



Global Criminal Justice Newsletter

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Issue #5

DECEMBER

Welcome Message

We are pleased to present you with our final newsletter edition of 2024!

As we approach the end of the year, we would like to thank everyone who has contributed to putting together this newsletter. Thank you to anyone who has submitted a piece to this edition and previous ones alike. We really appreciate your work, and the newsletter could not run without your precious contribution.

A final special thanks to the student editors for their work on this fabulous newsletter, and to Akua for overseeing the last four editions!

We look forward to sharing more of your exceptional articles and updates in the new year! Do not forget to check out the call for submissions for our next edition, which you will be able to find [here](#). Finally, you will also be able to find some news and updates [here](#).

Wishing everyone a lovely break and a great start to the new year!





By Milly Silvestro, BA (Hons) Criminology and Psychology Student

The essay analyses the criminal justice system in England and Wales, highlighting its role in ensuring justice and equality for all citizens. Despite its mandate, the system has been criticized for systemic discrimination against ethnic minorities, particularly Black individuals. This discrimination manifests in various forms, including policing practices, arrests and sentencing disparities, and broader societal biases.

Discrimination in Policing

A significant issue in the criminal justice system is the disproportionate application of Stop and Search powers against ethnic minorities. This practice allows police to search individuals they suspect of carrying dangerous items, often leading to racial profiling. Studies have shown that Black individuals are more likely to be stopped and searched than their white counterparts. For instance, national statistics reveal that for every 1,000 Black people, there are 29 arrests, while only 9 arrests occur for the same number of white individuals. This raises critical questions about whether such practices are based on actual suspicion or driven by racial bias.

The psychological implications of race also come into play. Research indicates that darker skin tones often trigger associations with crime and violence, perpetuating negative stereotypes that influence police behaviour. Consequently, individuals from ethnic minorities, especially Black individuals, face heightened scrutiny, leading to a cycle of mistrust between communities and law enforcement.

Arrest and Sentencing Disparities

The essay delves deeper into disparities in arrest and sentencing rates among different ethnic groups. Evidence suggests that Black individuals receive harsher sentences than white individuals for the same offenses. For instance, a report commissioned by former Prime Minister David Cameron highlighted that Black women are more than twice as likely to be sentenced to prison for drug offenses compared to white women. Similarly, Black men face disproportionately higher incarceration rates.

These statistics raise concerns about whether the criminal justice system operates fairly. The evidence suggests that systemic bias leads to more frequent arrests and harsher sentences for ethnic minorities, reinforcing the notion that these individuals are perceived as inherently more dangerous.

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Socioeconomic and Institutional Factors

The essay attributes the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system to various socioeconomic and institutional factors. Historical legacies of discrimination, structural inequalities, and institutional racism contribute to the marginalization of these communities. For instance, socioeconomic disparities often limit access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and crime.

Moreover, institutional racism manifests itself in biased decision-making processes within law enforcement and the legal system. Media portrayals of ethnic minorities further exacerbate these issues by perpetuating stereotypes that influence public perception and policy decisions. The essay emphasizes the need for reform to address these entrenched biases.

Case Study: Stephen Lawrence

The case of Stephen Lawrence, a Black teenager murdered in 1993, is a pivotal example of systemic racism within the justice system. The subsequent investigation and trial revealed significant failures by law enforcement, leading to widespread public outrage. The Macpherson Report, which followed, highlighted institutional racism in the police and made numerous recommendations for reform. These included improving police training, increasing accountability, and enhancing community relations.

The impact of the Macpherson Report was substantial, resulting in legislative changes and policy reforms aimed at addressing racial discrimination in policing. However, the essay argues that while these measures represent progress, ongoing vigilance is necessary to ensure their effectiveness.

Legislative Reforms and Initiatives

The UK government has implemented various initiatives to combat discrimination in the criminal justice system. The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect individuals from discrimination based on race and other characteristics. Additionally, reforms targeting Stop and Search practices aim to ensure these powers are applied fairly and transparently.

Community policing initiatives have also been introduced to rebuild trust between law enforcement and marginalized communities. These programs seek to foster cooperation and understanding, especially in areas disproportionately affected by crime and discrimination.

The essay highlights the importance of data collection and transparency in addressing disparities within the justice system. By tracking the racial backgrounds of individuals involved in the system, authorities can identify inequities and implement targeted interventions.

