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The Crossroads of Race and Sex Crimes: How Race Can Blur Moral Lines

Synopsis

Originally the purpose of this paper was to explore the concept of state protection. Specifically, exploring how many times an egregious crime has to happen until a state finally feels that they should intervene. The case used, for the original purpose of this study, involves the repeated occurrence of a specific crime, taking place in the United Kingdom (UK). Exploring the increase of this repeated crime, in this case sex crimes against children, raised the question of how the same crime is able to persist. After researching how sex crimes in the United Kingdom were able to continue for over a decade, being known by authorities but never being reported, it became more than apparent that race was a major deterring factor that dissuaded authorities from pursuing justice. Since bias incidents occur all over the world, with race being a considerable factor in the outcomes of events, discovering that race trumped an actual crime was not surprising. The most challenging aspect, however, was discovering that race stopped authorities from taking action, bolstering the occurrence of the sex crime.

Recently, the Telegraph and the BBC News reported on the jailing of a gang of men, all of South Asian decent. Beyond insinuating that the ethnicity of these men factored into the history of how the case was handled, the articles skirted around the topic of race as

an issue. Since this key factor was glazed over, it was tempting to do the same because of how sensitive of a topic race can be. However, the race issue could not be ignored after research revealed that there was a very arduous history between the South Asian population and the British government. There was horrifying facts, which revealed that police officials and social workers failed to pursue reports of sex crimes when parents went to authorities. Furthermore, there were various instances where family members who did not report the crime, also refused to believe their children or refused to pressure authorities once they reported the crime and were ignored.

The focus of the research transformed from questioning state intervention when crimes consistently occurred without any interference, to the sensitivity regarding the issue of race, which can provoke false accusations and deter justice. Therefore, the research will examine a few towns within short proximities that experienced sex crimes. In that, it will become apparent how the history of racial tensions play a role in the decisions made by authorities, which can perpetuate and already heinous issue. The complexities of an ethnic group who has experienced decades of bias will also clarify why authority figures veered away from the issue entirely in order to avoid backlash from the public. With these details, deepening the ramifications of the issue, it will become clear how crimes are allowed to thrive.

Sensitivity exists, overall, with any race or ethnicity, when communities of people have been marginalized overtime and have a history of experiencing hatred. When a small, even minute group of people, a part of a marginalized ethnic population, carry out crimes, this can be especially disheartening because their actions can cause a negative generalization of an entire population. If there's one person who is a criminal, there is a

fear of an entire group being categorized as criminals. But it should be clearly understood that to generalize a group with a negative stereotype is to give a group a negative stigma. Race and ethnicity in general, should not be a factor and should not complicate or hinder the outcomes of a crime. Thus, the following research will show what happens when the issue of race is put above a crime, allowing a singular crime to thrive.

Introduction

Oxfordshire, United Kingdom:

In early March 2015, a report indicated that over 300 “young people” were “groomed and sexually exploited by gangs in Oxfordshire” in the United Kingdom (UK) over a span of 15 years. It was discovered that the knowledge of the sexual crimes, occurring in Oxfordshire, were found to be kept secret by both police officials and social workers. That in turn, propagated victims to “years of sexual torture, rape, and trafficking.” The “young people,” who were children and fell victim to these crimes of sexual exploitation, were found to be “mostly girls” from Oxfordshire. (The Telegraph, 2015)

The revelation of these reports followed the jailing of seven men who were incarcerated “for a string of horrendous child sex crimes” of children ranging from the ages of 11 to 15 years old. Although these crimes began seven years prior, the men who committed these crimes were tried and jailed years later. Subsequently, Joanna Simons, who was the chief executive of the Oxfordshire county council, made the decision to step down from her post (The Telegraph, 2015).

Accountability is to be put on the fact that when these crimes were reported, police officials and social workers “failed to believe the girls when they detailed the abuse they were suffering, and dismissed their complaints.” In one report, it was revealed that “370

girls were abused” over a 16-year period. In reports made later on, the number of victims increased exponentially along with the number of years. As children told their parents, and parents who believed their children reported the crimes, it was transcribed that social workers “missed the opportunity to intervene” and police officials “ignored evidence of rape and violent sexual abuse” (Sanghani, 2015). Police officers told the parents of victims that the lives of these daughters were “none of their business” and that they appeared to be “happy” with their abusers. Also noted, it was reported that the police described the victims as “prostituting themselves” (Sanghani, 2015).

