

**RELATIONAL JUSTICE # 1**

**THE RELATIONAL CAUSES OF CRIME**

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper considers the relevance of Relational thinking to an understanding of the causes of crime. Relationships are regarded as a distinct category of social analysis and the natural forum within which societies and individuals strike the balance between choice and obligation. Relational proximity, it is argued, is essential to the good self order of society. A decline in encounter relationships and a rise in contringent relationships depletes social resources of commitment and constraint, leading to dysfunction at both the micro and the macro-social level. Set within the context of an overall theory of offending, Relational dysfunction has some utility in giving a partial account of the growth of various forms of antisocial behaviour, including crime. To the extent that existing social structures determine the means by which individuals inter-relate, Relational values highlight the futility of trying to solve the problem of criminal behaviour by means of the criminal justice system alone. The evidence is reviewed and the implication for public policy discussed*

# RELATIONAL JUSTICE # 1

## The Relational Causes of Crime

### *Explanations of criminal behaviour*

Explaining criminal behaviour is a challenge to rival the twelfth labour of Hercules. There are as many causes of crime as there are criminals and, as if to match this diversity there are as many theories of crime as there are theorists. A veritable pantheon of disciplines, including psychology, biology and sociology have laboured to produce a satisfying and enduring account. Thus crime has been variously described as the product of gender, social class, heredity, ecology, weak social bonding and class oppression. Theorists have supposed that it may even be related to one's somatotype, or body shape, depending on whether one shares the physical dimensions of 'a muffin, a horse or a bird'.<sup>1</sup> Nothing, in fact, which could differentiate a man from his fellows has escaped attention. Not only individual differences but almost any aspect of the social environment, however remote it might seem from the world of crime, "may be an embodiment or indicator of the variables that determine crime".<sup>2</sup> Even the moon may be regarded as a potent influence, though not as might be popularly imagined.<sup>3</sup> In all, as Farrington has observed, "there is no shortage of factors that are significantly correlated with offending and antisocial behaviour."<sup>4</sup> In fact, there are "literally thousands of variables [which] differentiate significantly between official offenders and non-offenders."<sup>5</sup> For better or worse, "more is known about factors that facilitate antisocial behaviour than about factors that inhibit it or that protect people against the influence of facilitating factors." Hercules had it easy.<sup>6</sup>

### Relational Thinking

What, then, is the specific contribution of Relational thinking to centuries of brooding upon the causes of crime?

This is perhaps best answered by outlining the contours of Relational thought.

Relational thinking is based on the idea that interpersonal relationships are of primary importance to the well-being of both the individual and society. Its central thesis is that a society's most vital asset is the

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2 Cohen, L.E. and Felson, M. (1979)

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4 Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marback Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000' p.2

5 Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers

6 *ibid*

network of interpersonal relationships that bind it. More than any other single factor, the happiness of individuals within society is dependent on the quality of their relationships.

Its sub-thesis holds that much social thinking and economic policy in recent decades has served to undermine those relationships, with grave results.

"To be is to be in relationship."<sup>7</sup> The ability to live in relationship to one another is surely the essence of what it means to be human. We depend upon relationships and we are shaped by relationships; we live in them and we live for them. The good self-order of society depends upon relationships.

All relationships are important; but some are more important than others. Michael Schluter and David Lee, in their seminal book, *The R-Factor*, distinguish between two types of relationships; encounter relationships and contingent relationships.

'Encounter relationships' is the term given to "a connection between two individuals which is based on some degree of unmediated contact".<sup>8</sup> Encounter relationships differ in style and in intensity and can include letters and telephone calls. Not all encounter relationships are face-to-face, but all encounter relationships provide an opportunity for deepening relationships.

'Contingent relationships', by contrast, are those which are mediated through social, economic and political institutions. Unlike encounter relationships they require no knowledge of the other person, or even knowledge that the contact exists. Economic and political units tend to create "asymmetries of power"<sup>9</sup> and the danger of contingent relationships lies in the fact that "power without personal contact invites abuse and division".<sup>10</sup>

Thus whilst all relationships are considered valuable, special importance is attached to encounter relationships and, in particular, to close relationships.

Despite their importance, modern society has put "a premium on encounter relationships" whilst contingent relationships have "snowballed".<sup>11</sup> Schluter and Lee attribute this to "the explosion of the pre-industrial community into the global village".<sup>12</sup> This refers to the way in which "the network of dependencies

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<sup>7</sup> Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R-Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

traditionally confined within grasping distance of the villager has exploded towards the global scale".<sup>13</sup> It is this transition, from the 'pre-industrial community' to the modern day 'mega-community' which in their view accounts for the decline in encounter and the huge upsurge in contingent relationships.

With this explosion in the size of the social group to which the individual feels himself a member and the consequent decline in the quality of his relationships has come a third major change; a shift in the point of equilibrium between choice and obligation.

Partly as a reaction to this, the modern western liberal democracy has emphasised the importance of protecting choice from obligation. But it is becoming increasingly clear that the results of this imbalance favouring choice over obligation are no less savage.

Whilst in certain contexts, freedom of choice does not impact upon our willingness to experience obligation, in the field of human relationships, it most certainly does. Where relationships are concerned the effect of an extension of choice is always to make us more reluctant to fulfil an obligation.

This is because our willingness to fulfil obligations is dependent on two things: commitment and constraint. The term 'commitment' is "more or less equivalent to moral conscience, the inner mechanism that makes the fulfilment of an obligation a natural reflex because we believe the obligation to be morally binding".<sup>14</sup> 'Constraint' on the other hand can occur without commitment. Rather it depends on the risk of social disapproval and "represents the conclusion that failure to fulfil a particular obligation would not be in our interest".<sup>15</sup> The authors regard commitment as being "as real an input to an economic system as technical proficiency or wage bills"<sup>16</sup> because "the sustainability of that system and the flourishing of that society depends on large measure upon trust".<sup>17</sup>

Both commitment and constraint spring from a wider background of social relationships. They cannot be created overnight. Commitment and constraint are social resources which can only be replenished through relational proximity, that is, the closeness of relationships in human society.

When commitment declines, "constraint soon follows because people will not long reinforce behaviour in others that they do not regard as binding on themselves".<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> *bid*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

In the absence of these social resources people look to structural constraint as a means of controlling human behaviour.

Legal paraphernalia is a common means of buttressing obligation, yet even this "cannot guarantee that self-interest will be kept in check".<sup>19</sup> "Obligation holds society together and yet the mega-community does not cultivate obligation. Under a prevailing ethos of choice, the social resource of commitment is gradually depleted".<sup>20</sup> The authors conclude that this "constitutes a major weakness in the capital based economy"<sup>21</sup> and that "choice without obligation leads to social breakdown".<sup>22</sup> The key issue is not whether there should be more of the one and less of the other but whether the extension of choice in a given area undermines the ability of individuals to fulfil obligations which have a legitimate claim on them.

Interestingly enough, relationships mediate choice and obligation. It is after all, through relationships that we learn how to balance our own needs against the interests of others.

Crime is, perhaps, one of the most dramatic expressions of choice over obligation. Rising crime may in part be linked to increasing Relational dysfunction within society and to the decline in the social resources of commitment and constraint. Crime may be partly seen as the product of a lack of closeness in relationships between individuals at the micro-level and the product of an anti-Relational societal ethos at the macro-level.

Not only may crime be the product of Relational dysfunction, but it also, in turn, destroys relationships. Like a stone going through a spider's web, crime destroys relationships between the victim and the offender, their families, the community and the state.

Close relationships are essential to the healthy functioning of the political economy, the good self-order of society, and the emotional well-being of the individual. It would be consistent with Relational thinking to regard the exponential increase in crime since the Second World War as at least partly due to the "fallout" which results from the melt down of the family and other social relationships. The purpose of this paper is to determine to what extent this is true.

It would be consistent with Relational thinking to regard the exponential increase in crime since the second World War was at least partly due to the "fallout" which results from the meltdown of family and other social relationships.

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

## Relational thinking and the causes of crime

The view that crime not only destroys relationships between individuals and institutions but is in some way the product of relational dysfunction enjoys popular support.

Fifty-three per cent of those interviewed for an N.O.P. survey in 1988 identified "poor parental discipline and control" as the main cause of crime, as opposed to 23% who noted "poverty" and 19% who named "television violence". A Gallup poll in the same year asked respondents to identify the principal cause of soccer violence and rural violence. Again, a narrow majority (52%) thought it was due to poor parental discipline, as opposed to excessive drinking (26%) or unemployment (11%).

The link between faulty parenting and crime was recognised in ancient society too. Thus the Athenian in Plato's *Laws* was able to observe that "the most important part of education is right training in the nursery."<sup>23</sup>

Yet despite both `ancient and modern support for the view that family relationships and crime are in some way linked, the family is regarded with embarrassment in some academic circles. It runs counter to the liberal *zeitgeist* which maintains that "people would be non-criminal were it not for the operation of unjust and misguided institutions."<sup>24</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s, criminological theories paid little attention to the family, preferring to concentrate on other factors such as peers, neighbourhoods, social class and so on.

More recent research has demonstrated the weakness of such an approach. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that crime runs in families. After all, "the child is father of the man"<sup>25</sup> and "no man has seen the worst of himself until it reappears in his own child."<sup>26</sup> The Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development discovered that offending was concentrated in a small number of families. Less than 5% of families were responsible for about half of the criminal convictions of all family members (fathers, mothers, sons and daughters).<sup>27</sup> Earlier, the project's helmsmen, Donald West and David Farrington had found that having convicted mothers, fathers and brothers by a boy's tenth birthday significantly predicted his own later convictions. They also found that, having convicted parents and delinquent siblings were predicted self-reported as well as official delinquency.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cited in: McCord, J. (1983) 'Family relationships and crime' in: S.H. Kadish, (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice, Vol. 1* London: Collier Macmillan Publishers

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<sup>25</sup> Wordsworth, W. *The Prelude Selected Poems*

<sup>26</sup> Meyer, F.B. *David: Shepherd, Psalmist King*, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade

<sup>27</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Juvenile delinquency', in: J.D. Coleman (Ed.), *The School Years*, London: Routledge, p.140

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, p.140

There thus appears to be a close association between relationships, of different kinds, and crime. But how far can the breakdown of relationships both within the family and society, be said to be a cause of crime? And if it is true, to what extent can Relational thinking form the basis of a strategy for crime prevention?

Ultimately, the explanatory power of Relational thinking depends on two things.

First, it depends on the strength of the research evidence which posits a link between relationship breakdown and crime.

Second, it depends on the strength of these other factors which are also related to criminality.

To set both these questions in context, we shall begin by considering Farrington's theory of criminal behaviour. This will provide a general overview. As we examine it we shall look at the research evidence which posits a linkage between the breakdown of relationships and crime.

