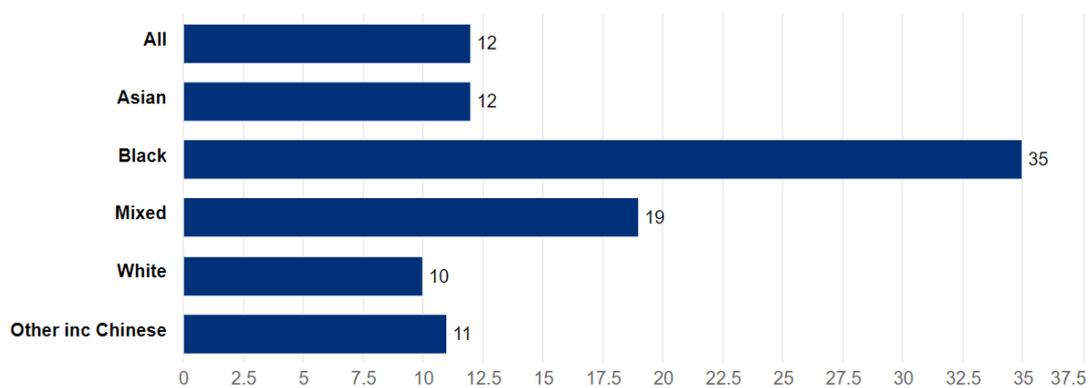


## Has financial background and race impacted the crime rates in the UK for the past 10 years and why, and what are the ways to fix it?

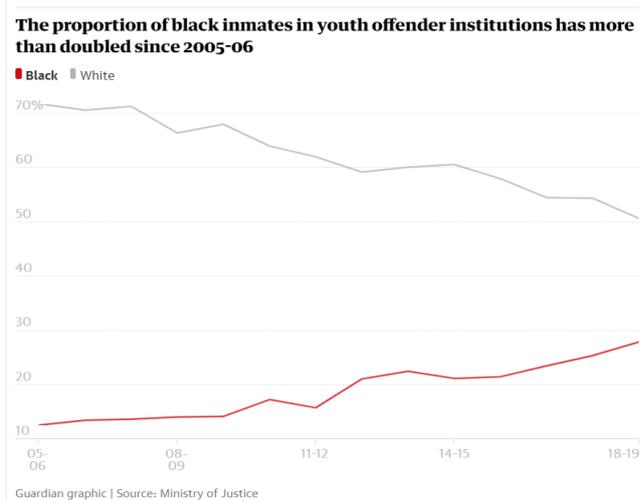
Recently, there has been a debate on if there really is a relationship between ethnicity, financial background, and crime rates. It would be important to investigate if that really is the case as it would be essential to make sure that UK's society and law enforcement ideally treats everyone fairly. However, if that isn't the case we should investigate the procedures the government could take in order try and improve and unfairness within its systems.

Firstly, when we look at the data provided by the government, we can already see a disproportionate amount of arrests for black people in comparison to white people. The website tells us that black people were three times more likely than white people. Other ethnicities had a somewhat low arrest rate in comparison to black ethnicities as shown in the table below.<sup>1</sup>(GOV.UK 2019)

Arrest rate per 1,000 people by ethnicity



Not only this, but whereas the proportion of white inmates in youth offender institutions overall decreased in the past decade, there has been a steady increase in black inmates during the same time,



shown in the graph below.<sup>2</sup> ( Vikram Dodd and Mattha Busby 2020).

Furthermore, there is also data from 2018 that shows us that the lower income a person earns, the more likely they are to be involved in a crime. According to the document we can learn that households who have incomes

<sup>1</sup> GOV.UK 2019, *Ethnicity Facts and Figures*, GOV.UK viewed 19 June 2020, <<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-the-law/policing/number-of-arrests/latest>>

<sup>2</sup> Vikram Dodd and Mattha Busby 2020, *Former top black Met police officers says racism blighted their careers*, The Guardian viewed 19 June 2020 < <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/14/former-top-met-police-officers-say-racism-blighted-their-careers-black>>

that are lower than £10,000 in comparison to those with incomes higher or equal to £50,000 were:

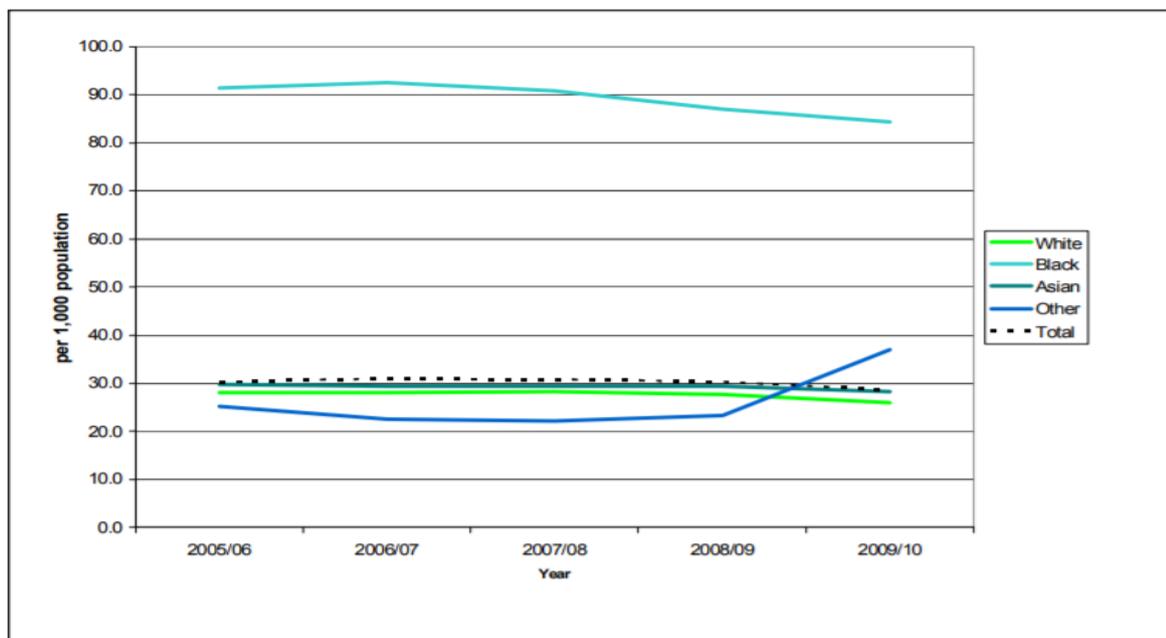
- ‘Twice as more likely to be burgled or to suffer violence with injury.’
- ‘Three times as more likely to be robbed or be raped/ have rape attempted on them.’  
(Peter Cuthbertson, Civitas).<sup>3</sup>

Not only were they seen to be affected by crime more often, but according to research conducted in the UK and the US, they concluded that children raised up in households with lower wages, convicted parents or low school attainment were more likely to grow up to be involved in criminal behaviour.<sup>4</sup>(Kim Williams, Vea Papadopoulou and Natalie Booth Ministry 2012)

There may be many factors that explain why minorities and lower earning individuals seem to be more commonly involved in UK’s crime statistics in comparison to the white upperclassmen. It is understandable that lower earning individuals may resort to crime especially if they don’t earn enough to support themselves or their families. Crime may offer quick, large sums of money, which explains why it seems that more poorer households seem to suffer from crime but commit more crimes at the same time.

However, it’s not as clear on why there is such a difference in arrest rates between different ethnicities, white people having the lowest arrest rates and black people having the highest rates as mentioned above. There are two main possibilities in this situation. Either that black people commit crimes than other ethnicities, or that there is racism in the law and the law enforcement. Both possibilities are

**Figure B: Arrests per 1,000 population (based on PEEGs) by officer observed ethnicity, England and Wales 2005/06 to 2009/10**



<sup>3</sup> Peter Cuthbertson July 2018, *Poverty and Crime: Why a new war on criminals would help the poor most*, CIVITAS viewed 22 June 2020 <https://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/povertyandcrime.pdf>

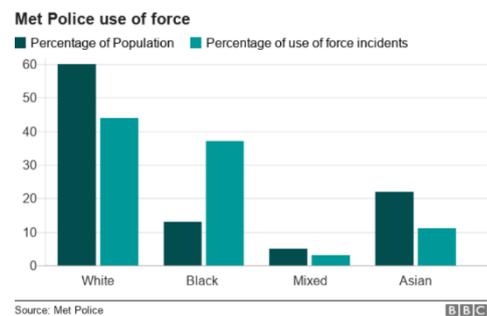
<sup>4</sup> Kim Williams, Vea Papadopoulou and Natalie Booth Ministry 2012, *Prisoners’ childhood and family backgrounds*, CIVITAS viewed 22 June 2020

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/278837/prisoners-childhood-family-backgrounds.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278837/prisoners-childhood-family-backgrounds.pdf)

quite grim and can be difficult to face directly. What's more shocking is that in 2010, it was still a similar table, in fact it was worse. On the table below, we can see that in 2009/2010 the arrest rates were twice higher than in 2018 at about 85 black people arrested per 1000 black people (GOV.UK 2010) <sup>5</sup> whereas in 2018 it was at around 35 per 1000 that were arrested.