Although authority figures chose to ignore the issue, no officers were called to step down from their position. Rather, in defense, a report concluded that due to the “general ignorance” of the officers, the failings of these children and their families was due to a culture of “turning a blind eye.” (Sanghani, 2015). Turning a blind eye, is absolutely what happened, but the root cause of why officials did so was not discussed.

Rotherham, U.K

In February 2015, it was reported in an article written by the BBC that “1,400 children were sexually exploited in Rotherham,” a report that first came to light five year earlier. In November 2010, five men “were jailed for sexual offences against under aged girls.” Two years later, in September of 2012, a journalist published a confidential police report from that same year, which detailed the sex crimes of “thousands” of children from South Yorkshire (BBC, 2015). South Yorkshire is the country in which Rotherham is one of the four boroughs (Pearson, 2014).

After the publication of the confidential reports, in October 2012, the council, South Yorkshire Police, along with “other agencies,” set up a “Child Sexual Exploitation

(CSE) team to investigate” the Rotherham scandal. On the one hand, the police of Rotherham made arrests, breaking up a “gang of international traffickers” that were imprisoned. The arrests brought “improved public awareness” about the population of young girls, of English descent, who experienced sexual corruption in Rotherham. However, with more prosecutions made in nearby cities, there remained to be further prosecutions in Rotherham or any other counties in South Yorkshire. (BBC, 2015).

According to the article, not only were the police deemed unfit to protect the people of Rotherham, but it became clear that the “trafficking of barely pubescent girls” was “much more widespread.” (BBC, 2015) After the 2012 revelation, concerns culminated due to the lack of prosecutions against other men involved in sex crimes in Rotherham. Scrutiny grew so much that yet another government official, the Chief Executive of Rotherham’s council, Martin Kimber, decided to step down due to the scandal (Charlton, 2014). Although, according to an article, he initially “commissioned an independent inquiry” to investigate cases “handled by social services” that began in 1997 (BBC, 2015). Also stepping down due to the controversy was the former Mayor of Rotherham Barry Dodson, Council Leader Roger Stone, and Deputy Chief Commissioner Tracey Cheetman (Charlton, 2014). In the case of former Chief executive Martin Kimber and Mayor Barry Dodson, their decision to step down from their post was not only because they failed to pursue justice against the reported sex crimes, but allegedly, they were accused of having involvement in sexual assault crimes themselves (BBC, 2015).

Child Grooming

The sexual exploitation of these children includes victims being abducted, trafficked, beaten, raped, and threatened. These terms bring light to the atrocious crimes

committed in these areas of the UK. However, in order to fully understand the scope of the crime, it necessary to understand the basics of sex crimes against children. So far, there have been many terms used in all the articles to describe the crimes. The most common of the words is “grooming.” By understanding this term, a huge part of how these sex crimes are able to commence, can be brought to light. When a sexual predator, who “grooms a child,” is called a “groomer.” Grooming occurs when a groomer “builds an emotional connection with a child” in order to “gain their trust for purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation” (Radford, 2015). Children are targeted by sex offenders through grooming, however, groomers also have the ability to groom parents and adult figures close to the children. A groomer will build a certain amount of trust of confidence with a child’s parental figures, and once a child knows that this adult is trusted, the groomer can manipulate the child’s trust (Weber, 2015). “Groomers” build trust with a child, parents, and guardian by offering support to a family, building a close relationship with parents, making a child feel special by showing extra attention, and filling voids in a child’s life (Radford, 2015).