### **Farrington's Theory of Crime**

A tentative, but serious, attempt to construct an overall theory of offending has been developed by David Farrington. In choosing to examine this theory we have the following reasons. Firstly, it is multi-disciplinary in character, integrating key constructs derived from several earlier theories. Secondly, it draws attention to the importance of biological and psychological factors, which are usually overlooked in most theories of crime. Thirdly, it has a developmental focus and as such is one of the few theories which takes cognisance of a major finding of criminological research; namely that "people differ in the likelihood that they will commit crimes ... that these differences appear early and remain stable over much of the life course."<sup>29</sup> Fourthly, it has implications for public policy, especially preventive interventions. Finally, it is based on a wide body of replicable findings, especially longitudinal studies of large community samples. In particular it draws on the results of the Cambridge study of Delinquency Development, a prospective study of 411 males, mostly born in 1953, who, at the time of initial contact (1961-2), lived in a working-class area of London.<sup>30</sup> "Similar results have been obtained in similar studies elsewhere in England ... in the United States ... in the Scandinavian countries ... and in New Zealand."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gottfredson, M.R. and Hirschi, T. (1990) *A General Theory of Crime*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press

<sup>30</sup> The boys were interviewed and tested in their schools when they were aged about 8, 10 and 14, in the research office at about 16, 18 and 21 and in their homes at about 25 and 32. "Tests in schools measured intelligence, attainment, personality and psychomotor skills, while information was collected in the interviews about living circumstances, employment histories, relationships with females, leisure activities such as drinking and fighting and offending behaviour". Information was derived from a variety of sources, including the subjects themselves, their parents, teachers, peers and official records. Thus the Cambridge Study "has a unique combination of features" which include personal interviews carried out over a period of 24 years, a large sample size, detailed case histories and a very low attrition rate. p. 261 pp.

<sup>31</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marbach Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000', p.2

Farrington's theory holds that offending is merely "a subset of a wider category of antisocial or deviant acts."<sup>32</sup> Theories of crime, therefore, should aim to explain "more general antisocial behaviour, not just offending."<sup>33</sup>

Both offending and antisocial behaviour result, Farrington suggests, "from the interaction between a person (with a certain degree of underlying antisocial tendency and the [social and physical] environment (which provides criminal opportunities)".<sup>34</sup> The key theoretical construct is "antisocial tendency",<sup>35</sup> which refers to "the underlying individual potentiality for antisocial behaviour."<sup>36</sup> Antisocial tendency covers "a multitude of sins"<sup>37</sup> including "acts defined as delinquency and prohibited by the criminal law such as theft, burglary, robbery, violence, vandalism, fraud and drug use; other clearly deviant acts such as bullying, reckless driving, heavy drinking and sexual promiscuity; and more marginally or arguable deviant acts, such as heavy smoking, heavy gambling, employment instability and conflict with parents".<sup>38</sup> Offending, therefore, is simply one of a wide range of phenomena which reflect an underlying antisocial tendency. The distinction between influences upon antisocial tendency and influences on offending is fundamental to Farrington's theory.

Farrington's theory has a developmental focus, considering "why people begin to commit different types of antisocial behaviour, why they continue or escalate and why they eventually stop or change to other types".<sup>39</sup> It aims to explain both continuity and change in antisocial and offending behaviour.

'Antisocial tendency' appears to be a stable construct; that is, it is continuous from birth to adulthood. There was evidence in the Cambridge Study of continuity in antisocial behaviour from childhood to the teenage years as well as continuity at younger ages. There is also "considerable continuity between juvenile and adult offending".<sup>40</sup> The Cambridge Study found that "nearly three-quarters of those convicted as juveniles (age 10-16) were reconvicted between ages 17 and 24 and nearly half of the juvenile offenders were reconvicted between ages 25 and 32".<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol. 3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers

<sup>33</sup> *ibid* p.255

<sup>34</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marbach Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000' p.33

<sup>35</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol. 3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers p.258

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marbach Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000'), p.2

<sup>38</sup> *ibid* p.2-3

<sup>39</sup> *ibid* p.1

<sup>40</sup> *ibid* p.10

<sup>41</sup> *ibid* p.10

There is also continuity in other forms of antisocial behaviour from the teenage to the adult years. The research of Robins has shown how "a constellation of indicators of childhood antisocial behaviour predicts a constellation of indicators of adult antisocial behaviour".<sup>42</sup> Hence, "the adult male with 'antisocial personality disorder' generally fails to maintain close personal relationships with anyone else, performs poorly in his jobs, is involved in crime fails to support himself and his dependants with outside aid and tends to change his plans impulsively and to lose his temper in response to minor frustrations. As an adolescent, he tended to be restless, impulsive and lacking in guilt, performed badly in school, truanted, ran away from home, was cruel to animals or people and committed delinquent acts".<sup>43</sup> Thus whilst the underlying construct of antisocial tendency remains stable, its behavioural manifestations "probably varies with age according to social circumstances and social influence".<sup>44</sup>

The Cambridge Study also found evidence of specific as well as general continuity in antisocial behaviour, aggression and violence from the teenage to the adult years. Farrington discovered that "bullying at age 32<sup>45</sup> was specifically predicted by bullying at ages 14 and 18 independently of the continuity between aggression at ages 14 and 18 and aggression at age 32". Moreover, "a male's bullying at ages 14 and 18 predicted bullying by his child when he was 32, showing that there was intergenerational continuity in bullying".<sup>46</sup>

"It is clear from our research," comment Farrington and West on the results of the Cambridge Study, "that problem children tend to grow up into problem adults and that problem adults tend to produce problem children."<sup>47</sup>

Of course, this process is not inevitable and is subject to change. Whilst the underlying dimension of antisocial tendency is sufficiently stable to allow certain predictions to be made, "the stability should not be exaggerated".<sup>48</sup> As Farrington and West caution "significant predictability does not mean that outcomes are inevitable or that people cannot and do not change".<sup>49</sup> The Cambridge Study found "there was both absolute change and relative consistency in antisocial tendency from the teenage years into adulthood."<sup>50</sup> In the Cambridge Study, Farrington found that there was a significant decrease in the prevalence of several kinds of

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid* p.8

<sup>43</sup> *ibid* p.10

<sup>44</sup> Farrington, D.P. and West, D.J. (1990) 'The Cambridge study in delinquent development: a long-term follow-up of 411 London males', in *Kriminalitat* Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 131-2

<sup>45</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marbach Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000') p.12

<sup>46</sup> *ibid* p.12-13

<sup>47</sup> Farrington, D.P. and West, D.J. (1990) 'The Cambridge study in delinquent development: a long-term follow-up of 411 London males', in *Kriminalitat* Berlin: Springer-Verlag, p.132

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, p.131

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, p.131

<sup>50</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), *Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts*, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol. 3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.279

antisocial behaviours between ages eighteen and thirty-two, although the males who were relatively more antisocial at age eighteen were still relatively more antisocial at age thirty-two".<sup>51</sup>

Identifying which factors predict behavioural changes over time is therefore a key area for future research.

Attention has already been drawn to the oft-reported finding that "about half of any sample of antisocial children persist to become antisocial teenagers and about half of any sample of antisocial teenagers persist to become antisocial adults".<sup>52</sup> Much depends on the changes that occur within the individual and his environment. The importance of criminal career research generally for criminal justice decision-makers has already been highlighted by Farrington. Establishing what makes some offenders persist or desist in their offending behaviour has implications for public policy generally since it may form the basis for "effective methods of prevention and treatment".<sup>53</sup>

Farrington identifies a number of factors which influence antisocial tendency and a number of factors which influence offending; that is, whether antisocial tendencies will be translated into delinquent acts.

Major factors which foster antisocial tendencies are "impulsivity, a poor ability to manipulate abstract concepts, low empathy, a weak conscience, internalised norms and attitudes favouring delinquency and long-term motivating influences such as the desire for material goods or status with peers."<sup>54</sup>

Major factors that influence whether antisocial tendencies leads to delinquency are "short-term situational influences such as boredom and frustration, alcohol consumption, opportunities to offend and the perceived costs and benefits of delinquency."<sup>55</sup>

According to Farrington's theory, "the onset of offending depends partly on an increase in antisocial tendency ... and partly on changes in situational factors, opportunities, benefits and costs."<sup>56</sup> In a similar way "desistance occurs when there is a decrease in antisocial tendency ... and changes in situational factors."<sup>57</sup> The worst offenders are those who are exposed to deviant social influences throughout their lives.

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marbach Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000'), p.11

<sup>53</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts. Advances in Criminological Theory Vol. 3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.279

<sup>54</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Juvenile delinquency', in: J.D. Coleman (Ed.), The School Years, London: Routledge, p. 151

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, p.151

<sup>56</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts. Advances in Criminological Theory Vol. 3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.279

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, p. 279

In the following section we take a bird's eye view of each of these influences upon antisocial tendency and offending; swooping lower when it is apparent that dysfunctional relationships of one kind or another seem to play an important role. In this way we shall attempt to demonstrate the extent to which the breakdown of relationships within the family and society contributes towards offending. Once this is done, we will be in a better position to indicate the potential scope of Relational values in contributing towards an understanding of the causes of crime.

In embarking on this exercise one major qualification needs to be made. It is not the aim of this paper to provide a systematic or evaluative overview of the different causes of crime. As already indicated, such a task would be Herculean. Its aim is considerably more minor: to attempt to set out what might constitute a Relational response to an overall theory of crime. Inevitably, Relational thinking is of greater relevance to some aspects of criminal behaviour than to others.

However, by drawing attention to both its limitations as well as its utility it should be possible to avoid falling into the same trap as the art expert who, in applying his lens to an interesting part of the picture, magnifies it to the exclusion of the rest of the canvas.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> The imagery is derived from Nigel Walker, *Crime and Criminology*, 1987, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

## *I Influences on Antisocial Tendency*

### **1. Impulsivity**

The first group of constructs identified by Farrington include "impulsivity, sensation-seeking, risk-taking and a poor ability to defer gratification."<sup>59</sup>

The key theoretical construct appears to be arousal. Low arousal acts as a mediator between "numerous psychophysiological and biochemical factors"<sup>60</sup> and offending. Summarising the results of a wide body of research, Farrington concludes:

"offenders have a low level of arousal according to their low alpha (brain) waves on the EEG, or according to autonomic nervous system indicators such as heart rate, blood pressure or skin conductance, or they show low autonomic reactivity."<sup>61</sup>

In addition, "adult offenders showed low adrenaline (epinephrine) levels at age thirteen",<sup>62</sup> whilst "violent offenders tend to have low levels of 5HIAA, a metabolite of serotonin, in their cerebrospinal fluid ... and aggressive children tend to have low adrenaline and high plasma testosterone levels."<sup>63</sup>

Low arousal may lead to crime because it results in sensation-seeking behaviour. Low autonomic reactivity may also make the individual more resistant to the conditioning process and therefore less likely to develop a 'conscience'.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to being hyperactive, sensation-seeking and risk-taking, impulsive individuals are less likely to defer gratification. They are thus more likely to commit crime since criminal acts provide immediate gratification. In this, as Farrington points out, impulsivity appears to be related to Gottfredson and Hirschi's "fundamental construct"<sup>65</sup> of low self-control. They write; "a major characteristic of people with low self-control is ... a tendency to respond to tangible stimuli in the immediate environment" in contrast to "people with high self-control ... [who] tend to defer gratification."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid*, p.274

<sup>60</sup> *ibid*, p.273

<sup>61</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marback Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000', p.20-21.

<sup>62</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.273.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*, p.273.

<sup>64</sup> Some psychologists, such as Eysenck (1977) regard the conscience as "a conditioned reflex" and the result of a long process of conditioning during which the child acquires "a repertoire of conditioned fear responses to a wide set of different behaviour patterns."

<sup>65</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.275.

<sup>66</sup> Gottfredson, M.R. and Hirschi, T. (1990) A General Theory of Crime, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p.89.

