry of Justice, 2011). Asian ethnic groups made up 5.6 per cent of the population and accounted for 9.6 per cent of stops and searches, 5.6 per cent of arrests and 7.1 per cent of the prison population. White ethnic groups were less likely to be arrested or cautioned than other ethnic groups and were also less likely than other groups to be sent to prison.

In 2009/10 in England and Wales, black people were seven times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people, while in 2006/7 they were six times more likely to be stopped and searched (Ministry of Justice, 2011). By 2009/10 Asian groups were nearly twice as likely to be stopped and searched as would be expected. At first sight, this seems to support the argument of those who claim that black and Asian groups in the population are disproportionately selected by the police for stop and search. However, the figures might reflect the age and places of residence of minority ethnic groups. These groups tend

Table 6.2 The proportion of individuals at different stages of the criminal justice process by ethnic group compared to general population, England and Wales

	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Chinese or other	Unknown	Total
Population aged 10 or over, 2009	88.6%	2.7%	5.6%	1.4%	1.6%	–	48,417,349
Stops and searches, 2009/10	67.2%	14.6%	9.6%	3.0%	1.2%	4.4%	1,141,839
Arrests, 2009/10	79.6%	8.0%	5.6%	2.9%	1.5%	2.4%	1,386,030
Cautions, 2010[1]	83.1%	7.1%	5.2%	–	1.8%	2.8%	230,109
Court order supervisions, 2010	81.8%	6.0%	4.9%	2.8%	1.3%	3.2%	161,687
Prison population (including foreign nationals), 2010	72.0%	13.7%	7.1%	3.5%	1.4%	2.2%	85,002

[1] Data based on ethnic appearance and therefore do not include the Mixed category.

Source: Ministry of Justice (2011) *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2010*, Ministry of Justice, London, p. 11.

to have a higher than average proportion of young people and are more likely to live in large cities, particularly London, where most stops and searches take place.

Raw figures do not on their own reveal whether the over-representation of minority ethnic groups results from discrimination within the criminal justice system, from demographic characteristics, or whether these groups actually have higher crime rates. We will now examine the research relating to this issue.

Evidence of racism in the criminal justice system

This section examines whether the differences in recorded crime between minority ethnic groups and the rest of the population can be explained in terms of differences in offending rates or in terms of racism within the criminal justice system. This is largely based upon reviews of the evidence by Coretta Phillips and Ben Bowling (2002, 2012; Bowling and Phillips, 2002), but it also includes data from elsewhere.

Policing and stops and searches

Phillips and Bowling (2002) claim that the criminalisation of minority ethnic groups starts with 'the over-policing of neighbourhoods where ethnic minorities, particularly African/Caribbeans, are heavily concentrated'. In the 1970s and 1980s there was ample evidence of this, with 'oppressive policing techniques, such as mass stop and search operations, the use of riot squads using semi-military equipment, excessive surveillance, unnecessary armed raids, and police use of racially abusive language'.

Despite the Stephen Lawrence case and the subsequent concern about racism in policing techniques, the proportion of stops and searches involving black people has risen in recent years. However, these figures should be treated with some caution. It may be that there are simply more members of minority ethnic groups available to be stopped and searched in the urban areas where such stops are likely to take place.

Phillips and Bowling (2002) quote Home Office research that used CCTV cameras in five urban areas and compared the number of black, white and Asian people on the streets with the numbers stopped and searched. It found that Asians were less likely to be stopped than other groups. For African Caribbeans, the results were mixed, with more stops and searches in some areas than in others. Furthermore, research based on the British Crime Survey of 2000 found that the incidence of stops and searches of African

Caribbean people could be explained in terms of factors other than race, such as age, income and area of residence.

However, Tim Newburn (2007) argues that the types of areas in which police decide to conduct stops and searches could reflect police racism. The police may assume that areas with high proportions of minority ethnic residents are more prone to crime and therefore patrol them more frequently. Furthermore, Ministry of Justice (2011) figures show that black people are more likely to be stopped and searched in the vast majority of police force areas regardless of whether they are predominantly urban or rural. What is more, since 2000 there have been significant increases in the ethnic disparities in stops and searches. Phillips and Bowling (2002) argue that the preponderance of African Caribbean suspects among those stopped and searched suggests that this makes 'a modest but significant contribution to the over-representation of black people in the arrest population'.