Grooming escalates once trust is built through secrecy. A groomer will introduce a secret to a child beyond the realm of a child’s control. For example, a groomer will tell a child a secret but will then explain why this secret cannot be shared because it will somehow cause family members distress. As a result, this “secrecy binds a victim to a predator” because of the threat posed. Eventually, the groomers’ shared “secrets” and reasons of secrecy turn into threats. The secrets told will change from explaining how telling a guardian a secret will cause distress to legitimate threats of death to the child or their family members. No matter how threatened, groomers are terrifyingly successful

because groomers break down barriers with a child by “forging an emotional bond” that gains a child's trust. Once trust is achieved, “accidental” touching occurs. Physical contact of sexual predators often begins as “non-sexual touching” which “desensitizes a child.” The touching eventually “leads to more overt sexual touching” and then the sex crime continues (Weber, 2015).

Of course, the child’s acceptance of this touching is ultimately gained through the groomers strategic manipulation. A child believes that this adult can be trusted so will often not tell an actual parent guardian. It can never be said that a child’s manipulated acceptance of any sexual activity is validated because children do not have the capacity to grant their own consent (The National Center for Victims of Crime, 2012). Children who consider telling a family member what is happening to them are often too afraid because of potential threats to their life or their family lives. Through blackmail, shame, guilt, and fear, a groomer can also manipulate a child’s family into not reporting the sex crime (Radford, 2015). Tragically, in the case of Oxfordshire, Rotherham, and the many other cities where this crime occurred, a majority of the perpetrators “had a background in care” which is how they were able to gain initial access to these children (The Telegraph, 2015).

This explanation is very important in understanding the cause of the sex crimes for the children involved in the Oxfordshire and Rotherham cases, along with other surrounding towns that had this scandal occur. However, this explanation is not enough to analyze how the number of children involved became so large and was able to persist for over a decade. An answer to this question is that the police were aware and did not

intervene. That is the reasons why the crime was able to persist, but the question then becomes, what hindered police from doing their jobs when the crimes were reported.

Quantifying the Facts

The facts reveal inconsistencies in the way this crime was handled. The question that comes naturally is, what made police officials and social workers ignore the problem. Furthermore, how could parents choose to ignore what was happening with their children or accept the fact that they were being disregarded by authority figures. To answer any of these questions, it is important to “fit all the pieces together and understand what was happening.” Once all the facts are compiled, understanding “what allowed the exploitation to occur over such a long period” can be made more clear (Press Association, 2015).

A professor expressed that no matter how many reports are written, “no one knows the true scale of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham over the years” as the number is only estimated. The number is even perhaps not accurately reported to be “approximately 1,400 children” who “were sexually exploited over the full inquiry period, from 1997 to 2013.” (BBC, 2014). Still, the more in depth information surfaces, the more disheartening the information found becomes. In gathering information from all articles, reports revealed that the sex crimes did not only happen in Rotherham and Oxfordshire. Unfortunately, arrests and prosecutions were made “of men in 11 towns and cities.” Some of these other towns include “Oldham, Rochdale, Derby” which are all in close proximity to each one another (BBC, 2015). In Lancashire, northern county of UK, there were 100 prosecutions made while South Yorkshire experienced “no prosecutions.” Inquiries specifically found that the overwhelming number of victims “had been doused in petrol and threatened with being set alight, threatened with guns, made to witness brutally violent rapes, and

threatened they would be next if they told anyone" (BBC, 2014). The realization of these details, although even the most minimal number of children involved in cases of sexual exploitation should be enough, should be cause for immediate intervention. It is appalling to know that although authorities, people who are there to protect anyone from infant children to the elderly, did not step in to do their job.

When it came to police and social services, they had been heavily accused of "fueling a culture of silence" which "allowed hundreds of young white girls to be exploited." It was reported that Detective Chief Inspector Alan Edwards challenged police departments, calling for "an end to the 'damaging taboo' connecting on-street grooming with race." (V

It reported that one senior policeman, Detective Chief Inspector Alan Edwards of West Mercia Police, had called for "an end to the 'damaging taboo' connecting on-street grooming with race", quoting him as saying that "these girls are being passed around and used as meat". (Vallely, 2012). So, what, in the mind of the police and social workers, could be so deterring to overrule protecting thousands of children.