It is plausible to suggest that some of these biological factors may have some genetic basis.<sup>67</sup>

## 2. **Poor ability to manipulate abstract concepts**

The second group of constructs identified by Farrington includes "a poor ability to manipulate abstract concepts, low measured intelligence, low scholastic achievement and low self-esteem"<sup>68</sup>. Of these, the most important is "probably a poor ability to manipulate abstract concepts which may cause low measured intelligence and low scholastic achievement, which in turn may cause low self-esteem."<sup>69</sup>

Theories suggest that children of pre-school age whose parents are of low socio-economic status are quite likely to be deficient in language skills and thus in cognitive functioning, which is closely dependent on language. These deficiencies seem to be attributable, at least in part, to "inadequate stimulation and to the relative paucity of verbal interaction in working-class homes"<sup>70</sup>. Thus, in contrast to children from more advantaged backgrounds, such children are more likely to suffer from a specific verbal deficient. They are also more likely to be lacking in abstract reasoning skills. Bernstein has shown how low levels of conceptualisation and differentiation are characteristic of lower-class linguistic relationships.<sup>71</sup>

As a result such children will find it harder to make progress within the educational system. This may lead to aggressive behaviour, either as a result of frustration or as a means of obtaining status. The likelihood of aggressive behaviour is increased given that those with a poor ability to manipulate abstract consequences would also be less inhibited by the fear of future consequences and less able to empathise with victims' feelings.

This is consistent with key findings in criminological research.

Firstly, that intelligence as measured by IQ scores is highly correlated with social class and secondly, that delinquents have a below-average verbal IQ compared to non-delinquent peers. Thirdly, that delinquents, and especially recidivists, generally score less on non-verbal IQ tests than non-delinquent peers. Finally, it is consistent with the finding that "delinquents do not like school and perform poorly in it"<sup>72</sup> regardless of whether the delinquent rate of the school itself is high or low.

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<sup>67</sup> Eysenck for example, claims that certain dimensions of personality may ...

<sup>68</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.275.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, p.275.

<sup>70</sup> Mussen *et al.*, 1970. Cited in: [see M.Phil].

<sup>71</sup> Bernstein. Cited in: [see M.Phil].

<sup>72</sup> Wilson, J.Q. and Herrnstein, R.J. (1985) Crime and Human Nature, New York: Simon and Schuster.

There is some suggestion that lack of ability to manipulate abstract concepts it may depend on conflicts in the executive function of the brain ... and it may have an important genetic component.

A pre-school intellectual enrichment programme could be an effective means of intervention by compensating for the lack of intellectual stimulation in the home. It could decrease aggression by increasing pre-schoolers' linguistic, cognitive and conceptual skills and in so doing increase their likelihood of school success.

Evidence from the United States (U.S.) suggests that such improvements can be made<sup>73</sup> although some studies suggest that this could be the result of increased parental participation.<sup>74</sup>

There is modest evidence from the U.S. that quality pre-school programmes, such as the Perry pre-school programme and Project Head Start, a cultural enrichment programme, can have positive impacts upon offending<sup>75</sup> whilst in this country, within-individual comparisons have shown a decrease in an individual's offending following improvement in school performance.<sup>76</sup>

### **3. Low Empathy**

This the third group of constructs in Farrington's schema, and they seem to be dependent on cold family relationships. The main reason is probably that a lack of consistent warm relationships hinders the development of attachment. Attachment refers to "the inculcation in a child of a desire to win and hold the approval of others."<sup>77</sup> It is related to the idea of 'social control' wherein the degree of attachment one has to one's parents is one of the components affecting an individual's bond to society. Attachment is crucial to the effective socialisation of individuals. Less socialised individuals show little regard for other people's feelings and are more likely to commit crime. Emotional coldness, egocentricity, callousness and selfishness are often cited as characteristics of delinquents or psychopaths. Bowlby's influential theory of maternal deprivation held that the formation of a bond between infant and mother was of great importance to the development of attachment. He argued that there was little chance of this bond forming if the infant was deprived of a mother figure during the first three years of life and stood a much reduced chance if delayed by eighteen months. In Bowlby's view, this could lead to "affectionless character";<sup>78</sup> aspects of which include "lack of guilt, an inability to keep rules and an inability to form lasting relationships."<sup>79</sup> However, the study is flawed in some respects, especially by the fact that the children who had lost their mothers were brought up in institutions and

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<sup>73</sup> Haskins, (1989). Cited in:

<sup>74</sup> Zigler, and Berman, (1983). Cited in:

<sup>75</sup> Berreuta-Clement *et al.*, (1985).

<sup>76</sup> Lally *et al.*, (1987), Farrington, D.P. (1988).

<sup>77</sup> Rutter, M. and Giller, H. (1983) Juvenile Delinquency, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

did not constitute a representative sample. The effects of maternal deprivation also seem to depend on the reason for the deprivation and may, in some cases, be reversible.

Less is known about the effects of paternal deprivation. The tendency to focus on mothers largely reflects the practical consideration that it is the effects of maternal deprivation which are there to be examined. Ninety-five per cent of all single parent families are headed by the mother and even if they do happen to have a man living with them, they are generally unlikely to admit it for fear that it will prejudice their welfare payments. Among intact families the situation is different but again, it is the mother who is usually present since the husband is out at work. Both reasons reflect "a culture where the routine tasks of child-rearing still fall disproportionately on women".<sup>80</sup>

The absence of a father may result in the economic, social, emotional and sexual aspects of his modelling behaviour going unfulfilled.<sup>81</sup> Research suggests that boys with absent fathers have less stereotypically male interests and show lower achievement motivation. Biller found more underachievers from families where the father had left before the boy was five years old.<sup>82</sup> This is probably because fathers are particularly keen to stress the importance of career and occupational success. Among older children, father absence has been associated with a decline of IQ in boys but not in girls. In addition, boys in the custody of their father following divorce were seen to be more mature and sociable with a higher level of self-esteem than those in their mothers' custody (the reverse was true for girls).<sup>83</sup>

Father absence has been associated with impulsive, anti-social and delinquent behaviour. Riley and Shaw (1985) discovered a significant association between delinquency and a lack of close feelings between teenagers and their fathers in the case of both boys and girls.<sup>84</sup> In fact, Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber claim that "lack of involvement of the father with the children generally has a stronger relation to delinquency and aggression than does the mother's lack of involvement."<sup>85</sup> In the Cambridge Study, Farrington and Hawkins found that "rarely spending leisure time with the father at age 11-12"<sup>86</sup> was one of the best independent factors that predicted whether convicted offenders before age 21 would persist in offending or desist between age 21 and 32.

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<sup>80</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre. [Conclusions].

<sup>81</sup> Vallender, I. (1988) 'The father's role in the family', Highlight No.78, London: National Children's Bureau.

<sup>82</sup> Bilter, Cited in: Vallender, I. (1988) 'The father's role in the family', Highlight No.78, London: National Children's Bureau.

<sup>83</sup> Vallender, I. (1988) 'The father's role in the family', Highlight No.78, London: National Children's Bureau.

<sup>84</sup> Riley, D. and Shaw, M. (1985). Cited in: Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

<sup>85</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.41.

<sup>86</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marbach Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000', p.17.

Plainly more research is needed on the different roles parents play in bringing up their children and their relative effect upon delinquency. In the meantime it is plausible to suggest that both parents have an important role to play in the formation of attachment and that a dysfunction in parent-child relationships which occurs at an early stage augurs ill for the future. As one playwright has noted, "every instant is the cradle of the next".<sup>87</sup>

Cold family relationships exist where the parents have rejected the child or where the child has rejected his parents. Parental rejection can be both a cause and a consequence of the child's behaviour. In asserting this we reject Locke's idea of the child as a *tabula rasa*, or a blank slate. It cannot be assumed that whatever happens to the child is always the result of the parent's acting on the child. Since the development of attachment is dependent on parent-child *interaction*, then knowing what the infant brings to the interaction is as important as knowing what the parents bring to it.<sup>88</sup> It is hard to love a child who makes your life a misery.<sup>89</sup>

Parental rejection refers generally to the parent's lack of appreciation of their children, and covers lack of warmth, love and affection as well as outright rejection. Parental rejection may have some genetic basis and may also be an extreme consequence of poor discipline. In such circumstances, parents no longer play a parenting role and the child supplants his parents in the dominant role. Parents and children may then begin to see each other as enemies and reject each other.

Rejection by the child may occur as a result of lack of identification with the parents causing them to be rejected as role models. It may also be a consequence of harsh discipline. Parental rejection of their children is "consistently related to delinquency and aggression"<sup>90</sup> although the nature of the causal link is sometimes hard to identify. Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, in their meta-analysis of family factors as predictors of juvenile delinquency found "a strong association between lack of parental involvement and children's official delinquency and aggression."<sup>91</sup>

Joan McCord's study of ... found that children who were neglected by both parents were much more likely to become delinquents than were children who were rejected by one parent or whose parents were loving.<sup>92</sup> A later study suggested that the link between parental rejection and delinquency may have something to do with the resulting lack of supervision. McCord studied boys in intact family homes and compared the

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<sup>87</sup> Cited in: Dennis, N. and Erdos, G. (1992) *Families without Fatherhood: Choice in Welfare No.12*, London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit.

<sup>88</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*, p.54.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, p.51.

<sup>92</sup> McCord, J. (1969). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, P.90-91.

results with boys coming from broken homes. In the intact homes she found that 81% of boys with 'loving' mothers were supervised compared with 56% of boys whose mothers were not 'loving'.<sup>93</sup> In the broken homes, 65% of boys with loving mothers were supervised, compared with only 21% of boys whose mothers were not loving. In both broken and intact homes, the incidence of supervision was much lower among non-loving mothers.<sup>94</sup>

The importance of good parent-child relationships is demonstrated by Rutter (1978), who found that even in homes with marked marital discord, if just one of the parents had a warm positive relationship with the children then the probability of child conduct disorders was reduced by a third compared with children who do not enjoy such a relationship.<sup>95</sup> Similar findings were reported by Langner (1979): "if parents became warmer or less rejecting over the five-year period their children demonstrated reductions in [the following measures] Conflict with Parents ... Fighting and Delinquency."<sup>96</sup> He also found that "changes in Parental Coldness and Excitability were tied to changes in children's aggressive behaviour in all settings."<sup>97</sup>

Indeed, Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber found that parental rejection was one of the "most powerful"<sup>98</sup> predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency.

#### 4. **Weak Conscience**

The fourth group of constructs includes "a weak conscience, low guilt or remorse and generally low internal inhibitions against anti-social behaviour."<sup>99</sup>

The concept of a conscience "typically refers to how people feel about their acts rather than to the likelihood that they will or will not commit them."<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless the word is used by psychologists such as Eysenck and Trasler to summarise the results of learning by means of negative reinforcement. Since it is used

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<sup>93</sup> Mothers were classified as actively affectionate if there had been considerable interaction without continual criticism of the boy. See McCord, J. (1982) 'A longitudinal view of the relationship between paternal absence and crime', in: J. Gunn and D.P. Farrington (Eds.), Abnormal offenders, Delinquency and the criminal justice system Vol.1. Current Research in Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, p.120.

<sup>94</sup> McCord, J. (1982) 'A longitudinal view of the relationship between paternal absence and crime', in: J. Gunn and D.P. Farrington (Eds.), Abnormal offenders, Delinquency and the criminal justice system Vol.1. Current Research in Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 113-125.

<sup>95</sup> Rutter, (1978). Cited in Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.91.

<sup>96</sup> Langner (1979). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.112.

<sup>97</sup> Langner (1979). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.112.

<sup>98</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.29.

<sup>99</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.276.