Although the situation has improved, it is still the case that black people are the ones who are being arrested more consistently. And once we take a deeper look inside the statistics, we can learn that both possibilities mentioned above have a fraction of truth to them. It's clear that the black ethnicity had less people to set a good example to the younger children of black ethnicities. For example, whereas white male British teachers made up 85.9 percent of male schoolteachers (it was the same percentage for white female British teachers), whereas black African and black Caribbean male teachers combined, made up 2.3 percent of the male schoolteachers. (GOV.UK 2020)<sup>6</sup>. With such a low number of black teachers, it would be easy to understand that young black children could often distant themselves from education as there would be less teachers in schools that would understand how they felt. Though it would be ideal if all ethnicities could understand each other, it can not always be the case. Having white British teachers take up most of the teaching staff, we need to question if the society and the environment that young black children grow up in is to blame.

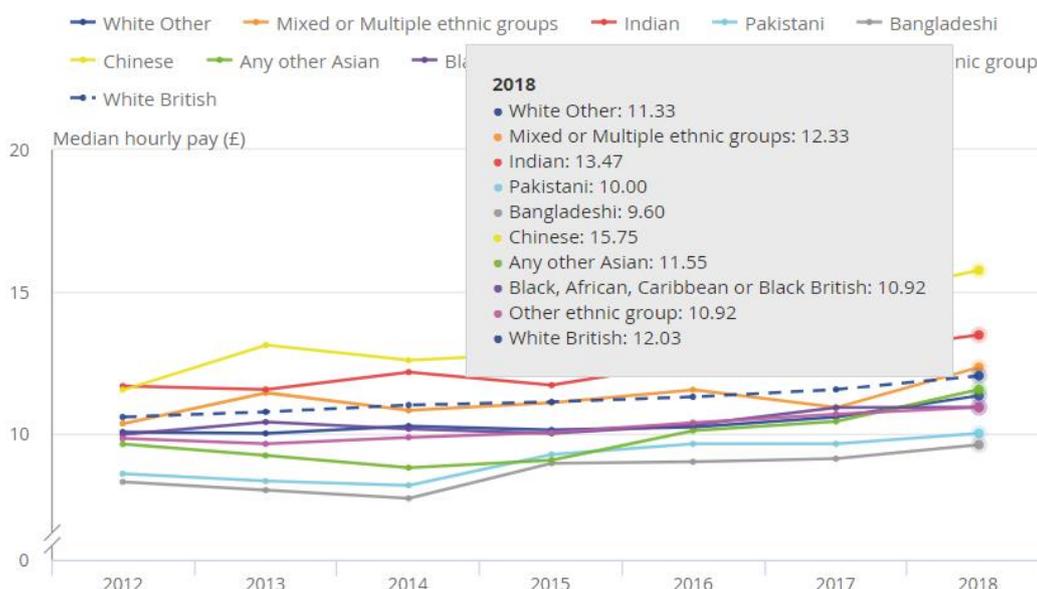
It would be sensible to also look at the probable discrimination within the police force. We can immediately see a disproportionate amount of white police officers in Britain. 93.1 percent of police officers were white whereas only 1.2 percent of police officers were black. (GOV.UK 2019)<sup>7</sup>. Having such a disproportionate number of white policemen in proportion to any other ethnicity would most definitely mean that the police force could be very one sided in arresting and other punishments due to the lack of cultures mixing within the force to help the officers keep an open mind. In the table below we can see that the Met Police use of force on black people are almost as high as white people even though white people were shown to be the ethnicity with the highest population in the UK. (S Francis 2018)<sup>8</sup>. From these statistics, it is obvious that there is a clear unfairness towards black people in the UK.



<sup>5</sup> GOV.UK 2010, *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2010*, GOV.UK viewed 23 June 2020, <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/219967/stats-race-cjs-2010.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219967/stats-race-cjs-2010.pdf)>

<sup>6</sup> GOV.UK 2020, *School Teacher Workforce*, GOV.UK viewed 23 June 2020 <[<sup>7</sup> GOV.UK 2019, \*Police Workforce\*, GOV.UK viewed 24 June 2020 <\[<sup>8</sup> S Francis 2018, \\*Met Police 'use force more often against black people\\*, BBC News viewed on 24 June 2020 <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-44214748>>\]\(https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/police-workforce/latest#:~:text=This%20data%20shows%20that%3A,from%20the%20Other%20ethnic%20group></a>></p>
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Furthermore, this links onto people with lower wages turning to crime more often, as other ethnic minorities excluding Chinese, Indian, or mixed-race individuals, had lower pay than white people. (Tom Evans 2019)<sup>9</sup>.