The Answer

In October 2012, when an investigative team was set up to research the sex crime scandal, it was found that the men who committed the sex crimes were "overwhelmingly" men of "Pakistani origin" (BBC, 2015). Because the origins of the perpetrators, police and social workers felt dissuaded from acting on the issue. The inquiry team found that there "were fears among the council staff of being labeled 'racist' if they focused on victim's descriptions of the majority of abusers as 'Asian' men" (BBC, 2014). The identity of these perpetrators somehow became a bigger issue over the sexual exploitation of thousands of

children across the UK. Concerns over self-integrity allowed for girls to be abused by groomers. Rather than focusing on the fact that “a person” either raped, beat, abused, molested, sold, manipulated, children across many cities, because “these people” happen to be Pakistani, the humanness of the situation was completely dismissed. With these findings, the Police of South Yorkshire “denied it had been reluctant to take child sexual abuse or the ‘ethnic origin had been a factor in its decisions” (BBC, 2015). Tactlessly, authorities had no grounds for dismissing claims that children of their areas were being sexually exploited.

Although nothing can justify the fact that authorities chose to ignore the issue based on their self-esteem, their lack of heroism could be explained through the UK’s history with Pakistani immigrants. Immigration from Pakistan to Britain increased in the 1950s with the rise of Britain's need for labor before the Commonwealth Immigrants Act that restricted entry into the UK (Communities and Local Government Publications, 2009). However, in the 1960s into the early 1970s, the “voucher system” allowed Pakistani immigrants to arrange jobs for relatives and friends to live in the UK. Many men were brought to London to work in Northern England towns to work in textile mills. When the textile mill industry dwindled, an estimated “one in every eight Pakistani men in Britain was a taxi or minicab-driver.” Overall, however, Pakistani men were marginalized. Still, despite their treatment, the population of Pakistanis grew as they began to bring their “parents and marriage partners,” a trend that has persisted ever since. (The Economist, 2013).

The Pakistani population, which has about 92% identifying as Muslim, is spread evenly throughout the UK but is the most “concentrated” in the counties of Lancashire,

Yorkshire, the West Midlands, and Greater London. Today, every one in five people identify as Pakistani, making the Pakistani population the second largest overseas population in the UK (Armstrong, 2012). Contrary to the large Pakistani population, they are also considered “the most disadvantaged ethnic” group. Britain has a multicultural population, however, there is a lot of animosity among the Pakistani population and those of British origin. In general, communities in the UK coexist in a respectable manner. However, there is a sense among the Pakistani population that the British will never accept them as truly British. Conversely, there is a sense among the British that the Pakistani population displays a lack of interests in “integrating.” “Integrating” happens to be a word that is not favored by the Pakistani community because it seems hypocritical when there is a low level “of awareness and lack of interests on both the immigrants side and the “host community.” (Communities and Local Government Publications, 2009).

Islamophobia

For the Pakistani population, there is also the issue of Islamophobia, causing the population to feel unsupported by the British with the negative perceptions shown of the Pakistani community through the UK media (Communities and Local Government Publications, 2009). Islamophobia is define as the “unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.” Perceiving Muslims as a real threat, those who are Islamophobic generally have the following attitudes towards those who practice Islam; that Islam cannot adapt to new realities, that Islam does not share common values with other major religions and faiths, that Islam as a religion is inferior to the West, and the most common fear that Islam is a religion of violence that supports terrorism and has a violent political ideology. “Islamophobia is a contrived fear” and prejudice that as a

results wrongly rationalizes the “necessity to deploy violence as a tool to achieve ‘civilization rehab’ of Muslims” (University of California, Berkeley, 2014)

A report made by Amnesty International found that Muslims, who openly show their faith, wrongfully suffer widespread discriminations in Europe. Throughout Europe, there have been bans on the veils that Muslim women wear and exclusion from jobs and education due to traditional forms of dress. While women are often denied job or prevented from attending classes, men have been dismissed for wearing beards “associated with Islam.” Of course, rights groups declare that “bans on full-face veils” or any traditional dress “cannot be justified” and groups such as Amnesty International recommend “the creation of national anti-discrimination bodies” to support the rights of Muslim communities. (BBC News, 2012)

The “Race Issue”

With this context, the reason why authorities in the UK chose to ignore reports of sex crimes, is because perpetrators were all identified as being of Asian descent, specifically Pakistani. This may be completely unjustifiable but there is a framework behind the reason authorities of the UK would avoid an issue they believe involved race.