<sup>100</sup> Gottfredson, M.R. and Hirschi, T. (1990) A General Theory of Crime, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p.88.

to explain why human beings do not commit crime, given that crime represents a quick and easy means of gratification, it is related to the construct of a bond to society, favoured by sociologists such as Hirschi.<sup>101</sup>

What all of these theories have in common, is the idea that everyone is predisposed to commit a criminal act. The question is not how people learn to offend, but how they learn not to offend. "Criminal behaviour is not something parents have to work to produce, but something they have to work to avoid."<sup>102</sup> As Nye has written, "conformity, not deviation, must be learned."<sup>103</sup> Delinquency is part of the child's "native equipment"<sup>104</sup> and can be expected to remain so until it is taught otherwise.

Theories suggest that the development of a conscience depends on a process of social learning. The key to social learning is the pattern of rewards and punishments given by parents. "If parents consistently and contingently reward prosocial behaviour ( eg. by praise) and punish antisocial behaviour (eg. by disapproval) the child will build up inhibitions against antisocial behaviour in a learning process."<sup>105</sup> Factors which interfere with the social learning process include harsh or erratic parental discipline, poor parental supervision and a lack of parent-child interaction. Each of these will be considered in turn.

(i) Discipline

The ability of parents to discipline their children, effectively or otherwise, has been circumscribed in two main ways. First, there has been an erosion in parental authority, epitomised by recent legal challenges to the parental right to chastise.<sup>106</sup> Second, increasing affluence has led to a decline in the power of the family to behaviour. The power of the family "depends on the resources available to it relative to the resources available to the child and the child's aspirations."<sup>107</sup> If the child "doesn't want to go to college and has a car and has a level of living equal or superior to that of his family, he is by definition no longer dependent on them."<sup>108</sup> The parents "no longer have the material means to punish him and thus the entire system of family control is vulnerable to collapse."<sup>109</sup> In fact, the increasing independence of adolescents from the family is a major feature of modern times, made possible by the "expansion and differentiation of the labour market".<sup>110</sup> One

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<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Hirschi, T. (1983) 'Crime and the family', in: Crime and Public Policy, J.Q. Wilson (Ed.), San Francisco: ICS Press.

<sup>103</sup> Cited in Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

<sup>104</sup> Hirschi, T. (1983) 'Crime and the family', in: Crime and Public Policy, J.Q. Wilson (Ed.), San Francisco: ICS Press.

<sup>105</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. MCCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.276.

<sup>106</sup> Hoghughli alleges that "the Department of Health is the chief architect of regulations that have massively undermined adult authority in dealing with delinquent youngsters." Even in children's establishments "the staff are often ill-trained, confused and above all, not sufficiently supported when they try to set and enforce boundaries. They are barred from asserting adult authority for fear of complaints." The result, as is so often the case, is a transfer of power from adult to child. "Any family therapist knows that when a child is in control the result is explosive: the child will push with ever grimmer and stronger behaviour until adult authority is re-established."

<sup>107</sup> Hirschi, T. (1983) 'Crime and the family', in: Crime and Public Policy, J.Q. Wilson (Ed.), San Francisco: ICS Press.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup><sub>i</sub> *bid,*

<sup>110</sup><sub>i</sub> *bid,*

important side-effect of adolescent independence from the family is increasing adolescent dependence on other adolescents. However, peers cannot take the place of parents as socialising agents. As Hirschi points out, they have little or no investment in the outcome, they are less likely to recognise deviant behaviour and they do not possess the necessary authority to inflict punishment."<sup>111</sup>

Nevertheless, parents still retain considerable disciplinary power, particularly in the early years of life when it is most effective. However, the evidence suggests that this power is not always exercised wisely.

Discipline can refer to a wide range of parental child-rearing practices, and may include physical punishment, withdrawal of affection and scolding. But it is also used to denote the consistency with which parents apply consequences. Some have argued that physical punishment is itself associated with child conduct problems, but as Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber have discovered, the evidence is "not strong".<sup>112</sup> The crucial factor is not the form of punishment so much as the way in which it is administered. Both strict and punitive, as well as lax and erratic disciplining styles have been found to be related to delinquency and aggression. We shall consider each of these in turn.

There are several reasons why parents may be overly harsh in punishing their children. The answer may lie in the 'social heredity' of violence latterly identified by Widom.<sup>113</sup> Wilson and Herrnstein found that those who said that their parents frequently hit them when they were children were more likely to say that they used physical force on their own spouses and children.<sup>114</sup> Harsh parenting may also be a product of poor marital relations. Empirical studies suggest that there is a link between harsh discipline and delinquency: maltreated children tend to display more aggression in both psychological tests and play situations.<sup>115</sup>

Overly lax and erratic styles of disciplining have also been correlated with delinquency. Such discipline is said to occur when parents, aware of the child's disobedience, are unable either to set limits to the child's behaviour or to impose discipline. There are various reasons as to why parents might be unable or unwilling to punish their children consistently.

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<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.52.

<sup>113</sup> Widom, C.S. (1989) 'The cycle of violence', Science, (244), 160-166.

<sup>114</sup> Wilson, J.Q. and Herrnstein, R.J. (1985) Crime and Human Nature, New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>115</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

First, they may be afraid that if they do the child's conduct problems will escalate. "Parents may learn to avoid conflict by abdicating their parental responsibility to control the problem behaviour."<sup>116</sup> Such parents are helpless to show their disapproval of problem behaviours.

Second, they may fail to punish consistently because consistent discipline was never modelled to them by their parents. This is becoming increasingly likely since traditional sources of good child-rearing practice, such as the extended family, are breaking down.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, parents may not be bringing up their children properly because they have little to gain from it. Whilst the incentives for good parenting have historically included "honour of the family, security for oneself and self-reliance for one's children",<sup>117</sup> nowadays "the major incentive appears to be some form of conspicuous display of one's accomplishments."<sup>118</sup> But "for those who cannot hope for such success and who have little to fear from failure, the rewards of child-rearing may not be worth the effort."<sup>119</sup> True, there are higher motivations, including reputation, the desire to set an example and a sense of obligation to others, but such motives are possibly less common among social groups which "have little to lose in terms of social standing or respect if they produce poorly-socialised children".<sup>120</sup>

The psychologist, Richard Lynn, proffers this as one possible explanation for "the decline in moral values in so many parts of Europe and America," that "parents suffer little or no social disgrace if their children turn out badly."<sup>121</sup>

It is plausible to suggest that good parenting is in some way related to the concept of 'stake in confirmity'. This holds that .... [return to]

The theory that lax or erratic discipline interferes with the social learning process through which the child builds up inhibitions against antisocial behaviour appears to be supported by empirical research. Goldstein (1984) drew attention to the importance of high levels of parental supervision in preventing crime. He discovered that high levels of supervision in families in which the father is absent can reduce the likelihood of police contacts, compared with youths from father-absent families with low supervision.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid*, p.40.

<sup>117</sup> Hirschi, T. (1983) 'Crime and the family', in: Crime and Public Policy, J.Q. Wilson (Ed.), San Francisco: ICS Press, p.67.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*, p.67-68.

<sup>120</sup> Lynn, R. (1993) 'How Britain lost its conscience', Daily Mail, 22nd February 1993.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>122</sup> Goldstein (1984). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.78.

Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber found that inadequate discipline (whether strict and punitive, or lax and erratic) was related to delinquency and aggression.<sup>123</sup> However, as a predictor of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency it was weaker than other measures such as parental rejection.

(ii) Lack of Supervision

Supervision is essential if parents are to be aware of their child's misbehaviour. Yet some children are poorly supervised by their parents; they are not kept out of trouble and the parents are unaware of what goes on the moment their backs are turned.

This is particularly likely in a large family where parental attention is divided between a large number of siblings. In fact, "one of the most consistent findings of delinquency research is that the larger the number of children in the family, the greater the likelihood that each of them will be delinquent."<sup>124</sup> This is explicable in terms of low levels of supervision: the greater the number of children, the greater the strain on parental time and energy. Of course, this effect could be due to the disadvantages which tend to accompany large family size, particularly in poor sections of the community. Such families are more exposed to illegitimacy, poverty and over-crowding. The influence of a greater number of siblings cannot be discounted, either. Indeed, Farrington regards sibling influence as the main factor, rather than family size, *per se*.<sup>125</sup> Nonetheless, it is plausible to suggest that at least part of the predictive power of family size is due to the greater difficulties parents in large families have in disciplining and supervising their children, compared with parents in small families.

Another fact which makes parental supervision less likely is the tremendous increase in the number of working mothers. An early study found that the children of working mothers, especially those who work "occasionally"<sup>126</sup> were more likely to be delinquent. It also showed that the effect on delinquency of the mother's working was completely accounted for by the quality of supervision provided by the mother. If the mother was unable to provide, or presumably arrange, supervision for the child, her employment had no effect on the likelihood of delinquency. More recent research reports that a mother's employment has a small effect, which it is unable to explain.<sup>127</sup> "The advantage of the housewife over the employed mother in child-rearing remains when supervision and other characteristics of the mother, the family and the child are taken into account."<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Hirschi, T. (1983) 'Crime and the family', in: Crime and Public Policy. J.Q. Wilson (Ed.), San Francisco: ICS Press, p.61.

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<sup>126</sup> Gottfredson, M.R. and Hirschi, T. (1990) A General Theory of Crime, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p.104.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid*, p.105.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid*.

Parental rejection, parental absence (through marital break-up) and marital conflict also tend to reduce levels of supervision for obvious reasons.

One final factor worth mentioning is that parental criminality also seems to be related to poor supervision. Farrington *et al* discovered that parents with a delinquent record supervised their children less. This increased the probability of their children's delinquency, compared with poor supervision by a non-delinquent parent.<sup>129</sup> This is consistent with what has been observed earlier; namely that offending reflects an underlying antisocial tendency which remains stable over time. Thus one would expect the antisocial parent to neglect his children and to supervise them poorly.

In their meta-analysis of family factors, Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber discovered that lack of parental supervision was one of the "most powerful"<sup>130</sup> predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency. This finding is supported by Wilson, who found that "of all the family variables she examined, weak parental supervision was the one most strongly associated with delinquency." This finding is supported by Wilson, who found that "of all the family variables she examined, weak parental supervision was the one most strongly associated with delinquency".<sup>131</sup>

(iii) Lack of Parent-Child Involvement

Limited awareness of the child's problem behaviours and limited time spent together can severely curtail the parents' opportunity to impose discipline. It also means there is insufficient time spent interacting positively with the children.

A wide range of factors may influence the degree of involvement between parent and child. These include marital conflict, parental absence, parental rejection and whether or not the mother is working. Lack of involvement is characterised by an absence of joint family leisure activities, a lack of affectionate identity with the parents and a dearth of intimate parent-child communication.<sup>132</sup>

Research reviewed by Loeber and Stouthamer - Loeber suggests that there is a strong association between lack of parental involvement and children's official delinquency and aggression.<sup>133</sup> In fact, in their

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<sup>129</sup> Farrington, Gundry and West, 1975. Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.90.

<sup>130</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.29.

<sup>131</sup> Wilson, (1980). Cited in: Rutter, M. and Giller, H. (1983) *Juvenile Delinquency*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

meta-analysis of family factors, they found that lack of parent-child involvement constituted a "most powerful"<sup>134</sup> factor of juvenile conduct disorders and delinquency.

## 5. **Internalised Norms Favouring Anti-social Behaviour**

This constitutes the fifth important group of constructs identified by Farrington. "Social influences", whether those of "parents, peers, schools or communities, are important."<sup>135</sup> This could be due to the importance of modelling as a means of acquiring modes of behaviour.