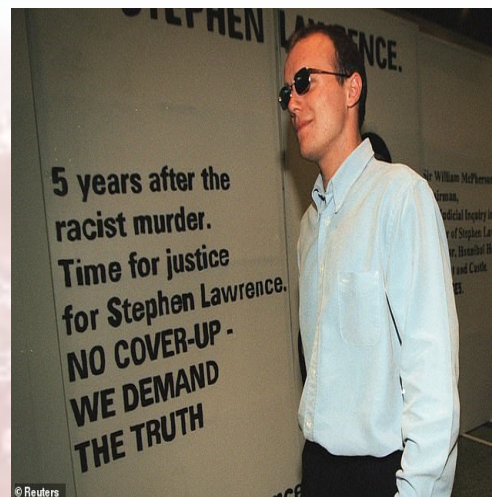
Challenges and Future Directions

Despite these efforts, the essay acknowledges that challenges remain. Discrimination persists in various forms, and progress is often slow. It raises concerns about the potential for "positive discrimination," where efforts to promote diversity inadvertently lead to new forms of bias. Ongoing assessment and adaptation of strategies are essential to ensure that initiatives effectively address the root causes of discrimination without creating additional problems.

Furthermore, the essay emphasizes the importance of community involvement in decision-making processes. Engaging those most affected by discrimination in discussions about policy changes can lead to more effective solutions and foster a sense of ownership and accountability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the essay paints a complex picture of the criminal justice system in England and Wales. While there have been significant strides in addressing discrimination against ethnic minorities, particularly Black individuals, much work remains. The system must continue to evolve, incorporating feedback from affected communities and adapting to new challenges. The commitment to fighting discrimination must be unwavering, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, receive fair treatment and equal opportunities within the justice system. The ongoing dialogue surrounding these issues is crucial for fostering a more equitable society.





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Misogyny Within the Criminal Justice System: the Neglect Towards the Mental Health of Women in Prison

By **Antoniya Yanakieva, BA (Hons) Criminology and Psychology Student**

The rising understanding of institutional and structural biases in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) has led to extensive studies on various kinds of inequality. Gender-based discrimination in the UK's disproportionate imprisonment of certain groups and regional law enforcement techniques has drawn criticism. The conditions of confinement and the phenomenon of imprisonment are defined by gender. Moreover, the deaths of women in custody are linked to insufficient mental health and substance abuse support, extended time spent in cells, limited engagement with personal officers, a shortage of knowledgeable staff, geographical isolation, separation from children and loved ones, and experiences of intimidation.

Statistics show that women are under-represented in prison populations. In June 2022, 4% of England and Wales's prison population was female, a constant percentage over the last five years. Women were prosecuted for lesser crimes (Ministry of Justice, 2022). Thus, therapy, integration, and prevention of future offences focus on male offenders. Extensive literature exists on gender differences in the CJS, although women's research has received less attention due to their low prisoner presence (Edwards et al, 2022).

An evaluation of the health and social care services offered in women's prisons was conducted by NHS England and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in January 2021. The review aimed to improve health and social care outcomes for all incarcerated or released women, ensure equal access to a diverse array of health and social care services throughout the women's estate, and address existing shortcomings. The main findings of the review reveal that the health and social care services provided in the twelve women's prisons across the United Kingdom are variable, lacking in gender specificity, and insufficiently attuned to the needs of women with protected characteristics. Alongside health and social care personnel, many women believe that the prison environment fails to meet its intended purpose (HM Prison and Probation Service, NHS England, and Ministry of Justice, 2023).



Additionally, there remain women in prison who suffer from serious mental illnesses. The limited availability of resources in prisons hinders women with severe mental illnesses from obtaining the essential care and treatment they require. Mental health services that address a range of needs, including primary mental healthcare and specialised therapies for women who have faced trauma, such as domestic violence and sexual assault, are insufficient. Many women entering prison require medication. The management of medications requires enhancement, particularly regarding interactions with women and the collaboration between medical professionals and prison personnel. While advancements have been made in prenatal and postpartum care, along with social support for mothers separated from their children, further efforts are necessary to achieve meaningful change (Durcan, 2023).



The number of women in prison has increased, and they have a greater risk of trauma and mental illness (Bright, Higgins, and Grealish 2023). Since 2000, the number of women in prison has risen 53%. Reconviction is projected for 73% of UK women serving a maximum 12-month sentence during the first year of release (Prison Reform Trust, 2021). Furthermore, brief prison sentences have less recidivism-reducing power than suspended or community punishments, prompting the topic. Approximately 80% of female detainees have mental health diagnoses, suggesting a major over-representation. Sadly, incarcerated women have five times the rate of mental health issues as the general population (Tyler et al., 2019).

His Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons' 2022 briefing paper highlights the main mental health differences between the sexes upon arriving to serve their sentences. Women had more mental health issues and were twice as likely to commit suicide in prison (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2022).