Phillips and Bowling (2012) also point out that section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, 1994, which allows stop and search without reason for suspicion, is used disproportionately against minority ethnic groups, as is section 44 of the Terrorism Act, 2000. In 2009/10 about 15 per cent of stops and searches under the latter Act were of Asians (Ministry of Justice, 2011).

Vani K. Boorah (2011) has compared rates of stop and search for minority ethnic groups and whites in police force areas in England and Wales. This research was based upon the assumption that if minority ethnic groups were more likely to be stopped than they were to be arrested or convicted, then the use of stop and search could be seen as disproportionate and biased.

Generally Boorah found that members of minority ethnic groups were considerably more likely to be stopped than they were to be arrested, but they were also more likely to be convicted than stopped and searched. Thus the research reached somewhat contradictory conclusions. However, Boorah also pointed out that stops and searches are an inefficient way of tackling crime. Only about 12 per cent of stops lead to an arrest. Given the large number of black people stopped and searched and the low proportion of arrests, this is likely to lead to resentment and lack of trust between minority ethnic groups and the police. Furthermore, the comparisons made in the research rely upon police arrest and conviction figures, which may themselves be affected by racial bias (see below).

A number of studies have found evidence of racism within the police that might account for a greater tendency for the police to suspect members of minority ethnic groups, stop them or arrest them. A study by Ben Bowling (1999, discussed in Bowling and Phillips, 2002) 'found that police officers saw racism as a "natural" and inevitable resentment of ethnic minorities in what had been at one time "white areas" ... ethnic minorities were seen to be "taking over"'. Many police officers in the study felt that African Caribbeans and Asians antagonised white people by failing to adapt to 'British culture'.

The Macpherson Inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence case examined a range of evidence and supported the view that there was institutional racism in the police (see pp. 187–8 for a definition of institutional racism). John Mewing, the Chief Constable of Derbyshire, admitted:

> *In the police service there is a distinct tendency for officers to stereotype people. That creates problems in a number of areas, but particularly in the way officers deal with black people. Discrimination and unfairness are the result. I know because as a young police officer I was guilty of such behaviour.*
> Macpherson, 1999

Further evidence of racism in the police was put forward in a study by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (1997, discussed in Bowling and Phillips, 2002). Bowling and Phillips found that there were so many complaints from the public about racism by the police that even if some complaints were not genuine, there were 'pockets of wholly unacceptable racist policing'.

It is difficult to be sure to what extent racism might have been driven out of the police by attempts to tackle the problem since the Macpherson Inquiry. Research by Simon Holdaway and Megan O' Neil (2007) used interviews with members of the Black Police Officers Association to try to gauge the extent of change. Members of the association did report that examples of overt racism, such as openly racist comments by white colleagues, had become rare. However, many argued that racism had become covert and was only likely to be expressed to colleagues whom they trusted not to report them. If white police officers are acutely aware of the harm that accusations of racism might do to their career they are likely to become more adept at keeping it hidden, or at least impossible to prove.

A study by Newburn, Shiner and Hayman (2004, cited in Newburn, 2007) provides some indication of how everyday discrimination might occur in policing without it being overt or obvious. Newburn et al. studied the use of strip-searches in a single police station in London over 18 months. They found that African Caribbean suspects who had been arrested were about twice as likely to be strip-searched as white suspects, even when the type of offence and its seriousness were taken into account. Newburn (2007) admits that it cannot be assumed that the same is true of the use of stop and search, but he says, 'the data raises the very real possibility that police racism plays a part in the use of such powers'.

Attitudes of minority ethnic groups to the police

Certainly, there is evidence that people from minority

Lifestyles Survey of 1998–9 questioned 4,848 people aged 12–30 (Flood-Page et al., 2000). It found that 58 per cent of blacks felt the police treated African Caribbeans less fairly than white people. It also found that 41 per cent of Indians and 45 per cent of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis felt that the police treated Asians less fairly than whites.

Research for the *Policing for London* project (Fitzgerald et al., 2002, cited in Newburn, 2007) found that between 1981 and 2000 the percentage of people in all ethnic groups saying the police treat minority ethnic groups unfairly had risen. Among blacks it had risen from 48 per cent to 50 per cent, among Asians from 36 per cent to 39 per cent and among whites from 20 per cent to 34 per cent. More recent evidence is provided by research into the inner-city riots of August 2011 (*Guardian*, 2011). This research involved interviewing 270 people who took part in these riots in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Salford, Liverpool and Nottingham; 45 per cent of the participants were black, 4.5 per cent Asian, and 17 per cent of mixed/other non-white origin.

