

BOOK SAYS PREJUDICE IS A PROBLEM HERE TOO**SCOTS'
RACIST
MURDER
RATE IS
HIGHER
THAN UK**

Authors say that
sectarianism is
not taken seriously
across country

BY **DAVID CLEGG**
Political editor

RACIST murders are more common in Scotland than in the rest of the UK, according to a shock academic study into the extent of prejudice.

A new book to be launched this week insists the belief Scotland is immune to racism and "culturally different" to England is a "misleading fantasy".

The authors of No

Problem Here: Understanding Racism in Scotland cite official crime figures to prove there is a very real problem north of the Border.

The analysis shows the rate of racist murders is higher on average in Scotland than in the UK as a whole.

Between 2000 and 2013, there were 1.8 murders per million people with a known or suspected race element in Scotland. The

equivalent figure for the UK was just 1.3 murders per million people.

Carol Young, senior policy officer for the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, said the stats show the idea that Scotland doesn't have a problem with racism is false.

She writes in the book: "There's a perception that Scotland has less of a problem with racism than other areas of the UK,

perhaps best summed up by the phrase, 'We're all Jock Tamson's bairns'.

"But, regardless of popular opinion, the statistics suggest otherwise. Between 2000

and 2013, the per capita rate of murders with a known or suspected racist element in Scotland was higher than in the rest of the UK – 1.8 per million people in the population compared to 1.3.

"In 2013-2014, 4807 racist



incidents were recorded by police in Scotland. That's equivalent of 92 incidents every week, without accounting for the many cases that go unreported."

The book, edited by experts from Glasgow University, also claims bigotry towards people from an Irish background is not taken seriously enough as it is defined as sectarianism.

Young added: "You could be white-skinned and still identifiably minority ethnic in many circumstances. Skin tone has not protected Jewish people, Irish people, Gypsy/traveller communities or new European migrants from racism."

The book will be launched tomorrow at a meeting of the Scottish Parliament's new cross-party group on tackling Islamophobia.

Neil Davidson, a sociology lecturer at Glasgow University who co-edited the book, warned Scotland could not be complacent about racism.

He said: "The idea that there is 'no problem', or at least much less of a problem, has grown for three reasons. One is that the Irish-Catholic presence – the largest-ever migrant group to settle in Scotland – tends to be discussed in the context of 'sectarianism', a concept which treats Catholics and Protestants as equivalent and ignores the racism directed towards the former.

"The second is the relatively small size of the migration to Scotland from the Indian sub-continent and especially from the Caribbean, which did not mean that migrants did not suffer racism, just that it was much less visible than in Birmingham or London.

"Finally, the movements for devolution and independence have involved the idea that Scotland is 'culturally' different from England, and that part of this difference involves the Scots being more 'welcoming', 'tolerant' and so on.

"The editors and contributors to our book think these are misleading fantasies, which ignore the historical experience of Irish Catholics and the contemporary experience of Muslims, Roma and other BAME groups.

"Whatever our views on Scottish independence, a better Scotland will only be built by confronting the evil of racism rather than pretending it does not exist."

Labour MSP Anas Sarwar, who chairs the cross-party group, added: "Scotland is an open and diverse country but we should never allow our national pride to blind us to the fact that good and bad people live everywhere.

"In recent years, we have seen the rise of Scottish exceptionalism – the idea

that somehow just because we are Scottish and live in Scotland that we're less intolerant than our neighbours.

"It is not talking Scotland down to expose this myth. We can't hope to eradicate everyday sexism and homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia unless we acknowledge it exists in our workplaces, university and college campuses and playgrounds.

"Our task is to make the unconscious bias conscious so people can challenge themselves and then as a country we can aim to defeat prejudice in the long-term."



KUNAL'S STORY

Naval officer's murderer said he had 'done a Paki'

CHRISTOPHER Miller was jailed in 2009 for the "incomprehensible" racist murder of an Indian naval officer.

The 25-year-old was found guilty of the unprovoked killing of Kunal Mohanty, 30, who had been in Glasgow to sit his captain's exams.

Miller confronted Mohanty as he was walking to a fast-food restaurant near the Citizens Theatre and

slashed his neck open with a knife. CCTV cameras later captured Miller "celebrating" his attack. He later told his brother he had "done a Paki".

Judge John Beckett told the High Court in Glasgow the unprovoked attack was "as incomprehensible as it was evil".

Mohanty's wife was expecting the couple's first child at the time of the murder.





VICTIM Kunal Mohanty was attacked and killed in a Glasgow street. Picture: PA



GRIEVING Kunal's parents Suman and Debendra with a portrait of their son



CALLOUS Miller minutes after killing. Record story, left