This highlights the need for gender-specific rehabilitation and punishment measures. Moreover, the report also found that a shortage of mental health services keeps some women in prison (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2022). These findings show that mental health services can reduce deviance and reoffending.

Early intervention and mental health treatment may have avoided women's criminal conduct; Ministry of Justice Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan 2022–25 (2023). The Ministry of Justice (2023) also

recognises that men and women commit crimes for different reasons. This matters because it demonstrates the government recognises women's criminal justice system challenges. Future steps must include reducing reoffending and preventing delinquency early on.

The 2023 Review of Health and Social Care in Women's Prisons provided important recommendations. All institutions shall provide gender-specific, controlled, respectful of protected features, individualised, equitable, accessible, and uniform health and social care for women in prison. Female mental health patients must have timely and fair access to gender-specific therapies and environments. There is a need to expand evidence-based trauma treatments and standardise sexual assault and domestic abuse services. The first few days in custody should be spent providing practical and emotional support to all women. Women who are pregnant, leaving protected estates, or separated from their children may need special support (HM Prison and Probation Service, NHS England, and Ministry of Justice, 2023).

Additionally, a performance and outcomes framework, a collaborative gender-specific Health and Social Care Needs Assessment, and health inequalities data collection should be improved. Women's health, social care, and medication management communication needs improvement. Foreign-language women and neurodiverse women should be provided with information. To meet women's needs throughout the care pathway, the national substance misuse service standard must be updated. Finally, social, and prenatal care must improve, especially for mothers who have lost their children. Corrections, probation, health, social services and prisons must collaborate on women's release planning. Release plans for women should include RECONNECT services (HM Prison and Probation Service, NHS England, and MoJ, 2023).





Life on Mars, Ashes to Ashes, and Mr Blobby

By Dr Wayne Cronin-Wojdat,
Associate Lecturer

The popular fictional TV programme *Life on Mars* saw a police officer taken back to 1973, and its sequel, *Ashes to Ashes*, to 1981. I'll follow the theme with a further sequel, *Mr Blobby*, as David Bowie appears to have struggled with writer's block in the early 1990s. *Mr Blobby* originated from a primetime entertainment show and 'wrote' the 1993 Christmas number one hit—it's better viewed on YouTube than described!

What would the public see in *Mr Blobby*? It wouldn't be a fictional series, as it was my reality starting my career as a police officer in the North Wales Police in 1994. Many aspects of policing differed because of changes in society, technology, types of crime, and investigation methods.

I started the police application procedure at the end of 1993. The police service required few qualifications; a minority of recruits had attended university, and some experienced officers would question why you had joined with a degree. The recruitment procedure involved completing an application form, taking the written police entrance exam, attending an interview, and then undergoing a medical examination and fitness test. If successful, you would have a second interview with a very senior officer, hopefully resulting in a job.

Policing and your private life were inseparable. The final recruitment check was a home visit. When you received a visit, it was to ensure you lived in suitable housing and with acceptable people. Homeownership was unusual; you had to make a written application asking permission to buy a house, which was rarely given during the two-year probation period.

A prerequisite of accepting the job was the likelihood of being posted anywhere in the police force area. You were required to live within 45 minutes of your station, and it was thought to be easier to start policing in an area with which you had no previous connections. In smaller geographically sized police forces, this might not pose a problem, but North Wales Police covers an area of 6,290 KM².

Police officers looked different. The intake was predominantly white British males with short natural-coloured hair. Tattoos had to be covered at all times, and piercings were prohibited, except for a single ear piercing for females. Our daily uniform was dry clean only black trousers, collared white shirt, black tie, itchy blue wool jumper, and a custodian helmet for males and a bowler-style helmet for females. We would wear tunics and a whistle for more formal events, men in trousers and females in skirts with nylon tights in the designated colour.

Most police training took place at large regional training centres attended by several police forces. The typical day consisted of classroom lessons, occasional role-play scenarios, marching around a parade ground to pre-recorded music, martial arts, public order training, and far too many fitness sessions for a recent university graduate who was not fond of exercise. There was then a period of one-to-one tutor street training before facing the public alone.

Police technology was rudimentary. A police officer and a civilian staff member ran the typical divisional headquarters control room. It usually had one of the two computers in the building, with a dedicated connection to the Police National Computer. A fax machine gradually reduced the reliance on telex. The control room recorded incidents, including '999' calls, in handwritten carbon-copy books.

Custody records were started on a computer, but everything other than the basic details and charge sheet was handwritten. There was a double-deck cassette tape system to audio-record interviews with suspects. A suspect's photograph was taken using a traditional camera and film, and their finger rolled onto ink pallets and fingerprints onto paper. DNA was in its infancy and only taken for the most serious crimes.