Modelling emphasises the degree to which learning takes place vicariously. Quay writes, "observing the behaviour of others and its consequences for them permits individuals to acquire complex patterns of behaviour by using other people as models without the need to fashion elements of their own conduct through trial and error."<sup>136</sup>

Observational learning involves three steps; attention to the model, memory of the model's behaviour and motor reproduction of the observed behaviour. These processes are respectively termed acquisition, maintenance and retrieval, or emission.<sup>137</sup>

In this way, behaviour can be learned, but not necessarily put into practice. The final stage, emission, is likely to take place where there are sufficient incentives and motivations to act out the behaviour pattern in real life.

According to Farrington, it is "possibly through a modelling process that people tend to internalise the norms and attitudes held by significant others to which they are exposed in their social environment".<sup>138</sup>

Three sources of internalised norms favouring anti-social behaviour are poor marital relations, broken homes and parental criminality. We shall consider each of these in turn.

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<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.276

<sup>136</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Juvenile delinquency', in: J.D. Coleman (Ed.), The School Years, London: Routledge.

<sup>137</sup> Bandura (1973). Cited in:

<sup>138</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecast, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p.276.

### (i) Poor Marital Relations

Chronic conflict between the spouses can directly or indirectly affect children's behaviour. Marital strain can make the parents more irritable and more prone to aggressive outbursts which the children may then imitate. It also reduces the likelihood that parents will teach positive social skills to their children or that they will learn to deal with their children's problem behaviour effectively.

Apart from modelling anti-social behaviour, chronic marital discord may have other deleterious effects on parent-child relationships. It can make parents more coercive in their child-rearing practices, resulting in inadequate discipline. It can also make the parents so self-absorbed in trying to cope with concomitant stress that they begin to supervise their children less and spend less time with them. The possible consequences of poor supervision and a lack of parent-child involvement have already been noted.<sup>139</sup>

Empirical research has demonstrated the link between poor marital relationships and crime. Loeber and Stouthamer - Loeber found that 17 out of 22 analyses showed a significant relation between marital discord and children's delinquency and aggression.<sup>140</sup>

In addition, Farrington (1978) discovered that new marital disharmony by age fourteen was followed by the emergence of aggressiveness in boys who had not previously shown aggressive behaviour.<sup>141</sup> Length of time, may, however, be a relevant factor and it is possible that the effects of parental strife may wear off over time.

We may in closing observe that Rutter *et al* found that poor marital relations were associated with the development of new disorders in children after the age of ten.<sup>142</sup> Similar findings were reported by Richman *et al* for younger children.<sup>143</sup>

Loeber and Stouthamer - Loeber, in their meta-analysis of family factors found that poor marital relations constituted "medium-strength" predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency.<sup>144</sup> As such, it seems to be a stronger predictor than parental absence (p. , above).

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<sup>139</sup> See above, p.22-23

<sup>140</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>141</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1978) cited in above, p. 112

<sup>142</sup> Rutter *et al* (1976). Cited in above, p.112

<sup>143</sup> Richman *et al* (1982). Cited in above, p. 112

<sup>144</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 29

Poor marital relations can lead to separation, divorce and lone-parenting. But does avoiding divorce prevent delinquency?

(ii) Broken homes<sup>145</sup>

The harsh effects of separation upon young children are well-documented. Indeed most personality theories claim that two parents are needed for effective upbringing.

Mothers, for it is generally the father who is absent, can try to do the work of two parents but if both are needed one can expect to get less done. Kellam, for example, found that mother-only families reduced the extent to which some boys are adequately socialised;<sup>146</sup> a finding also borne out by Wilson and Herrnstein.<sup>147</sup>

Parker and Kleiner found that children from broken homes were more likely to develop neuroses and to lack achievement motivation<sup>148</sup> whilst Shinn discovered that such children also had lower verbal and full-scale IQ scores.<sup>149</sup> Given the relationship between low verbal IQ and crime, probably linked by the poor ability to manipulate abstract concepts, one could perhaps argue that the impact of divorce on crime is indirect.

Yet there is also some evidence of a direct impact, and it appears to be greatest when the children are young. Wadsworth found that 29% of boys who experienced family disruption before the age of five became delinquent, compared with 16% for older boys.<sup>150</sup> Similar findings were reported by Behar and Stewart.<sup>151</sup> Loeber and Stouthamer - Loeber also found a relationship between parental absence and delinquency.<sup>152</sup>

To what extent are the criminogenic effects of divorce transmitted through the loss of a parent or through the marital strife which led to the loss of that parent? "Taking all the evidence together", write Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, "marital discord has a stronger relation with delinquency and aggression than parental absence".<sup>153</sup> This supports Rutter's claim that "children's behaviour is disrupted by parental discord and quarreling rather than parental separation".<sup>154</sup> This, in turn is "consistent"<sup>155</sup> with studies that show that the

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<sup>145</sup> The term 'broken home' is used to reflect conventional language. It recognises the damage caused by the loss of both or either parents without necessarily prejudging the future development of the family unit or its members.

<sup>146</sup> Kellam ( ). Cited in: Wilson, J.Q. and Herrnstein, R.J. (1985) Crime and Human Nature, New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>147</sup> Wilson, J.Q. and Herrnstein, R.J. (1985) Crime and Human Nature, New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>148</sup> Parker and Kleiner ( ). Cited in: Wilson, J.Q. and Herrnstein, R.J. (1985) Crime and Human Nature, New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>149</sup> Shinn, ( ). Cited in: Wilson, J.Q. and Herrnstein, R.J. (1985) Crime and Human Nature, New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>150</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 77

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*, p. 77-78

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*, p. 77

<sup>153</sup> *ibid*. p.78.

<sup>154</sup> Rutter, (1971). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.78.

<sup>155</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.78.

death or hospitalisation of a parent does not seem to have the same effect on child behaviour as divorce or separation.<sup>156</sup>

Recent research indicates that marital discord is the crucial factor.

This is suggested by several studies which compared boys from broken homes with those with unhappily married parents. Thus McCord compared the percentage of serious delinquents in intact homes (32%), in broken homes (41%) and in intact homes with marital conflict (52%) and found that the difference was non significant.<sup>157</sup> In addition, Nye discovered that "boys in broken homes were less delinquent than boys in homes with marital discord"<sup>158</sup> whilst Power *et al* found that "more delinquents from unhappy homes became recidivists than did delinquents from broken homes".<sup>159</sup>

To the extent that marital discord and resulting parental absence impact on delinquency, their effects seem to be mediated through the consequent lack of parental supervision.

For example, McCord found that 67% of parents in intact homes supervised their children, compared to only 44% in broken homes.<sup>160</sup>

In addition, Stouthamer-Loeber *et al*, in a study of ten to sixteen year old boys discovered that "both single mothers and unhappily married mothers supervised their children significantly less assiduously than did happily married mothers".<sup>161</sup>

Much may of course depend on whether the divorce was bitterly contested or not; short-lived or not; civil or not. The criminogenic effects of divorce may vary according to context: there are more single parent families in New York than in London.<sup>162</sup> Ironically, it could be that where divorce is rare, its effects are less.

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<sup>156</sup> Glueck and Glueck (1950), Zill (1978). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.78.

<sup>157</sup> McCord, J. (1982). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*, p. 78

<sup>159</sup> *ibid*, p. 78

<sup>160</sup> McCord, J. (1982). Cited in: McCord, J. (1982). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,

<sup>161</sup> Stouthamer-Loeber *et al* (1984). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>162</sup> Wilson, J.Q. and Herrnstein, R.J. (1985) *Crime and Human Nature*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Marital relations and parental child-rearing practices may improve when a parent divorces an antisocial or alcoholic partner and subsequently marries someone who is not involved in these behaviours. Thus divorce may, in some circumstances, decrease the likelihood of later offending.<sup>163</sup>

In conclusion, there appears to be some association between separation, divorce and delinquency. The relevant factor seems to be the marital discord which typically surrounds the departure of one of the parents, rather than parental absence *per se*. This may increase the risk of delinquency by making effective supervision of the child by the remaining parent less likely. Thus it is possible that living in a broken home will only affect the child's delinquency when it is accompanied by other factors such as poor supervision. There is much truth in the assertion that "ruptures in the family which cause broken homes may be no more significant than their causes."<sup>164</sup> Intact families may have as many unhappy traits, anger, tension and violence as a broken home: possibly more, because its members continue to live together. As a result, avoiding divorce may not reduce crime. If quality of relationships is the key, then any regrouping of those relationships which decreases strife is likely to lessen the risk of delinquency, provided of course that high levels of supervision can be maintained. In practice, it is precisely this that divorce makes difficult.

### (iii) Parental Criminality

The link between parental criminality and juvenile delinquency may have some genetic basis. But criminal parents may also constitute a source of social influences whose effect is to lead to internalised norms which favour antisocial behaviour. This can happen in several ways.

First, parents may model criminal behaviour which the children either witness directly or hear about.

Second, criminal parents may display attitudes condoning or encouraging deviant acts by their children. This may include urging them to "act tough" for example. They may also transmit deviant attitudes concerning other people's property by, for example, allowing stolen property to remain in the house.<sup>165</sup>

Third, such parents are more likely than non-criminal parents to protect their children from the negative consequences of their misbehaviour. Parents with deviant values are also less likely than parents with prosocial values to try to eliminate juvenile conduct problems. This is because they are less likely to see it as wrong in the first place, and therefore will be less likely to punish. Research carried out at the Oregon Social

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<sup>163</sup> Stewart (1984). Cited in: Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.112-3.

<sup>164</sup> Rutter, M. and Giller, H. (1983) Juvenile Delinquency, Harmondsworth: Penguin

<sup>165</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 39

Learning Centre showed that many parents of children with social conduct problems do not even recognise *criminal* behaviour in their own children.<sup>166</sup>

Farrington *et al* discovered that there was some link between parental criminality and lack of supervision.<sup>167</sup> Parents with a delinquent record supervised their children less, leading to an increased probability of their children's delinquency compared with poor supervision by a non-delinquent parent.

Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, in their meta-analysis of family factors found that parental criminality constituted a "medium strength" predictor of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency.<sup>168</sup>

## **6. Long term motivating factors**

The sixth group of constricts identified by Farrington are long-term motivating factors such as the desire for material goods, status with peers and so on. Whilst these motivations "do not (in themselves) produce antisocial tendency they will produce antisocial tendency in people who cannot satisfy these needs by legitimate means."<sup>169</sup> Since such motivations are neutral in themselves, lack of opportunity plays a major role.

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<sup>166</sup> Hirschi, T. (1983) 'Crime and the family', in: Crime and Public Policy, J.Q. Wilson (Ed.), San Francisco: ICS Press.

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<sup>168</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 29

<sup>169</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p. 277

## *II Influences on offending*

Offending is only one of a wide range of anti-social behaviours. The fact that an individual has anti-social tendency does not necessarily mean that he will commit crime. Farrington has identified five clusters of factors which in his new influence the likelihood of an antisocial individual committing an offence.<sup>170</sup> Each will be considered in turn and the potential relevance of Relationism assessed.

### **1. Antisocial Tendency**

In Farrington's theory, the individual brings a certain degree of antisocial tendency into his social and physical environment. Offences are the product of an interaction between the individual and his environment.<sup>171</sup>

Plainly, the more antisocial the individual, the more likely he or she is to offend.