Along the lines of race, one reason why authorities would want to avoid a race conversation altogether has its roots planted in the UK’s relationship with people of Pakistani descent. Although noted earlier that the Pakistani population live cohesively alongside their British counterparts, there has been a recent reboot of tensions among the communities. The recent disturbance occurred when the “minister responsible for community cohesion” asked hundreds of Muslim leaders to demonstrate “how faith in Islam can be a part of British identity,” to create community cohesion (Hooper, 2015). In

2001, the concept of “community cohesion” was established after a number of “race riots” occurred in England that year.

The first of these riots began in May 2011, noted as the “worst ethnically-motivated riots” in the UK since 1985. These riots were prompted by long periods of tensions between local communities and South Asian Muslim communities, specifically Pakistani people. In June, the second riot occurred, because of a sequence of events following the wrongful arrest of an South Asian man. In July the final but intense set of riots occurred in West Yorkshire between locals and the South Asian population, consisting of Pakistanis, Indians, and Bangladeshis. (Cantle, 2015)

Out of these riots, the idea of community cohesion had the intentions of creating programs that would tackle inequalities and build understanding between groups, “breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions about the “other.” There was also the concept of “parallel lives” to describe how two communities, white and Asian, “had little or no contact and had developed separately,” an idea the concept of community cohesion aimed to change. From then, there were interaction programs and dialogues set up from 2002 onward, attempting to create more acceptance of the South Asian communities. (Cantle, 2015)

Eric Pickles, the secretary of state for communities and local government, was the person who actually wrote to “hundreds of imams, imams being Muslim leaders who lead prayers in Mosques, ” with the intentions of tackling “violent extremism and demonstrate ‘how faith in Islam can be a part of British identity.’” His actions provoked angry responses from the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) along with other leaders of the Muslim community. Minister Pickles said, “there is a need to lay out more clearly than

ever before what being British Muslim means today: proud of your faith and proud of your country.” Minister Pickles may not have intended to provoke or offend the Muslim community, however, this is how his message was taken. Leaders of the Muslim community believed Minister Pickles suggested the government “appeared to be seeking to shift the blame for the failings of its counter-extremism policy and the security services onto Muslim communities.” (Hooper, 2015)

Despairingly, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, disregarded criticism believing the letter was “reasonable, sensible, and moderate.” He followed that by saying, “anyone, frankly, reading this [the letter of Minister Eric Pickles], who has a problem with it, I think really has a problem. The statement of the prime minister did not help, as a leader from the Ramadhan Foundation, Mohammed Shafiq, expressed, “All we get is the government and ministries seeing us through the prism of security and terrorism.” Shafiq continued on to articulate frustration with the idea that Muslims needed to be “reconciled” with the British identity while also reprimanding the government for not working directly with the MCB. (Hooper, 2015)

In response, the secretary-general of the MCB, Shuja Shafi, countered Minister’s Pickles claims suggesting extremism takes place at mosques and rejected the idea that Muslims should prove their loyalty to a country they are already a part of. The chair of The Islamic Human Rights Commission, Massoud Shadjareh, also called on the government to not only reach out to Muslim leaders, but to work with them directly as he wrote, “before the government starts preaching to people to subscribe to slogans about British values, let us all sit down and decide what British values actually are.” He explained that if the British government is not willing to have conversations directly with Muslim leaders and

community members, including the youth, “expecting the Muslim community to conform to an undefined notion of 'Britishness' is fanning an Islamophobic agenda.” Not all reactions from the Muslim community were negative however. The president of the Islamic Society of Britain, agreed that the letter written by Minister Pickles was “unusual,” but agreed that as Minister Pickles prescribed, mosques could do more to “resist and counter the pressures put upon them by small and loud anti-democracy voices that push a ‘them and us’ portrayal of what is actually a plural, diverse, and constantly changing social reality” (Hooper, 2015)

