

AC1.2 – THE UNDER-REPORTING OF CRIME

Crimes go unreported for variety of reasons – these may be into two distinct types – **personal reasons** AND **social and cultural reasons**.

For full marks on this section you need to discuss both of these (Personal and Social and Cultural)

PERSONAL REASONS

FEAR: VICTIMS OF CRIME MAY FEAR THE CONSEQUENCES IF THEY REPORT CRIME. THEY MAY BE WORRIED ABOUT PERSONAL SAFETY OF THE ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES. FOR EXAMPLE AN ABUSED PARTNER MAY FEAR HER PARTNER BUT SHE MAY ALSO WORRY ABOUT HER CHILDREN BEING TAKEN INTO CARE IF REPORTS THE ABUSE.

SHAME: SOMETIME PEOPLE DON'T REPORT CRIME BECAUSE THEY ARE EMBARRASSED OR ASHAMED OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THAT CRIME. THIS IS PARTICULARLY A FEATURE OF SEXUAL CRIMES, BUT ALL CRIMES CAN CARRY AN ELEMENT OF SHAME. FOR EXAMPLE, AN ELDERLY PERSON WHO IS A VICTIM OF A DISTRACTION ROBBERY MAY FEEL EMBARRASSED THAT THEY WERE TAKEN IN BY THE PERPETRATOR.

DISINTEREST: ANOTHER REASON THAT PEOPLE MAY NOT REPORT CRIME IS THAT THEY MAY NOT CARE ABOUT IT. FOR EXAMPLE, YOUNG PEOPLE MAY NOT FEEL INCLINED TO REPORT OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE FOR SMOKING MARIJUANA IN THE PARK, WHEREAS AN OLDER PERSON MIGHT.

NOT PERSONALLY AFFECTED: SIMILAR TO DISINTEREST, PEOPLE MIGHT NOT FEEL PERSONALLY AFFECTED BY A CRIME AND NOT REPORT IT. FOR EXAMPLE, A WHITE PERSON WHO WITNESSES RACIAL ABUSE OF AN ASIAN PERSON MAY DECIDE THAT IT IS NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS, AN ASIAN WHO WITNESSED THE SAME THING MAY TAKE A DIFFERENT VIEW.

SOCIAL and CULTURAL REASONS

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE: SOMETIMES WE DON'T REPORT CRIMES BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW THAT A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED. FOR EXAMPLE, MAY WHITE COLLAR CRIMES ARE VERY COMPLEX AND THE OFFENCES ARE NOT OBVIOUS, FOR EXAMPLE TAX AVOIDANCE IS LEGAL BUT TAX EVASION IS ILLEGAL, WE MAY NOT KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO.

COMPLEXITY: THIS IS SIMILAR TO LACK OF KNOWLEDGE, CRIMES CAN BE VERY COMPLEX, AND WE MAY NOT BE SURE THAT A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DECIDE ON WHETHER WE HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF CRIME OR JUST BAD MANNERS/RUDENESS WHEN SOMEBODY ATTACKS US ONLINE.

LACK OF MEDIA INTEREST: MANY CRIMES DO NOT INTENT THE PUBLIC OR THE MEDIA (THE TWO MAY BE RELATED). FOR EXAMPLE, SURVEY DATA SHOW THAT PUBLIC IS NOT OVERLY CONCERNED WITH PEOPLE USING MARIJUANA, AS A RESULT PEOPLE RARELY REPORT IT TO THE POLICE; THE PRESS IS SIMILARLY RELAXED ABOUT MARIJUANA USE AND MANY NEWSPAPER ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED SUPPORTING DECRIMINALISATION OR LEGAL CHANGE.

PUBLIC CONCERN ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME DRUGS ARE LOOKED ON MUCH MORE NEGATIVELY BY THE PRESS AND PUBLIC, FOR EXAMPLE ECSTASY USAGE WAS THE SUBJECT OF A PRESS DRIVEN MORAL PANIC IN THE 90S AND THE PUBLIC WAS MUCH LESS TOLERANT OF ITS USE.

CULTURAL REASONS (CULTURE BOUND CRIME): SOME CRIMES ARE NOT REPORTED BECAUSE OF CULTURAL REASONS. THE UNITED KINGDOM IS A DIVERSE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY; THE NORMS AND VALUES OF SOME CULTURAL GROUPS CAN BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF SOCIETY. FOR EXAMPLE, FORCED MARRIAGE AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION ARE ACCEPTED PRACTICES IN SOME SECTIONS OF SOCIETY. IN FACT, SOME MEMBERS OF THESE CULTURAL GROUPS MAY BE UNAWARE THAT THESE PRACTICES ARE