### **2. Short-term situationally induced motivating factors**

Short-term situationally induced motivating factors which increase the likelihood of antisocial tendency being translated into offending include "boredom, frustration, alcohol consumption, getting fired from a job or quarrelling with a wife or girlfriend".<sup>172</sup>

### **3. Life circumstances or events**

Life circumstances or events which may be conducive to offending include unemployment, drug addiction and shortage of money.<sup>173</sup>

### **4. Situational opportunities for offending**

These vary according to changes in the physical environment and the willingness of individuals "to seek out and create opportunities for offending".<sup>174</sup>

The 'routine activities' theory of Cohen and Felson (1979) offer one explanation of how "opportunities for crime arise and change over time".<sup>175</sup>

"Most criminal acts", they argue, "require the coming together in space and time of likely offenders and suitable targets... and an absence of capable guardians."<sup>176</sup> They demonstrate that convergence depends on

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<sup>170</sup> *ibid*, p. 275

<sup>171</sup> *ibid*, p. 277

<sup>172</sup> *ibid*, p. 278

<sup>173</sup> *ibid*, p. 278

<sup>174</sup> *ibid*, p. 278

<sup>175</sup> *ibid*, p. 278

<sup>176</sup> Cohen, L.E. and Felson, M. (1979) 'Social Change and crime rate trends: a routine activity approach' *American Sociological Review*, (44), 588-608

the patterning of "routine activities"<sup>177</sup>, that is "(Those that provide for basic needs such as food and shelter)".<sup>178</sup> Crime rates change according to shifts in routine activity patterns.

According to Cohen and Felson; "we would expect routine activities performed within or near the home and among family on other primary groups to entail lower risk of criminal victimisation because they enhance guardianship capabilities".<sup>179</sup>

Since the Second World War the United Kingdom has experience a margin of shift of routine activities away from the home and into jobs and other activities away from home. One consequence of the increasing number of working women, coupled with the increase in single-parent, female-headed households is that "it contributes to the 'destruction of the nest' where no one is home for a large portion of the day".<sup>180</sup>

In addition, the 1960s and 1970s have seen a striking decline in the physical weight of such prized consumer durables as television sets and record players, resulting in an increase of suitable targets. Both trends provide increased opportunities for burglary. Cohen and Felson find significant and sometimes impressive correlations between crime rates and a number of such indicators of routine features of every day life.<sup>181</sup>

If changes in 'routine activities' anticipate changes in the crime rate then they are probably also a good index of wider Relational dysfunction.

Central to Relationism is the idea that macro-social processes upset patterns of relating within society. Whilst recognising that there are a wide range of social and ecological factors which can influence the pattern of 'routine activities', it nonetheless appears to have a distinct Relational orientation.

## 5. **Costs and benefits of offending versus legitimate behaviour**

This final cluster postulates that "whether an offence is committed... is essentially a rational, hedonistic decision".<sup>182</sup> Would-be offenders "weigh the benefits of offending (e.g., material goods stolen, enhanced status among peers, pleasure gained by seeing someone suffer) against the costs of offending (e.g., being caught by the police and punished by the courts, disapproval from parents or spouses) in relation to the benefits and costs of alternative behaviours".<sup>183</sup> Farrington reports that "in the Cambridge study the most common reasons given for offending were rational ones, suggesting that most property crimes were committed because the offenders

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<sup>177</sup> *ibid*

<sup>178</sup> *ibid*

<sup>179</sup> *ibid*

<sup>180</sup> *ibid*

<sup>181</sup> *ibid*

<sup>182</sup> Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behaviour from birth and adulthood', in: J. McCord (Ed.), Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts, Advances in Criminological Theory Vol.3, New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, p. 278

<sup>183</sup> *ibid.* p.278

wanted the items stolen."<sup>184</sup> It could be that in a materialistic society, which value choice above obligation and which is characterised by alternated relationships, an individual is less likely to be deterred by subjective probabilities of arrest with and correspondingly more likely to value the utility of committing crime. This may be of particular relevance given that the deterrent value of subjective probabilities of arrest typically hinge on Relational considerations, for example, disapproval from one's parents or spouse.

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<sup>184</sup> West, D.J. and Farrington, D.P. (1977). Cited in: Farrington, D.P. (1993) 'The Challenge of Teenage Antisocial Behaviourism' (Unpublished paper prepared for Marbach Castle conference on 'Youth in the Year 2000', p.34.

## Assessment

A satisfactory explanation of criminal behaviour would also explain the broader range of antisocial behaviour of which it is a part. Farrington identifies five major influences upon antisocial behaviour; impulsivity, the poor ability to manipulate abstract concept, low empathy, a weak conscience, internalized norms favouring antisocial behaviour, as well as certain long-term motivating factors.

A Relational approach to the causes of crime focuses on the value of close interpersonal relationships and regards the breakdown of the family and other social relationships, that is Relational dysfunction at the macro and the micro-social level, as an important cause or factor. How important depends on the strength of the research evidence which posits a link between relationship breakdown and crime and the strength of those other factors which are also related to criminal behaviour.

Evaluated in the light of Farrington's theory of offending this approach clearly has some relevance.

It appears to be related to the formation of low empathy (dependent on cold family relationships), a weak conscience (partly dependent on poor discipline, lack of supervision and lack of parent-child involvement) and internalized norms favouring antisocial behaviour (variously dependent upon poor marital relations, broken homes and parental criminality). To the extent that relational dysfunction creates a social climate in which material gains are valued at the expense of their impact on relationships then it may, in very general terms, have some bearing on the development of certain long-term motivating factors. These may increase the risk of antisocial behaviour in the case of individuals denied legitimate opportunities. However, the fact that for most people, the desire for material goods, status with peers and so on can have positive Relational effects suggests that the absence of legitimate opportunities to pursue these goals is more relevant than background influences. In terms of giving some account of impulsivity and various cognitive deficiencies, the Relational perspective has little, if anything, to add. In view of the importance of genetic and biological factors in explaining crime, this constitutes a severe limitation.

To the extent then, that Relational dysfunction contributes towards low empathy, the development of a weak conscience and internalized norms favouring antisocial behaviour, than one could argue that Relational thinking is relevant to an understanding of antisocial tendency.

However the level of antisocial tendency which an individual brings to a given situation is but one factor in determining whether or not an individual is likely to offend. Other factors identified by Farrington include short-term situationally-induced motivating factors, life circumstances or events, situational opportunities for offending, in addition to the perceived costs and benefits of offending.

Of these, the relevance of Relational thinking to antisocial tendency has already been considered. Relational thinking may be of some relevance to the development of short-term factors and perhaps to changes in life circumstances or events but this is unclear at present. Changes in geographical patterns of relating, particularly those which draw individuals away from the home appear to be related to increased situational opportunities for offending. However it must be recognized that there are innumerable social and ecological factors which can influence the pattern of 'routine activities'. Finally, while the subjective probability of arrest is dependent on a wide range of factors, it is likely that their deterrent value is predicted upon Relational proximity to significant others.

Thus, it looks as though Relational thinking could feed into a general understanding of crime at a number of different points. Given its focus upon 'relational breakdown' it appears to be on rather firmer ground when considering micro-relational dysfunction rather than at the macro-social level. As such it appears to have rather more to contribute to an understanding of antisocial behaviour in general rather than offending in particular. Its utility seems to lie in being able to draw a number of diverse, but interrelated, themes together. But there are many issues upon which it has either nothing to say or in which it is heavily outweighed by other factors. This must act as a severe curb upon its explanatory power. But provided its limitations are borne in mind the concept of Relational dysfunction and the Relational world view it embodies does appear to be of some value.

Now that we have considered how the idea of Relational dysfunction fits into an overall theory of criminal behaviour, we may now turn to consider what it means in details. To return to our image of the art expert, we move from the outline sketch to those parts of the canvas where the painting is starting to take shape.

### ***Proximity, Dysfunction and Crime***

Relational thinking asserts that relational proximity, or the closeness of relationships within society is essential to the proper functioning of the political economy, the good self-order of society and the inner happiness of the individual. Relational proximity constitutes a source of commitment and constraint which creates effective obligations and should lead to a reduced willingness to commit crime. A lack of Relational proximity constitutes a source of commitment and constraint which creates effective obligations and should lead to a reduced willingness to commit crime. A lack of Relational proximity within society may be said to lead to Relational dysfunction.

Relational proximity can be measured along at least five dimensions. These include directness, continuity, multiplexity, parity and commonality.<sup>185</sup> Each concerns the degree of interaction between two individuals. Taking each in turn we may say that Relational proximity is increased if there is a high degree of face-to-face contact (directness) which occurs regularly over an extended period of time (continuity). Individuals will be more Relationally proximate if they meet in different roles and contexts (multiplexity) on as equal a footing as possible (parity) and if the interaction is characterised by a common purpose (commonality).

By the same token there is less prospect of Relational proximity if interaction typically takes place over the phone, through an intermediary, irregularly and on a short-term basis. It is also less likely if encounters always take place in the same context, if the parties are separated by an asymmetry of power and if their interests fail to overlap.

To the extent that each of these dimensions is present the individuals concerned may be said to be Relationally proximate. To the extent that they are absent, the relationship may be said to be dysfunctional. Within the framework of Relational thought, Relational dysfunction is what happens when encounter relationships are supplanted by contingent relationships under a prevailing ethos of choice.

Relational dysfunction can occur at many different levels. It may occur within the family giving rise to parent-child conflict, marital discord and divorce. It may occur within neighbourhoods, giving rise to 'anonymous societies' or within companies as a result of the phenomenon of 'giantism'.<sup>186</sup> In the latter cases it may increase situational opportunities for offending. Relational dysfunction can occur at the macro-level, giving rise to materialism and to an anti-Relational societal ethos in which the pursuit of material goods may be encouraged at the expense of Relational considerations. Finally, Relational dysfunction at either the micro or the macro-level may remove some of the stigma of criminal behaviour, decreasing the chances that shame will be a determining factor when an individual chooses whether or not to offend.

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<sup>185</sup> Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*

We shall consider the extent to which each of these propositions can be supported by empirical evidence. In doing so we may obtain some idea of how Relational values may contribute to an overall theory of crime.

1. *The Family*

This century has witnessed the transformation of the family from an extended kin-group to the isolated nuclear family which in turn is steadily giving way to the lone-parent family unit. It is a trend which reflects the loss of encounter relationships within society as a whole, for the value of the family lies in the fact that it constitutes a natural source of encounter relationships.<sup>187</sup>

Those who argued for the abolition of the family in the 1960s on the grounds that it represented an oppressive institution missed the point. The family is not an institution, it is "an arrangement of relationships"<sup>188</sup> and to that extent it is "an instrument, a means".<sup>189</sup> The family "creates the conditions necessary for individuals to have strong Relational Bases"<sup>190</sup> and "brings individuals together within the social structure for particular purposes that usually include security and child-rearing."<sup>191</sup>

However, under the prevailing ethos of choice "stability is achieved and encounter is secured only with difficulty".<sup>192</sup> Schluter and Lee argue that "within the free-choosing mega-community, relationships themselves turn into consumer goods".<sup>193</sup> Divorce is not the problem so much as the tendency to favour choice over obligation.

Of course, divorce occurs for a wider number of reasons, but it is undoubtedly true that "the exercise of choice has become a factor in relationship breakdown".<sup>194</sup>

This century has witnessed the transformation of the extended kin-group with the isolated nuclear family which in turn is steadily giving way to the lone-parent family unit. Stability is achieved and encounter is secured only with difficulty.

"Within the free-choosing mega-community", argue Schluter and Lee, "relationships themselves turn into consumer goods".<sup>195</sup> Divorce is not the problem, so much as the prevailing ethos of choice.

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<sup>187</sup> *ibid*

<sup>188</sup> *ibid*

<sup>189</sup> *ibid*

<sup>190</sup> *ibid*

<sup>191</sup> *ibid*

<sup>192</sup> *ibid*

<sup>193</sup> *ibid*

<sup>194</sup> *ibid*

There are, to be sure, occasions when the relationship has irretrievably broken down and divorce becomes the only option.

