

**Bhui, H.S. (ed) (2009) *Race and Criminal Justice*. London:Sage.**

As Hindpal Singh Bhui, the editor of this valuable collection of essays, points out in the introduction, criminal justice systems are highly symbolic sites which demonstrate visibly and authoritatively the relationship between justice and race within a given social group. This highly stimulating series of essays traces recent developments in the state of that relationship in contemporary England and Wales. It is timely in that our understanding of race and racism has developed rapidly in recent years. A new awareness has developed of the diversity and complexity within what are already problematic racial categories and the emergence of faith in a highly racialised field has altered the way race is understood by criminal justice agencies. A fresh analysis of race in criminal justice is, therefore, not only welcome but necessary and whilst it focuses on a specific jurisdiction it nevertheless simultaneously raises important issues for theory, policy and practice across Europe.

A number of common themes and qualities run through the various contributions. Smith introduces some of these in the initial two chapters which provide a framework for those which follow. For example, the term race is used critically throughout in a way which regards it as useful in describing patterns of perception and abuse of power but erroneous and damaging if taken to reflect essential, biologically-based differences between groups of people. Very helpfully, the various contributors keep in the forefront of their analyses the diversity which exists within the overarching categories of ‘black,’ ‘white,’ ‘Asian’ etc. and the ways in which race interacts with gender, faith, ethnicity and other aspects of identity. For example, the experience of Muslim people of criminal justice is a thread which runs throughout the book with interactions between faith, race, policy and practice consistently explored. Another common feature is the careful use of research to support argument and analysis. Smith’s second chapter (the first reviews theory) which offers an overview of the very uneven development of race-related policy and practice between the major criminal justice agencies (Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Probation and Prisons) is typical in its careful use of research findings as a foundation for analysis. Driven by a strong commitment to the promotion of race equality this book, nevertheless, avoids either simplified or strident arguments.

Following on from Bhui’s introduction and Smith’s foundational chapters a series of four further chapters goes on to examine in turn the Police, the CPS, Prisons and Probation. The next four essays focus on black women, refugees and asylum seekers, foreign national prisoners and Muslim people respectively. The book is completed by two further chapters one of which analyses police responses to race-hate crime and of the other the services provided for black minority ethnic (BME) substance misusers.

Touching in slightly more detail on some of the many important points raised by the contributors, in his chapter on race and policing Rowe focuses primarily on ‘stop-and-search’ practices, police recruitment and the relationship between the police and Muslim communities following the suicide-bomb attacks on London Transport on 7th July 2005. He is concerned that the political reaction to such events might undermine some of the progress made in policing following the racist murder of Steven Lawrence in 1993 and the subsequent Macpherson enquiry (1999). In the following chapter, Taylor offers an engaging discussion of the comparatively recent response of the CPS to evidence

of racial discrimination in its practices. Benefitting from the experience of other criminal justice agencies, the CPS has implemented the range of policies from altered leadership style and race awareness training to consultation with community and campaigning groups, policy / action plan development, race impact assessments and the creation of a set of performance management indicators to measure change. The chapter provides a case study in organisational change in response to evidence of institutional racism. In the following chapter on Prisons Bhui discusses an organisation with a slightly longer history of response to racism. He is more critical of the potential of a performance management driven approach to deliver 'paper' results only in relation to race equality. He notes the shift from overt racism in prisons to a covert form and notes the difficulty of moving beyond the first policy-related stage of promoting racial equality in criminal justice to the second 'delivery' stage. Turning to Probation Lewis particularly considers race issues in direct work with offenders. She draws attention to the potential of standardised assessment tools and centrally accredited interventions to institutionalise discrimination in the absence of a detailed research-base regarding how to incorporate responses to race into their design. In surveying the evidence for weaker assessments in relation to BME service users (HMIP 2000, Hudson and Bramhall 2005) she also opens up for discussion the interpersonal dynamics which accompany practice across racial difference: the small non-verbal communications of discomfort which compound fears on both sides and accumulate or amplify in the course of an interview to produce a reduced quality of empathy, poorer rapport, a 'thinner,' more distanced assessment and proposals for sentences other than those based on interpersonal, relational work (Barnet-Page 2010 forthcoming).

At this point the collection completes its review of criminal justice agencies and turns its attention to specific groups of victims and service users. Farrant's chapter 'Race, gender and criminal justice process' contributes to the theoretical resources available. For example, drawing on Crenshaw's (1991) work on intersectionality she points out how identity politics can render invisible those experiences which exist at the intersections between the main strands of diversity (race, gender, sexuality, faith etc.). The example of black women is explored and the tendency to think of them in relation to criminal justice either in terms of the category 'gender' or 'race' rather than in terms of the particular dynamics of the interaction between the two.

The next two chapters deal with groups in criminal justice for whom nationality is both central issue and closely connected with race and racism. Firstly, Cooper offers an informed discussion of refugees and asylum seekers. She points to their unfounded but aggressive labeling by the media as 'criminal.' This, combined with policies of holding refugees and asylum seekers in detention centres run by prison services and by the use of electronic monitoring place them firmly within a discussion of race and criminal justice. Cooper highlights the comparative scarcity of reliable research and data regarding this group and their neglect in equal opportunity and diversity policies. In the following chapter, Bhui echoes the theme of invisibility and neglect interspersed with periodical moral panic and racist labeling in his discussion of foreign national prisoners. He also draws attention to widespread fears about immigration and national identity to shed light on the erroneous understanding of this group as especially dangerous. Bhui identifies the particular difficulties experienced by foreign national prisoners as stemming from criminal justice responses to language and communication, family contact and managing the complex legal and administrative aspects of immigration and citizenship issues.

Spalek, Lambert and Haqq Baker argue in their chapter for a particular criminal justice approach to minority Muslim communities which have been subject to stigmatisation following the London bombings of 7/7. Making a comparison with the Irish Catholic community at the time of 'the troubles' and, in particular, following the Birmingham pub bombings of 1974, the authors highlight the damage caused to criminal justice by the creation of a 'suspect community' (180). Drawing on

the work of the Muslim Contact Group set up within the Metropolitan Police to work with marginalised young Muslim men, it is argued that whilst top-down, security-led policies are counter productive, grass roots engagement and a willingness to adopt a critical stance towards aspects of foreign policy are significantly productive.

With a focus on black people as victims of crime, Hall traces developments in the policing of race hate crime since the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, reviewing definitions, legislation and practices. He revisits the effects of the tendency in police practice to treat incidents as single, unrelated events. This is problematic since the evidence is that race-hate crime is more likely to consist of regular, sustained incidents. Patterns of offending can be missed and the detrimental effect on victims underestimated.

Finally, the collection is completed by Mills who considers ‘Racism, ethnicity and substance misuse.’ She draws attention to the alienation of BME groups from treatment provided both within and outside the criminal justice system. Calling for ‘cultural competence’ in practice she points out the variation in substances used and methods of drug taking between different BME groups as well pointing out the very different meaning of admitting an addiction and seeking treatment in different cultural contexts. In the light of the rules governing the right to work within the EU, Mills also raises and begins to explore responses to substance misuse on the part of EU Nationals who have migrated for work.

Both students seeking an authoritative and up-to-date introduction to race and criminal justice and more experienced scholars exploring current thinking will find this book invaluable. Managers, policy makers and practitioners will likewise find it an informative and stimulating resource. Additionally, as dialogue between academics and practitioners across Europe gathers strength, this book will contribute to the identification of collectively held principles in promoting race equality in criminal justice and the sharing of good practice. It might fruitfully stimulate a further edited collection of essays on race and criminal justice in Europe.

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