All this being said, the police and social workers of Rotherham may have completely failed at their job, failing to protect it’s people, but with such high tensions, perhaps it could be assumed that authority figures were trying to avoid being blamed for racial profiling. Or perhaps the authorities did not want to deal with another scandal between the Muslim Pakistani community and the government. Whatever the reason, the stress of the issue is real and very serious for both sides. Although, no matter how uncomfortable the issue of race and religion may be, ignoring a crime absolutely caused more harm than good.

Tackling a Sensitive Issue

Established now is the fact that there is a deep history of mistrust between the Pakistani community and British authorities. With the Pakistani community marginalized from the time Pakistani people arrived in the UK, riots based on race, high tensions with the government, and the concept of parallel lives describing little interaction between the British and Pakistani community, the Pakistani community has gone through tough times living in the UK. With regard to that, the fact still remains that all of the men convicted for

the sex crimes against the young children in Oxfordshire, Rotherham, along with other cities, were of Pakistani descent. With a deep history of racial tensions, race was put into consideration for authorities when they were made aware of the crimes.

Although the police and social workers chose to ignore the issues entirely due to the race issue, many groups who knew of the convictions expressed strong opinions. A few far right parties including the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defense League expressed very intense sentiments. In 2012, one leader of the BNP, Nick Griffin, voiced his opinion on the matter, claiming that Muslims were the common denominator between the mass grooming of young girls from the English community and were the “only” group of people doing so. Griffin continued on rambunctiously saying through the Koran and the Hadith, Muslim scriptures, along with “the expressions of what the Prophet did in his life,” one could “see where Muslim pedophiles comes from.” The outlandish claim, of course, was misinformed. Islam as a religion is not synonymous with crime. Statistics show that in Greater Manchester, for example, out of all sex offenders, only five percent of perpetrators were Asian. Nonetheless, “in Derby, Leeds, Blackpool, Blackburn, Rotherham, Sheffield, Rochdale, Oldham, and Birmingham” who were all involved in the 18 child sexual exploitation trials since 1997, most of the men “convicted were of Pakistani descent.” (Valleley, 2012)

Tackling the question, of race related to crime, is not one that many pursue because of how sensitive of a question that is. With these cases, “some have focused on how the victims were white and their tormentors” were “nearly all of Pakistani heritage.” Naturally with that notion, the question that arose was whether race played a role in the crimes. Such

a question grazes sensitivities about race that are challenging when societies all throughout the world have such a hard time tackling race issues.

After hearing details of the sex crimes concerning predominantly Asian men as the perpetrators, former home secretary, Jack Straw, made the mistake of saying that “some UK Pakistani men saw white girls as ‘easy meat’ for sex abuse. Although he was right in also saying that “there was a specific problem in some areas where Pakistani men ‘targeted vulnerable white girls,’” it was wrong of him to generalize all Pakistani men. Still evidence shows that there is a significant problem with these sex offenders who happen to be of Pakistani descent. What’s important is not allowing the problem to be “hijacked by the far right,” to not distract from finding ways to fix the problem rather than only condemning the people involved. (Akwagyiram, 2012)

At the sentencing of the Rochdale gang, Judge Gerald claimed that the men originating from Pakistan and the one from Afghanistan were involved in atrocities because they were not involved in their communities or religion. To an extent, Mohammad Shafique of the Ramadhan Foundation agreed. Wanting to promote better understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims, he said that “clearly as members of the Pakistani community” they have a problem to fix and speak out against. Rather than making religion the unifying factor, Shafique made community the connection.