Similarly, the so-called "democratisation of the family"<sup>196</sup> increases the likelihood of dysfunction among intact families. The phrase refers to the tendency to see relationships within the family as one of contract, in which "members reserve the right to pull out if things don't go as planned or if certain conditions aren't met."<sup>197</sup> Again, it is not dysfunction which is the problem so much as the perceived dominance of choice over obligation at the macrosocial level. If choice is seen as a dominant value then one is more likely to pull out of any relationship when it starts to go wrong. Whilst it is still generally regarded, in the mega-community, as wrong to shirk one's responsibilities, "it is still just as strongly affirmed that the individual should not be inconvenienced or 'tied down' against his will".<sup>198</sup> As Ronald Fletcher puts it, "the modern family as we know it is founded on the basis of free personal choice by partners of equal status".<sup>199</sup> This is in contrast to families in low income countries which function as economic as well as social entities.

Both trends increase the risk of micro-Relational dysfunction within families. Hallmarks include parent-child rejection, lack of supervision, inadequate discipline, lack of parent-child involvement, poor discipline, poor marital relations and divorce.<sup>200</sup>

We have already seen how important these factors are in giving rise to low empathy, a weak conscience and internalised norms favouring antisocial aggression which in turn constitute important influences on antisocial tendency. We have also considered the extent to which marital breakdown, separation and divorce constituted risk factors for delinquency.

Studies strongly suggest that it is the marital discord associated with divorce rather than divorce itself which is associated with later delinquency. A more harmonious realignment of relationships following divorce may even make delinquency less likely than continuing to stay together, provided high levels of supervision can be maintained. In affirming this, one is only emphasising the Relational point that the value of the family lies in its ability to promote good relationships and not because of its supposed virtues as a 'social institution'. It is the relationships within the family which matter, not the family *per se*. As a result, "if the family fails to

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<sup>195</sup> *ibid*

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*

<sup>198</sup> *ibid*

<sup>199</sup> Cited in: Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton

<sup>200</sup> Relational proximity is implicated in each of these, by its absence. Taking divorce as an example, "typical scenarios ... include the absentee husband (lack of continuity), the separation of the partners social worlds (lack of multiplexity, 'growing apart' (lack of commonality) and the isolation of partners from the family and friends who might otherwise have acted as safety valves for tension (lack of relational proximity in surrounding relationships). See Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton

support constructive relationships it is failing in its purposes both from the individual's point of view and from society's".<sup>201</sup>

Nonetheless, the breakdown of the family may be seen as a contributory factor to the steady increase in the crime rate.

## 2. *Social Mobility*

Relational dysfunction may also occur at the macro-level and may also be characterised by major geographic changes in the way in which society operates. One example is excessive social mobility.

Sorokin has observed that social mobility has many positive effects on both human behaviour and psychology as well as in the field of "social progresses and organisation".<sup>202</sup> Increased mobility tends to "reduce narrow-mindedness and occupational and other idiosyncrasies,"<sup>203</sup> and it also facilitates inventions, discoveries and "an increase of intellectual life".<sup>204</sup> Mobility can also, under some conditions promote harmony by facilitating "a better and more adequate social distribution of individuals than in an immobile society".<sup>205</sup> Thus it can exert "quite positive effects on social stability".<sup>206</sup> Mobility, in fact, is essential to the good self-ordering of society because "the greater efficiency of properly-placed individuals gives a greater possibility of procuring all the necessitates for the population as a whole".<sup>207</sup>

At the same time, however, mobility facilitates an increase of many opposite kinds of behaviour. It tends to increase mental strain, various forms of mental illness, superficiality, densensitisation, scepticism, cynicism and misoneism.<sup>208</sup>

It also tends to decrease Relational proximity. The rise in private transport, the design of housing estates with a lack of public space coupled with a lack of oversight between properties, all combine to diminish psycho-social intimacy and the prospect of encounter relationships. Social mobility shifts the pattern of relating "slowly and persistently into contingency".<sup>209</sup> Excessive mobility leads to a kind of (electron dance) of individuals "scattered too far and moving too fast to maintain a strong base of encounter relationships".<sup>210</sup> Since encounter relationships have a tendency to foster pro-Relational qualities such as commitment and

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<sup>201</sup> Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton

<sup>202</sup> Sorokin, P.A. (1959) *Social and Cultural Mobility* Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe

<sup>203</sup> *ibid*

<sup>204</sup> *ibid*

<sup>205</sup> *ibid*

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*

<sup>207</sup> *ibid*

<sup>208</sup> *ibid*

<sup>209</sup> *ibid*

<sup>210</sup> *ibid*

constraint, it follows that the risk of criminal behaviour increases with the decline of encounter. Not only is there greater unwillingness to steal from friends than strangers, but there is a lower risk of detection. The stranger without goodwill stands out more easily in a locality characterised by strong encounter relationships than in the mega-community where everyone is a stranger. "Whereas in the typical pre-industrial setting the arrival of strangers constituted an extraordinary event... in the mega-community with its massive urban concentration and rapid mobility, the stranger has become the norm. Seldom in the west is the stranger another person coming in: rather he is every one of us going out."<sup>211</sup>

The loss of encounter also increases the situational opportunities for offending [more].

### 3. *Giantism*

Another symptom of macro-relational dysfunction, which may also increase situational opportunities for offending is giantism. This refers to the scale of commercial enterprise and the tendency for the big to keep getting bigger. Thus whilst half of the manufacturing employment in Britain before the Second World War had been in plants with 70 -750 employees; in 1968 "the corresponding range ran from 130 - 1,600 employees".<sup>212</sup> The same period saw a fall in the number of smaller plants employing ten or less from 93,000 to 35,000. Deregulation of the financial sector and the lifting of exchange controls in the 1980's has served to hasten this process. "Over half of the money invested in U.K. pension funds is in the hands of the six largest institutions"<sup>213</sup> whilst in "as vital an area as food retailing the British market is dominated by just five companies".<sup>214</sup>

Giantism is a form of relational dysfunction because the size of the company tends to reduce Relational proximity by substituting contingent relationships (mediated through asymmetries of power) for encounter relationships.

Since Relational proximity is an important determinant of moral behaviour; negatively, by increasing the fear of being found out and positively, by promoting a deeper sense of obligation it follows that the trend towards giantism increases opportunities for various forms of while-collar crime, including employee theft, illicit expense claims and so on. Larger companies have more contingent relationships than smaller companies and, lacking relational proximity find it harder to build a sense of loyalty or pride.<sup>215</sup> Thus one would expect there to be some correlation between the size of the workforce and certain forms of white-collar crime. It may

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<sup>211</sup> "Whereas in the typical pre-industrial setting the arrival of strangers constituted an extraordinary event ... in the mega-community with its massive urban concentration and rapid mobility, the stranger has become the norm. Seldom in the west is the stranger another person coming in: rather he is every one of us going out." See Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton

<sup>212</sup> Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton

<sup>213</sup> *ibid*

<sup>214</sup> *ibid*

<sup>215</sup> *ibid*

also be related to aspects of management style which may either inspire or fail to promote a sense of loyalty and respect. Jobs which are technology-intensive and which require little human supervision may also provide greater opportunities for crime.

#### 4. *Materialism*

Materialism is a form of macro-relational dysfunction because it fails to recognise that the value of material things can only be weighed in Relational terms. Money, for example, is a very important determinant of relationships and needs always to be considered in that light. Materialism ignores the relational aspect of material things and begins to regard them as a dimension in their own right. It may underlie the long-term motivating factors which act as an influence upon antisocial tendency, including the desire for material goods and for status among peers.

Relational values challenge the basis of an economy in which "motivating a person to produce has become less urgent than motivating her to consume."<sup>216</sup>

#### 5. *Loss of Shame*

We have already seen how offending is the product of a rational cost-benefit analysis. The subjective probability of arrest and conviction determines how costs are perceived. But also relevant to how heavily they weigh in the balance is the degree to which the individual is susceptible to guilt and shame.

The extent to which an individual will identify a genuine sense of guilt as arising from an extra-human source will depend on his moral and religious beliefs, or lack of them and the extent to which an individual feels shame will depend on whether he has close relationships with people whose opinions he values. The success of recent attempts at public shaming, including the decision by the courts to publish list of fine<sup>217</sup> defaulters, and the decision of a chain-store to hire a town crier to read out a list of persons caught shoplifting in the store <sup>218</sup>will be determined by the degree of relational proximity within the locality. Relational proximity, by fostering obligation, increases the chances that an individual will be deterred by the shame of arrest or conviction.

According to Braithwaite 'shaming' is at its most effective when it is reintegrative and counter-productive when it results in stigmatisation.<sup>219</sup> Reintegrative shaming is "disapproval dispensed within an ongoing relationship with the offender based on respect, shaming which focuses on the evil of the deed rather

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<sup>216</sup> *ibid*

<sup>217</sup> *The Times*, (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improv ing child rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre

<sup>218</sup> News Bulletin (date unknown)

<sup>219</sup> Braithwaite, J. (1993) 'Shame and modernity', *British Journal of Criminology*, (33), 1-18

than on the offender as an irremediably evil person".<sup>220</sup> Stigmatisation, by contrast is "shaming where bonds of respect with the offender are not sustained".<sup>221</sup> Its result is to create "outcasts"<sup>222</sup> for whom criminality has become "a master status trait that drives out all other identities".<sup>223</sup> In *Crime, Shame and Reintegration* he advances the thesis that societies with low crime rates are societies where shaming of criminal behaviour is both "potent and reintegrative".<sup>224</sup>

Reintegrative shaming is an essentially Relational construct. It depends first and foremost upon Relational proximity for its effectiveness. Thus whilst "urbanization is posited in the theory as one of the structural variables that enfeeble the communitarianism that makes shaming possible"<sup>225</sup>, it comes as no surprise to discover that Tokyo has low crime rates or that crime rates declined during the Victorian era, which was "a period of unprecedented urbanisation".<sup>226</sup> Critics of Braithwaite's theory who see it as a plea to "turn back from the clock" from an urban to a folk society therefore miss the point. Whilst urbanisation does tend to decrease encounter relationships and increase contingent relationships, it is the presence or absence of these that is the issue, not urbanisation *per se*.

"Shaming affects us most when we are shamed by people who matter to us."<sup>227</sup> Accordingly, "people enmeshed in many interdependent relationships with others are exposed to more sources of effective shaming".<sup>228</sup> Relational dysfunction, at both the micro and the macro level makes shaming more difficult. However, there are other factors which contribute to "the withering of shame"<sup>229</sup> some of which can be directly linked to the choice-obligation imbalance which gives rise to Relational dysfunction in the first place.

Following Duerr, Braithwaite observes that "late modernity has involved a frontal assault on shame wherein everything - nakedness, sex, violence, rage, fidelity - is turned into a consumer item".<sup>230</sup> Commodifying "the body, sexuality and violence has probably weakened the threshold of shame in relation to them".<sup>231</sup> The danger indicated above of treating marriage as "just another consumer choice"<sup>232</sup> has "implications for the power of family shaming".<sup>233</sup> It has been well observed that, "during the twentieth

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220 *ibid*  
221 *ibid*  
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232 *ibid*  
233 *ibid*

century we became ashamed to be ashamed ... and the very word shame atrophied in our vocabulary".<sup>234</sup> Shame has become "declass  within the increasingly popular libertarian vision of the citizen freely choosing in a market for commodities where punishment was just another commodity".<sup>235</sup> Ultimately, "it has become a tolerated idea that we have a right to break the law so long as we pay the price in punishment".<sup>236</sup>

Of course, there are important ways in which twentieth-century culture has increased the potential for shame. "Business executives are more vulnerable to shame for environmental aims to-day than they were just twenty five years ago, before the rise of the environmental movement".<sup>237</sup> And, compared to fifteenth century England, where "wife-beating was a recognised right of man"<sup>238</sup> more shame is attracted to such beatings to-day with the advent of "feminist shaming". (However whether this actually inhibits behaviour or simply means brutal men are more likely to act in secret is difficult to say).