The London riots, 2011

The shooting dead of Mark Duggan, a black suspect, by the Metropolitan police, triggered the initial riot in London. The research found that hostility to the police was the second most cited explanation for the riots: 86 per cent said that poverty was an important or very important cause, while 85 per cent said this of policing. The qualitative research, based on interviews, reached similar conclusions. The report said:

> *Race is never far from the surface of the first-person accounts of rioters. The most acute sense of a longstanding mistrust was among black interviewees. Many referred to specific incidences of black people dying in custody or during police raids.* Guardian, 2011, p. 18

It went on to argue that, 'Nowhere was the singling out of black people more apparent in the minds of the rioters than when the police use stop and search.' No less than 73 per cent of the rioters had been stopped and searched one or more times in the previous year and many complained of feeling harassed by the police. A desire to take revenge on the police was an important motivation for the rioters and many felt that there was a racial element in police harassment.

Arrests, cautions and DNA

Ministry of Justice (2011) statistics show that there is a significant disparity between black ethnic groups and others in arrest rates. Figure 6.9 shows that, between 2005/6 and 2009/10, black people were arrested 3.3 times more

frequently per thousand of the population than white ethnic groups. Furthermore, arrest rates rose by 5 per cent for black people and 13 per cent for Asian people, while the overall arrest rate for the population as a whole fell by about 3 per cent.

Phillips and Bowling (2007) note that the over-representation of black people in arrest statistics is particularly high in the case of drugs offences, robbery, fraud and forgery, while for Asians the same applies to arrests for fraud, forgery and sexual offences. They also note that, partly because of the arrest statistics, there is a significant disparity in the proportion of men from different ethnic groups who have a sample of their DNA on the national database. In 2006 some 37 per cent of black men, 13 per cent of Asian men, and just 9 per cent of white men were on this database. Phillips and Bowling describe this as a form of **genetic surveillance**.

According to Phillips and Bowling there is evidence that, once arrested, minority ethnic groups are more likely to deny the offence, use their right to silence and choose to have legal advice. Phillips and Bowling suggest that all these responses to arrest may reflect 'ethnic minorities' opinions of police'. The suspicion with which minority ethnic groups tend to view the police is well documented in a number of surveys. If defendants do not admit an offence they cannot escape with a caution. Because of this, whites who are arrested are more likely to be cautioned and they avoid the possibility of a conviction.

Prosecuting and sentencing

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decides whether to proceed with prosecutions. It does so if it considers that there is a 'realistic prospect of conviction' and the prosecution would be in the public interest. Phillips and Bowling quote two studies which have examined differences between ethnic groups in relation to decisions to prosecute: studies by Phillips and Brown (1998) and Mhlanga (1999). Both studies found that the CPS were more

likely to terminate cases involving minority ethnic groups. On the surface this might suggest discrimination in favour of minority ethnic groups. However, Phillips and Bowling suggest two other possible causes:

1. It may be that the police tend to forward cases involving minority ethnic groups to the CPS where the evidence is weak because the police tend to have negative stereotypes of minority ethnic groups.
2. The decisions of the CPS may reflect the ethnic mix of the organisation. Minority ethnic groups are seriously under-represented in the police. In 2009 around 4 per cent of the police service but 12 per cent of the CPS were from minority ethnic backgrounds (Phillips and Bowling, 2012).

Once it has been decided to bring a prosecution, minority ethnic groups are more likely than whites to be tried in a Crown Court rather than a Magistrates Court (Phillips and Bowling, 2007). In part, this might result from a tendency for minority ethnic groups to elect for jury trial, even though this exposes them to risking the heavier sentences which tend to be given by Crown Courts.

Ministry of Justice (2011) statistics show that in 2010 a higher proportion of white people tried for indictable offences were convicted compared to those from minority ethnic groups (81 per cent for whites, 77 per cent for blacks and 77 per cent for Asians). However, of those convicted, whites were least likely to be sentenced immediately to a custodial sentence (23 per cent of whites, 27 per cent of blacks, 29 per cent of Asians and 42 per cent of those in 'other' ethnic groups). Furthermore, the average custodial sentence handed out was 20.8 months for blacks, 19.9 months for Asians and 19.7 months for other ethnic groups.