A former police detective and child protection expert, Mark Williams Thomas, studied trends between race and sex crimes. He found that more white men were involved in attacks in isolation and grooming while Pakistani men were more involved in the transfer of girls for sex. However, the former detective said, “he was unsure why the trends exist,” but was sure that the issue was complex. Thomas believed that the reason behind

people who commit sex crimes “could involve factors such as disparities in the age of sexual consent” and the fragmented perceptions many people from all parts of the world have of women. Still, it is difficult to verify statistics about child exploitation and race. The report reviewed by the former police detective also stressed that “conclusions about ethnicity cannot be drawn from the data available because it relies on limited nationwide information” from “a limited number of areas.” (Akwagyiram, 2012)

Ms. Helen Brayley, of whom former investigator Thomas cited his findings, explained that knowing what is going on and who is involved is very difficult. The first problem is that different police forces and agencies use varying terminology “such as ‘localized grooming,’ ‘street grooming,’ and ‘internal trafficking,’ which all have slightly different meanings.” Therefore, “you’re not always comparing ‘like’ with ‘like’” since Ms. Brayley believes the police have a challenging job having to categorizing the scale of problems and trends involving perpetrators. Professor Malcolm Cowburn, a criminologist at Sheffield Hallam University, studied the topic of sexual violence, said he “has not seen any empirical evidence to say that one group of people has greater proclivity to sexual violence than any other” (Akwagyiram, 2012).

This proves that it cannot be said that a certain ethnicity is linked to any specific crime. A person, who commits a crime of sexual assault, does not commit the crime because that is a part of their race, heritage, or background, but there is a deeper person issue having nothing to do with ethnic origin or religion.

Professor Cowburn actually believes that there is a much larger issue at hand. Much more complex and grand than trying to tie race to crime. The problem of these sex crimes is the way some men who are involved in sex crimes view women, children, and their

sexual rights. Furthering this explanation, Professor Cowburn says that the issue is a lack of “empathy” because sex offenders who commit these crimes do not show any empathy for the people they harm and are often incapable of doing so. (Akwagyiram, 2012)

Conclusions

After the sentencing of the Rochdale gang, Judge Gerald Clifton made his statement regarding the case. To the men involved, Judge Clifton said the following. “All of you treated, [the victims] as though they were worthless and beyond respect.” Judge Clifton continued on to explain how their lack of community involvement played a role in their decision, giving “credence to the idea that culture issues were involved.” Then Judge Clifton went on to directly address accusations that race and ethnicity were the sole reasons why these men committed the sex crimes. To those who judged the men accused, Judge Clifton said, “some of you, when arrested, said it was triggered by race.” “This,” said Judge Clifton, “is nonsense.” “What triggered prosecution was [their] lust and greed.” (Vallely, 2012)

The response of Judge Clifton is the way the case should have been handled from the very beginning. There was a problem involving sex crimes that was held back from justice. Because of fear, the crimes were allowed to thrive for an outrageous span of time because people were made race issue rather than the crime. Yet, race should not have been a factor to begin with. Race issues interfered when race should not have been a determining factor.

These instances reveal what happens when race becomes bigger than the issue, whatever the issue may be. Rather than seeing that a group of “people” were committing sex crimes against children, the issue was muddles with the details of race. Needing to

specifically label what a person is should be trivial when it comes to crimes of any kind. A crime is a crime no matter who commits the act and the ways in which a crime is pursued should not be determined by what racial historical tensions exists.

However, we live in a world where race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and culture are determining factors because the world has had, and still has, many difficulties accepting people for who they are. People experience judgment and are marginalized everyday because of what they look like and where they come from. How a person identifies himself or herself somehow becomes more important than an actual issue. With this being the way the world is, problems become convoluted with details that don't actually matter when making decisions to give people the justice they deserve.

In this case, race interfered with redeeming justice for the thousands of children involved in the sex crimes of Oxfordshire, Rotherham, and the countless cities and those that may still be unknown. If the police and social workers had ignored race entirely, the sex crimes that occurred from 1997 to 2015 could have been stopped a decade ago. There may have been backlash regarding the race of the perpetrators, but there could have been an opportunity to educate the community about sex crimes and how ethnicity actually isn't a factor at all. Nevertheless, recent prosecutions are occurring, so at least the issue is being pursued. There is still a chance to educate communities on how to prevent grooming crimes and a chance to continue attempting to build a more accepting community, breaking down barriers to build trust, regardless of where a person originates from.

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