

Sociology Transition Work

Week 3



Key questions in sociology: is modern British society fair?

- Is the education system fair?
- Is the family fair?
- Is the criminal justice system fair?

Institutional Racism

On the 25th May 2020 George Floyd, a 46-year-old resident of Minnesota, USA, became yet another victim of police brutality as he was killed in police custody while unarmed. Floyd's death has prompted thousands of protesters to march in cities around the country demanding justice and an end to police violence.

The number of police killings in the US disproportionately affects African Americans. Despite only making up 13 percent of the US population, Black Americans are two-and-a-half times as likely as white Americans to be killed by the police.

What allows this police brutality to continue is a system of institutional racism (the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin". It is seen in "processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people).

Institutional racism doesn't just exist in the US, it exists in the UK too. From the corrupt police investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the treatment of the Grenfell families to only one black British students being admitted to Corpus Christie College, Oxford University last year.

Task 1: Watch the two videos and summarise institutional racism in your own words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZUvjAJGFkM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XL5f45TJqM> (THIS SHORT FILM CONTAINS VERY STRONG LANGUAGE, AS WELL AS SOME VIOLENT AND UPSETTING SCENES)

Stephen Lawrence

On 22 April 1993, at the age of just 18, Stephen was murdered in an unprovoked racist attack. He didn't know his killers and his killers didn't know him.

After the initial police investigation, five suspects were arrested but not convicted.

A public inquiry into the handling of Stephen's case was held in 1998, leading to the publication of the Macpherson Report, which has been called 'one of the most important moments in the modern history of criminal justice in Britain'.

It led to profound cultural changes in attitudes to racism, to the law and to police practice. It also paved the way for a greater understanding of discrimination of all forms and new equalities legislation.

Task 2: Watch the video and summarise the Stephen Lawrence case in your own words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsHwKPE0mjU> (THIS FILM CONTAINS VERY STRONG LANGUAGE, AS WELL AS SOME VIOLENT AND UPSETTING SCENES)