At this point, it can not be too surprising that ethnic minorities had higher arrest rates than white people, and we can see that there is a clear classist, racist reason on why race and financial background effects crime rates of the UK.

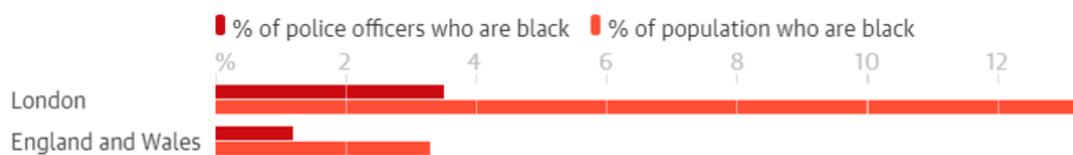
Overall, we can conclude that crime rates in the UK are most certainly effected by race and financial background, and overall, we can see most usually it is the ethnic minorities with lower wages that get involved in crime from the data seen so far. To make sure the social inequalities that effect crime rates are fixed, we would have to look at possible ways that would improve the situation so that the law enforcement force in the UK has a more fair view and treatments towards the ethnic minorities and the lower earning households.

The main way in which the government could lower crime rates from households with lower incomes would be to increase the funding to improve the quality of their lives. This could be done with funding education, funding rehabilitation centres, raising the amount of money given out through benefits, etc. Improving the lives of young children from low income families could most certainly lead them away from the life of crime that would offer an alternative out of poverty. Furthermore, this would increase employment rates for ethnic minorities as more of them would have a high level of education that would get them a job with a good salary. This would also mean more ethnic minorities being involved in the education department, which would allow the children learning at school experience

<sup>9</sup> Tom Evans 2019, *Ethnicity Pay Gaps in Great Britain: 2018*, Office for National Statistics viewed 24 June 2020 <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2018>>

and observe a vast range of cultures at school, which would help tackle the systemic racism that has ethnic minorities at a large disadvantage.

The second way in which the government could help tackle the problem of low wages, ethnic minorities and its relation to crime could be by fighting the systemic racism in the police force. This has most recently come into light with the George Floyd incident in America. After it came to light that there was a clear difference between how white people and black people were treated in America by the police, it was also claimed that it was no different in the UK, even if it was not as severe. There are also multiple ways in which this could be solved. Firstly, by increasing the diversity of ethnicities in the police force, it would help tackle the racial discrimination in the police force. In the most recent data that was available, it was shown that black people were extremely under-represented in the police force, (Vikram Dodd and Mattha Busby 2020)<sup>10</sup> which may explain why some police actions seem to be prejudiced against black people. Furthermore, the previous black police officers recently came forward claiming that they were treated differently within the police force. Pat Gallan, who was one of the highest-ranking female officers claimed that she “experienced both overt and subtle racism – internal more often than external and from all ranks.” (Vikram Dodd and Mattha Busby 2020)<sup>11</sup>



Such data and quotes show us how much the police force lacks in equal treatment towards different races. However it is encouraging to see that the police have announced to increase their efforts to allow the police force to become more diverse in the ethnicity of its officers, as Chief constable Ian Hopkins told The Guardian that: “We recognise we have been far too slow to increase diversity and we know there is still a long way to go so that policing is truly reflective of the communities we serve.”

In conclusion, there has been a definite relationship between race, financial background and crime rates. This could be seen as a result of the UK’s lack of support for the weaker parts of society, but it could also be seen as a lack of effort from the communities that are seen committing more crime. In the end, it’s clear that it is necessary that there needs to be effort from both the government and the people who are more ‘open’ to crime. Furthermore, the data showed a link between race and financial background, as most ethnicities were earning below white people on average were also being arrested more often than white people. This showed the social disadvantage that ethnic minorities went through. With the pressure of low wages, and the systemic racism within the UK’s police force, it was in fact not too surprising that it was the ethnic minorities who were being arrested more often. As a result, in order to fix this unfairness, we would need more support for the ethnic minorities from the government by recruiting more people from ethnic minorities into the police force. Furthermore, with

<sup>10</sup> Vikram Dodd and Mattha Busby 2020, *Former top black Met police officers says racism blighted their careers*, The Guardian viewed 24 June 2020 < <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/14/former-top-met-police-officers-say-racism-blighted-their-careers-black>>

<sup>11</sup> Vikram Dodd and Mattha Busby 2020, *Former top black Met police officers says racism blighted their careers*, The Guardian viewed 24 June 2020 < <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/14/former-top-met-police-officers-say-racism-blighted-their-careers-black>>

more discouragement and support attract lower earning individuals away from crime would also help lower the crime rates.