A number of factors can affect sentencing, particularly the seriousness of the offence and previous convictions. The Ministry of Justice therefore conducted further research examining whether there was evidence of racial discrimination in sentencing. They selected three mid-range
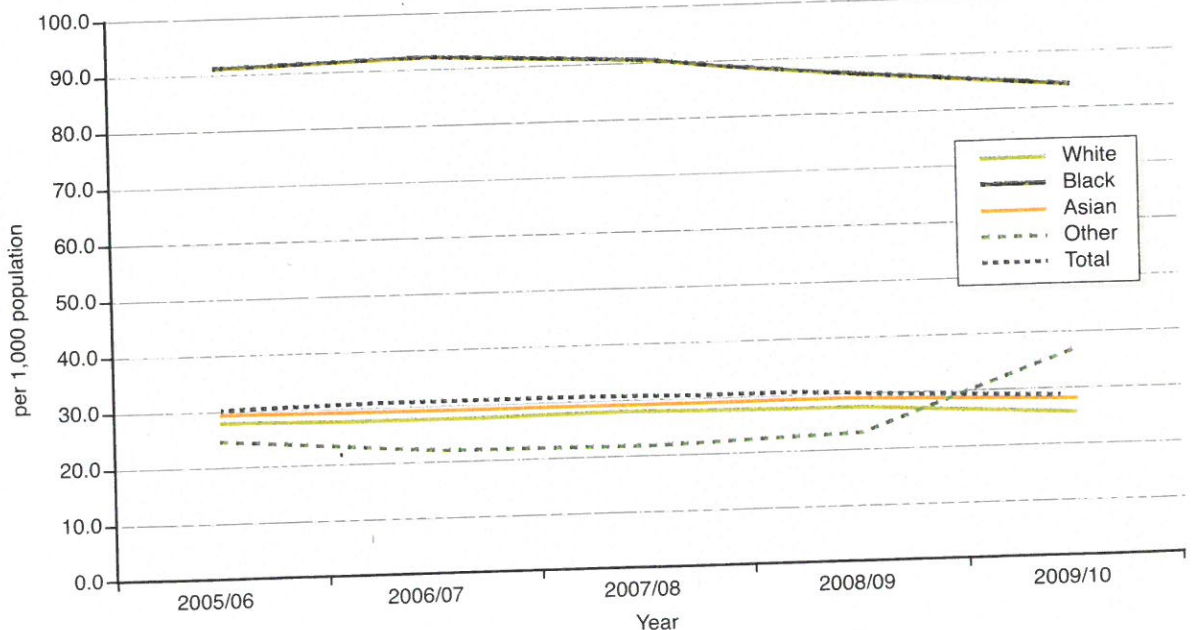

Figure 6.9 Arrests per 1,000 of the population by officer-observed ethnicity, England and Wales, 2005/6 to 2009/10

Source: Ministry of Justice (2011) *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2010*, Ministry of Justice, London, p. 15.

black British admitted offending in the previous 12 months. Selling drugs in the preceding year was reported by 1 per cent of whites, 0.5 per cent of Asians and 1 per cent of blacks or black British. For violent offences, 6 per cent of whites, 3 per cent of Asians and 4 per cent of blacks or black British reported offending over the previous year. Self-reported offending was high for those defining themselves as of 'mixed' ethnicity.

In terms of lifetime offending, Asians reported about half as much criminality as whites, while blacks reported about a third less than whites. This is very different from the large over-representation of blacks in arrest statistics and the prison population (2009/10 figures show that blacks are about three times more likely to get arrested and about five times more likely to be in prison than you would expect given their proportion in the population – see Table 6.2).

The survey also found that blacks were less likely than whites to have taken any illegal drugs in the last year (11 per cent as opposed to 13 per cent) and half as likely to take class A drugs (2 per cent as opposed to 4 per cent).

Even taking account of the limitations of self-report studies, these figures do suggest that black offenders are far more likely to be arrested and imprisoned than white offenders, and it seems likely that this is at least partly the result of unfairness in the operation of the criminal justice system.

Conclusion

Phillips and Bowling (2002) conclude that it is impossible to calculate the extent to which the over-representation of some minority ethnic groups among those convicted of crime is due to racism. It is impossible because some studies are contradictory and none of the evidence is perfect, and because of the complex nature of criminal justice itself.

