

EDITORIAL

For many, the relationship between crime and the economy is both controversial and difficult to prove. Certainly, current governmental thinking has attempted to remove any suggestion of a link between crime and socio-economic factors.

However as **Geoffrey Pearson** argues, at a local level especially there does appear to be some kind of connection between areas of multiple deprivation and high crime rate areas - 'the active human spirit' amongst the poor and disadvantaged striving to create alternative systems of status, achievement and social meaning under such circumstances.

Evidence on the link between crime and unemployment has suffered both a complexity of debate and susceptibility of argument providing a 'consensus of doubt' on any relationship. For **David Pyle**, one response is that recorded unemployment is less a reliable indicator of the state of the economy than economic indicators more closely related to the cycle in economic activity, such as consumer expenditure and gross domestic product, which are connected with levels of recorded crime.

The relationship between crime and unemployment is questioned by **Norman Dennis** and **Jon Davies**, although their analysis locates criminality firmly within the disintegrating family and liberation of males. Whatever the link, **Jim White** certainly highlights vividly the demoralisation and dislocation of one particular community in the face of mass unemployment resultant from the closure of the local colliery. Later in the issue **Andrew McCall** argues that little doubt can be cast on the link between unemployment and re-offending and **Alun Michael** takes a sideways look at recent research.

Several contributors to this issue discuss the notion of the underclass, first popularised a decade ago by the American sociologist, Charles Murray. **Patricia Morgan** suggests that one of the worst results of social dislocation and the disenchantment of communities is an underclass, an isolated mix of people outside the occupational system, dependent upon public assistance and illegal activity. The notion of an underclass, comes under strong criticism from **Bob Holman**, whose analysis suggests that

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any explanation must be sought in poverty and inequality generating circumstances which facilitate crime.

Beatrix Campbell provides a further critique locating crime within gender analysis and an understanding of masculinity, and **Sandra Walklate** re-examines the recent feminisation of poverty thesis and suggests that poverty is a significant variable for both men and women in prompting law-breaking behaviour.

A further explanation for criminality is offered by **Peter Wynarczyk**, who argues that those involved adopt the same cognitive strategies as the rest of society, namely rational choice based upon anticipated costs and benefits. It is his contention that criminals are potentially all of us, as opposed to them.

Thinking about crime and serious money, **David Kidd Hewitt** draws our attention to the enormous cost of white collar crime, whilst **Mike Goodman** points to the huge profits made in the drugs trade, now reckoned to be second only to the arms trade as a world industry. Finally, **John Blackmore** describes efforts being made to draw the business community into crime prevention partnerships, through an appeal to enlightened commercial self-interest.

Peter Francis & Julia Braggins

Each issue of CJM focuses on a special area of criminological interest. CJM 19 will consider Gender, Crime and Criminal Justice. Contributions are welcome and will be considered for publication if sent to Julia Braggins by February 28th 1995. Publication, even of invited articles, cannot be guaranteed and we reserve the right to edit where necessary. Articles and letters can only be accepted on this basis.

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