Police officers were less protected than now. Forget body armour, rigid handcuffs, batons, captor spray, or tasers. Our handcuffs were connected by a link chain, which we carried in a belt pouch. We concealed our wooden truncheon in a special pocket down the inside of our trouser leg; drawing the truncheon was rare, and we tended to use a more hands-on approach. A smaller truncheon was issued to female officers, so it fitted into their police-issued handbag.

Police radios were not issued to individuals but shared between everyone working from a station. It was not unusual to get a dodgy radio or battery; even a well-working radio did not guarantee a signal in many rural areas. Losing radio contact was a problem because this was an era before widespread mobile phone use.

Despite lacking personal protective equipment, police officers often patrolled alone day and night. Because we were 'Officers of the Crown' rather than employees, the police service was largely exempt from employment legislation, including health and safety laws.

During the *Mr Blobby* era, 'joyriding', taking a car without consent and abandoning or setting fire to it, was common. Self-installed car radios were often stolen. Fraud was committed using cheques and credit cards. Cash was more widely used, so coin-operated telephone kiosks and electricity and gas meters were targeted. It was not until later in the 1990s that the term "anti-social behaviour" was introduced; the same behaviour existed but was described as nuisance, rowdiness, drunkenness, or public disorder. 'Hate Crimes' had yet to be conceptualised.

Police officers attended almost every reported incident. Crime details were recorded on handwritten forms and faxed to headquarters. Supervising and auditing incidents was more difficult. Consequently, some low-level crimes were overlooked or deliberately 'cuffed'; therefore, these incidents were unrecorded or unsatisfactorily investigated.

Life on Mars and *Ashes to Ashes* era police recruits frequently reminisce that policing was better then. As a *Mr Blobby* era recruit, I'd say to today's recruit, don't compare the policing eras because the world has changed so much in thirty years. Also, today's policing will inevitably be different in the future due to continuous changes in society, technology, types of crime, and developments in investigation methods.



CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS

Serial Killer Exhibition

The **Serial Killer Exhibition** is open and running at The Vaults in London, a great opportunity for anyone interested in finding out more about notorious cases and how investigative techniques have evolved over time. While this can be a great educational experience, don't forget to reflect on potential ethical issues with exhibitions like this and to respect the memory of the victims! Book a visit [here](#) (concession tickets for students are available).

Criminology Film Festival presents:

The Shawshank Redemption

In the new year, join us for an afternoon where cinema meets critical conversation!

About the Film:

Experience *The Shawshank Redemption*, a timeless classic directed by Frank Darabont and adapted from Stephen King's novella. This film is more than a tale of hope and resilience - it's an immersive look at life inside prison walls, justice and redemption. With standout performances from Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman, the film explores the depths of human endurance and the power of friendship.

Why This Screening Matters:

For students and enthusiasts of criminal justice, *The Shawshank Redemption* provides an unparalleled insight into themes of incarceration, rehabilitation and justice. It opens the floor for deep discussions on prison reform and human rights, making it an essential watch for anyone invested in the realities of the justice system.

Enjoy Food and Beverages:

Join us in a relaxed setting where food and beverages will be served, creating a warm and engaging social environment for all attendees.

Special Feature:

Following the screening, participate in a stimulating panel discussion with our distinguished faculty members, each bringing diverse real-world experience and scholarly insights into the realm of criminal justice:

- **Dr David Honeywell** – Specialist in desistance and prison reform and a convict criminologist with personal experience as an ex-prisoner turned academic - focusing on the value of lived experiences.
- **Dr Darren Woodward** – A pracademic and former prison officer with 17 years of service, bringing deep knowledge and practical insights in the field of criminal justice.
- **Dr Mark Duncan** – A criminologist with 18 years of experience in the Prison Service, known for his profound understanding of mental health and substance abuse issues.

Enjoy an afternoon filled with thought-provoking cinema, expert dialogue and community connection.

Date and time TBC, so keep an eye out for more details—in the meantime, please sign up [here](#) or via the QR code to register your interest!



GLOBAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE NEWSLETTER

EDITION #6 Call For Submissions

Would you like to see your work in print? NOW YOU CAN!

You can submit either a feature **article up to 1000 words** on current issues relating to crime and justice, **OR a shorter piece (up to 500 words)** discussing crime film/book reviews or inspirational stories related to your studies.

Deadline: Friday 28th February 2025

To submit your entries, either click on the link below or scan the QR code:



INSPIRATIONAL
STORIES

ARTICLES

BOOK &
FILM
REVIEWS