However, Phillips and Bowling (2012) still argue that the research suggests there is racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system, influenced by prevailing stereotypes of race and ethnicity, but these stereotypes and the associated discrimination change over time. They say:

In our view, conceiving of racism as a complex and socially situated phenomenon can explain the criminal justice experience of different ethnic groups. Thus, patterns of selective enforcement and harsher criminal justice outcomes are consistent with unjustified heightened suspicion of black people (and more recently Asians, especially Muslims) based on stereotypes. For this reason, we reject notions of the uniform, static, and monolithic form of racism in favour of one rooted in historical and spatial specificity. Phillips and Bowling, 2012, p. 392

Race and victimisation

Table 6.3 shows the risk of victimisation by ethnic group according to data from the British Crime Survey of 2006/7 to 2010/11. It shows that members of all minority ethnic groups are more likely to be victims of personal crime than other groups. Risk of victimisation has fallen for most groups, although it has risen for the categories 'Asian or Asian British' and 'Chinese or other'. However, the assumption that this is directly related to race issues has been criticised by a number of studies.

The Home Office made the point that other factors might explain this situation:

The 2004/05 BCS indicated that ethnicity was not independently associated with risk of victimisation for either personal or all violent incidents. Instead other factors; age and sex, frequency of visiting pubs or bars, living in an area with high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour and marital status were the strongest predictors of risk of victimisation. Home Office, 2006, p. 8

According to Clancy et al. (2001), much of the difference in victimisation can be explained in terms of social factors, such as the areas in which minority ethnic groups live, the higher rates of unemployment among minority ethnic groups, and the younger age structure of minority ethnic groups compared to whites. Indeed, their statistical analysis suggests that such factors are more important than ethnicity.

Nevertheless, ethnicity explains some of the difference in victimisation rates. Furthermore, Phillips and Bowling (2012) point out that some of the factors, 'such as inner-city residence and unemployment, may themselves be partly explained by discrimination in housing and employment'.

Data from the British Crime Survey and other sources suggest that the increased risk of victimisation – particularly in violent crime – is reflected in increased fear of crime among minority ethnic groups. Phillips and Bowling (2002) comment: 'On the street, and especially at home alone at

Table 6.3 Trends in the percentage of adults who were victims once or more of a British Crime Survey personal crime, by ethnicity, England and Wales, 2006/7 to 2010/11

	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
% victimised once or more					
ALL	6.6	6.1	6.3	5.7	5.9
White	6.5	6.1	6.2	5.7	5.6
Non-white	8.0 ·	6.0	7.0	5.6	7.5
Mixed	15.7	8.2	13.2	9.1	10.8
Asian or Asian British	6.6	5.3	6.5	4.0	7.0
Black or Black British	9.6	7.0	6.8	6.9	6.9
Chinese or other	6.2	5.5	6.2	7.2	8.5
Unweighted bases					
ALL	47,138	46,903	46,220	44,559	46,754

Source: Ministry of Justice (2011) *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2010*, Ministry of Justice, London, p. 25.

offences: assault occasioning actual bodily harm, burglary in a dwelling, and possession of a controlled class A drug. This meant that there was some control for the seriousness of the offence. They found the following:

> **Among those convicted of actual bodily harm, blacks were slightly more likely to be sentenced to immediate custody than other groups. The average custodial sentence for those pleading not guilty was 16 months for whites, 19.3 months for blacks and 18.4 months for Asians.**
> **Among those convicted of burglary in a dwelling, whites were slightly more likely than other ethnic groups to be given an immediate custodial sentence. However, blacks were given significantly longer sentences than others. Among those convicted after pleading not guilty, the average sentence was 47.3 months for blacks, 37.9 months for Asians and 36.5 months for whites.**
> **Among those convicted of possession of class A drugs, 36 per cent of blacks pleading both guilty and not guilty were sentenced to immediate custody, compared to just 26 per cent of whites who pleaded guilty and 11 per cent who pleaded not guilty. However the average sentences among those who entered a guilty plea were 7.6 months for whites, 7 months for blacks and 14.1 months for Asians.**

These data suggest that there are significant differences in the treatment of black, Asian and white ethnic groups in sentencing, which often, though not always, tend to disadvantage minority ethnic groups, particularly black ethnic groups.

Earlier research conducted by Roger Hood (1992) is the most sophisticated in this area because it took into account a range of legally relevant factors including previous convictions and the seriousness of the offence. The study found that when these factors were taken into account, black men were 5 per cent more likely than white men to be given a custodial sentence. Furthermore, black males who were sent to prison were given sentences that were on average three months longer than those of whites who had committed equivalent offences. The disparity was even greater among Asian men, who received sentences that were on average nine months longer than those of white men.

Among female defendants there was less evidence of discrimination, but black women did have a greater chance of being given a custodial sentence than white women, taking into account relevant factors. Phillips and Bowling (2002) argue: 'Hood's findings represent a clear example of direct discrimination against people of African/Caribbean origin, which has a clear contributory effect to the higher proportion of African/Caribbean people in prison in England and Wales.'

Self-reported crime

Self-report studies have been used to try to discover whether the rate of offending among minority ethnic groups really is higher than that among whites. There are, however, methodological problems which raise questions about the reliability and validity of the figures. Phillips and Bowling (2002) point out:

The self-report technique is obviously limited by the necessity to rely on the honesty of interviewees. Further methodological weaknesses include the under-measuring of serious offences, and the under-sampling of groups of people such as the homeless and those in institutions who may be more involved in offending.

Nevertheless, self-report studies give some indication of the chances of crimes committed by different groups leading to arrests. They are also free from any bias that might result from police discrimination.

The largest study of ethnicity and self-reported offending resulted from the government's Crime and Justice Survey of 2003, with data analysed by Clare Sharp and Tracey Budd (2005). This was based upon 12,000 respondents aged 10–65, with respondents from minority ethnic groups over-sampled to make ethnic comparisons more reliable. It examined property offences, violent offences and drugs offences, and collected data both on offending in the previous 12 months and on offending over the lifetime of the respondents. It produced some striking findings, as shown in Figures 6.10 and 6.11.
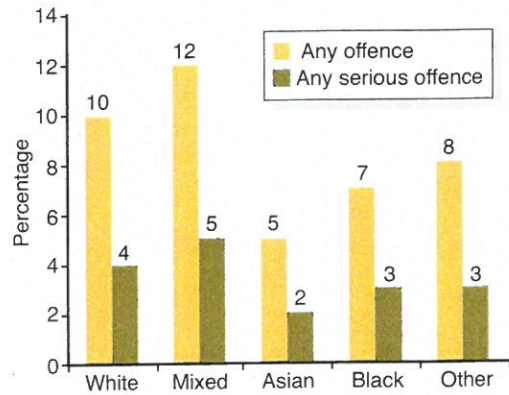

Figure 6.10 Self-reported offending in the last year, by ethnic group, in the Crime and Justice Survey of 2003

Source: C. Sharp and T. Budd (2005) *Minority Ethnic Groups and Crime: Findings from the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey 2003*, 2nd edn, Home Office, London, p. vi.
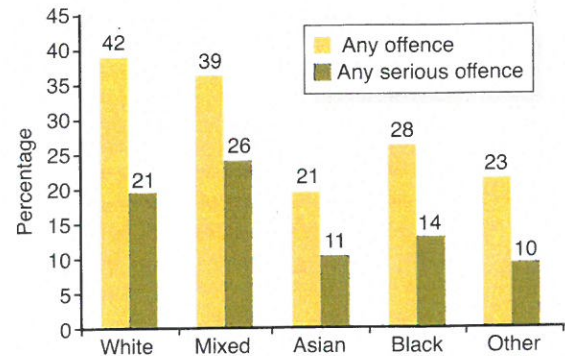

Figure 6.11 Self-reported offending during their lifetime, by ethnic group, in the Crime and Justice Survey of 2003

Source: C. Sharp and T. Budd (2005) *Minority Ethnic Groups and Crime: Findings from the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey 2003*, 2nd edn, Home Office, London, p. 10.

The study found that both black and Asian respondents were less likely than whites to admit offending either in the last 12 months or during their lifetime. Furthermore, this was true whether all offences were taken into account or just serious offences. For property crimes, 6 per cent of whites, 2 per cent of Asians and 4 per cent of blacks or

night, ethnic minorities feel less safe than white people and that feeling affects their individual freedom of movement.'

Given that minority ethnic groups have less faith in the police than whites (see p. 391), the problems of increased risk of victimisation are compounded by a lack of faith in the ability of the criminal justice system to deal with the racially motivated and other crimes to which they fall victim. The Macpherson Inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence case highlighted the complacency and inefficiency of the police in dealing with a racially motivated incident. While considerable efforts have been made to tackle this problem, opinions are divided over how effective these efforts have been. In 2010/11 there were 51,187 racially motivated incidents recorded by the police, although this was a drop of some 18 per cent compared with 2006/7 (Ministry of Justice, 2011).

'Race', ethnicity and crime – conclusion

Bowling and Phillips (2002) conclude that minority ethnic groups' involvement in crime and criminal justice is closely related to social exclusion. Social exclusion relates both to minority ethnic groups as victims of crime and as suspects or perpetrators.

> *Criminological research shows that victimization clusters in conditions of social exclusion, such as high unemployment, high housing density and poor schools. On the basis of the social and economic position of ethnic minority communities, structural theories of crime – including those based on such concepts as anomie, strain, social disorganization, absolute and relative deprivation – would all posit that people from ethnic minority communities are disproportionately likely to be found in criminogenic contexts.* Bowling and Phillips, 2002

To Bowling and Phillips, the evidence on whether minority ethnic groups commit more crime than whites is inconclusive. However, they believe it is clear that black people are more likely to be **criminalised** – that is, they are more likely to be turned into a criminal by being arrested and imprisoned. This in turn leads to greater social exclusion and therefore to a greater chance of criminalisation. Social exclusion can therefore lead to a vicious circle that creates increased chances of minority ethnic involvement in crime, both as victims and as people who are criminalised.

Gender and crime

Gender and patterns of crime

Writing in 1979, Carol Smart argued that female criminality was comparatively neglected. Partly this was because women tend to commit fewer crimes than men, so female offenders are seen as less of a problem for society. Furthermore, most crimes committed by women seem to be of a comparatively trivial nature and may therefore be considered unworthy of research. Since women's criminality has been seen as much less problematic than men's, it has received correspondingly less attention.

Although the years since Smart's study have seen much more interest in the study of female crime and deviance, some general theories in this area of sociology continue to neglect gender as a factor influencing criminality. This

is perhaps the most significant single factor in whether an individual is convicted of crime. Sociological theories that fail to explain this relationship could therefore be seen as inadequate.

Official statistics, criminality and gender

According to official statistics, in 2010, of offenders found guilty of, or cautioned for, indictable offences in England and Wales 82 per cent were male. The ratio of male offenders to female offenders was therefore more than four to one. Theft and handling stolen goods was the most common offence category for both males and females, representing 53 per cent of offences by females and 31 per cent of offences by males. Nevertheless, males still committed over 73 per cent of the offences.

Taking just those who were sentenced for indictable offences and excluding those cautioned (see Figure 6.12 for statistics which include those cautioned), in 2010, women made up 21 per cent of those convicted of theft and handling stolen goods, 15 per cent of motoring offenders, 12 per cent of those convicted for violence against the person, 12 per cent of those committing 'other offences' (which includes criminal damage), 8 per cent of drugs offenders, 7 per cent of robbers, 4 per cent of burglars, and just 1.2 per cent of sexual offenders. Women are also much less likely than men to be given the most severe sentences. In England and Wales in 2010, of 384 people sentenced to life imprisonment, only 20 were women (*Social Trends*, 2011, *Crime and Justice*).

Such figures are neither unusual nor surprising. In Britain, there has been a long-standing tendency for men to commit many more crimes than women, and a similar pattern is repeated in many other countries. This is reflected in both conviction rates and prison statistics. Frances Heidensohn and Marisa Silvestri (2012) cite a study by Zedner (1991), which found that in England, women had committed 27 per cent of indicted crimes in 1867, a figure that had fallen to 19 per cent by 1890.

Internationally, a small proportion of those imprisoned are women. For example, in the USA in 2010, 943 men but only 67 women were imprisoned per 100,000 of the population (Guerino *et al.*, 2012). In European countries in 2003 the percentage of those in prison who were female ranged from 2 per cent in Georgia and Northern Ireland to 7 per cent in Portugal, with an average figure of 5 per cent (Aebi *et al.*, 2006).

Official figures such as these have raised three main questions about gender and crime:

1. **Do women really commit fewer crimes than men, or are the figures misleading? Some sociologists have suggested that women's offences are consistently under-recorded by the authorities.**

2. **Although women continue to commit comparatively few crimes, some people have suggested that the proportion of crimes committed by women has been increasing. If women are becoming more criminal, how can this be explained?**

3. **Why do those women who do break the law commit crimes?**

In the following sections we examine the answers that sociologists have given to these questions.