Despite such trends it is probably fair to say that the potential for shame is less than it has been. The result is that "modern coercion is uncoupled from shame to a considerable degree".<sup>239</sup> The likelihood, then, that shame will weigh in the balance when an offender decides to commit a crime is increasingly slight.

From a Relational perspective, one might attribute the loss of effective shaming to the loss of Relational proximity. Here the most influential dimension appears to be multiplexity.

The loss of multiplexity is partly the product of role differentiation in a highly-mobile society. This makes it harder for an individual to be confronted with the whole person; instead all he is likely to see is several fragments of what Braithwaite terms the "segmented self".<sup>240</sup> In one sense, lack of multiplexity makes us more vulnerable to shame. Braithwaite cites "the embarrassment of coming into contact with others who know us in different roles - the former Sunday school teacher from whom we purchase condoms in a pharmacy [or] the appointment with a doctor married to a colleague at work".<sup>241</sup> On the other hand, of course, lack of multiplexity "affords us day-to-day protection from shame as we move around groups with different values".<sup>242</sup>

The real problem with a lack of multiplexity, however, is that it risks Braithwaite's worst case scenario: that is, little prospect of reintegrative shaming coupled with a high prospect of stigmatisation.

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<sup>234</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>235</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>236</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>237</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>238</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>239</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>240</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>241</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>242</sup> *ibid*

In a society with high levels of Relational proximity (which for Braithwaite is typified by a 'village' society, although as indicated Relational proximity need not be equated with geographical proximity, nor vice versa).

Reintegrative shaming is more likely to occur than in societies with low levels of Relational proximity. To accept a person's whole self as good and to recognise that "it is just a part of their conduct which is disapproved as bad"<sup>243</sup> is more likely when, in the course of events, individuals are confronted with the 'whole person'.<sup>244</sup>

By contrast, stigmatisation is more likely to occur in societies with low levels of Relational proximity than in societies with higher levels. In a society characterised by lack of multiplexity, "one of the consequences of a criminal conviction is that audience segregation cannot be sustained. The worst side of the offender's business or professional self is exposed to people to whom he normally presents his church-going self, his golf-playing self, his fatherly self".<sup>245</sup> Lack of multiplexity, in Braithwaite's terms the 'segmented self', "leaves us very vulnerable when an act of wrongdoing becomes so public as to become known to all these groups".<sup>246</sup> He rightly points out that "precisely because we make ourselves comfortable in a role-segregated world by partitioning audiences in a way that enables us to present radically different selves to those different audiences, our shame can be many-sided and more unmanageable in a role-segregated world".<sup>247</sup>

It goes without saying that the risk of stigmatisation is less in a society characterised by multiplexity. This is because such individuals, will have a better understanding of "the complex totality of their neighbours [which] renders them less susceptible to the stereotypical outcasting of deviants"<sup>248</sup> that is normal in the "metropolis" or, to use Relational language, where mutiplexity is absent.

It is probably an open question "whether reintegrative shaming by a single group on which we depend for everything will be more or less powerful than reintegrative shaming by many groups on each of which we depend for some important subset of our needs".<sup>249</sup> But even if reintegrative shaming is less powerful in a multiplex society because it is characterised by greater acceptance of the person anyway, the important point is that it is still more likely to occur. By contrast, reintegrative shaming is unlikely to occur in a society which lacks multiplexity even though it may be more powerful. Instead, it is likely to result in stigmatisation, presuming that the culture still allows some concept of shaming.

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<sup>243</sup> *ibid*

<sup>244</sup> *ibid*

<sup>245</sup> *ibid*

<sup>246</sup> *ibid*

<sup>247</sup> *ibid*

<sup>248</sup> *ibid*

<sup>249</sup> *ibid*

Stigmatisation is anti-Relational. It is "shaming where bonds of respect with the offender are not sustained".<sup>250</sup> Stigmatised individuals may cope with this by cutting themselves off from other people, retreating into a "stigmatised subculture"<sup>251</sup> of other stigmatised individuals. In fact, they may do more than cut themselves off from caring about what others think. Out of resentment at being stigmatised they may try to do exactly the opposite to what they know others would approve. "In short, stigmatisation not only cuts away the heightened exposure of shame we have in a structurally differentiated world, it can create criminal subcultures where shame resides in *complying* with the law."<sup>252</sup> And when this happens, the very ability of the criminal justice system to preserve social order is thrown into doubt.

## 6. *Criminal Justice*

The loss of one dimension of Relational proximity typically leads to the loss of others. They are inter-dependent. The loss of multiplexity has been linked to social mobility, and hence to the loss of directness and continuity. But it can also be symptomatic of an absence of parity (restricting the variety of roles in which an individual can be encountered) and commonality (since a shared purpose is more likely to bring people together in a range of different roles and settings). We have already seen how the loss of multiplexity can undermine effective shaming and can promote stigmatization and the emergence of deviant subcultures. In this section we consider how the existence of disaffected minorities constitutes a major challenge to the proper functioning of the criminal justice system. In so doing, we underline again the interdependency of the various dimensions of Relational proximity. In this case, the loss of multiplexity, caused perhaps by the absence of directness and continuity, triggers a landslide in two other things on which a criminal justice system depends - parity and commonality.

In the early 1980's the Minneapolis Police Department collaborated with the noted American criminologist, Lawrence Sherman, to find out whether arresting domestic violence suspects had any effect on their later behaviour.<sup>253</sup> (Domestic violence it should be noted, is the single most frequent form of violence police encounter in the United States and is more common than all other forms of violence combined). This was achieved by means of a randomised experiment, said by some commentators to be "arguably the best field experiment on a criminal justice policy problem done to date."<sup>254</sup> Suspects were randomly assigned, by police, to receive one of three different responses. Thus one third received an arrest and at least one night in jail, another third were told to leave the home for eight hours on pain of arrest, whilst the remaining third were given some kind of 'talking to' by police and then left at the scene.

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<sup>250</sup> *ibid*

<sup>251</sup> *ibid*

<sup>252</sup> *ibid*

<sup>253</sup> Sherman, L.W. (1992) Policing Domestic Violence. New York: Macmillan, The Free Press

<sup>254</sup> *ibid*

The results showed that arrest and a night in jail cut in half the risk of repeat violence against the same victim over a six-month follow-up period, from about 20% to 10%. Both official records and interviews of victims showed that "arrest worked best."<sup>255</sup>

The results of the Minneapolis experiment were first reported in 1983 and attracted unusual recognition. On the strength of this, replications were carried out in six other cities. The results of five were reported in 1992.

These studies found that some of the findings were replicated whilst others were not. Only two cities confirmed the Minneapolis results by showing a six-month deterrent effect. None of the other three replications showed any support for a specific deterrent effect. On the contrary, all three of them produced evidence that arrest *increased* the frequency of future domestic violence by the suspects. Why?

A possible explanation is that the samples in each of the cities differed from one another in important ways. Indeed, in the original Minneapolis experiment it was thought that "there is a good chance that arrest works far better for some kinds of offenders than for others."<sup>256</sup> Hypothesising from control theory, which holds that "more socially bonded people are more deterrable".<sup>257</sup> Sherman suggested that unemployed and unmarried persons would be least likely to be deterred by arrest.

In fact, the only apparent difference yet found between the "arrest deters" cities and the "arrest backfires" cities lies in the racial composition of the samples. On average, the proportion of black victims and suspects substantially lower in the "arrest deters" cities and higher in the "arrest backfires" cities. The data was re-analysed to consider the importance of the individual's "stake in conformity" for predicting the effect of arrest on subsequent domestic violence. As indicated above (p. 21) this idea states that people vary in the "stake" they feel they have in society and in conformity to its broader social norms. It holds that sanctions deter people more when they have more to lose.

The findings show that arrest increases domestic violence among people who have nothing to lose, especially the unemployed; deters in cities with higher proportions of white and Hispanic suspects, and deters domestic violence in the short run, but escalates violence later on in cities with higher proportions of unemployed black suspects.

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<sup>255</sup> *ibid*

<sup>256</sup> *ibis*

<sup>257</sup> *ibid*

Overall, the results clearly show that those randomly assigned to arrest who were unemployed or not married were significantly more likely to re-offend than their employed or married counterparts.

As such it provides some empirical evidence to support the idea of 'stake in conformity'. It also underlines the importance of social justice to the adequate functioning of the criminal justice system. And it also suggests that law enforcement may be, not just impotent, but worse, counter-productive in a Relationally-dysfunctional society.

This is because "different folks seek different strokes, from both life and the law".<sup>258</sup> It is natural that different people should react differently to different things. However, problems may arise when these natural differences are compounded by structural inequalities. In Relational terms, structural equality is related to the concept of parity (see above). In some respects, parity is a form of shorthand for social justice, governing right relationships between individuals and institutions. Parity acts as a check on the abuse of power and promotes respect for authority that is legitimately exercised.

In a society which lacks parity, one can expect the exercise of power to be more difficult. In the absence of any form of corrective social justice, what might in other circumstances be seen as the proper exercise of power can be interpreted as unjust.

It is the central thesis of this paper that justice is Relational; that is, it is concerned with promoting and maintaining right relationships between individuals and institutions. Whilst, in the interests of fairness, it is usually said that "the law should treat everyone the same",<sup>259</sup> it may be the case that the interests of justice are not well served by treating each person identically. As Sherman points out, "there is a strong basis in criminological theory for predicting that equal treatment will produce unequal results".<sup>260</sup> Hence apparent injustice may be required to satisfy the needs of justice. Certainly, the evidence of Sherman's own research suggests that "some [people] seem to fight back against criminal punishment- becoming more frequently or seriously criminal the more they are punished".<sup>261</sup>

Of course, there are all sorts of reasons why some individuals will react in this way. After all, "others, perhaps most, 'learn their lesson' and resolve to avoid any further encounters with the law".<sup>262</sup>

Sherman suggests a number of interesting reasons to account for the different responses.

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<sup>258</sup> *ibid*

<sup>259</sup> *ibid*

<sup>260</sup> *ibid*

<sup>261</sup> *ibid*

<sup>262</sup> *ibid*

First, "the suspect's attitude towards the legitimacy of the arrest."<sup>263</sup> This may depend partly on the history of police treatment of the suspect's racial or ethnic group, which can be quite different for whites and minorities. The racial difference between the 'arrest deters' and the 'arrest backfires' cities suggests that white suspects more often see arrest as a legitimate response to their conduct, rather than as part of a long-standing pattern of discriminatory police harassment".<sup>264</sup>

Second it may depend on "sub-cultural values within their ecological context"<sup>265</sup> which may "favour or disfavour getting into 'trouble' with the police".<sup>266</sup>

Third, it may be the result of "the neighbourhood social context, or social ecology, of the subject's daily interpersonal relations, especially the neighbourhood's average 'stake in conformity'".<sup>267</sup>

Fourth, it may be a product of the individual suspect's own 'stake in conformity' that is "the material or psychic resources he has to lose by repeated arrest".<sup>268</sup>

Finally, it may be related to the individual's own "strategy of deviance".<sup>269</sup> This, is a means for "avoiding the shame of arrest by a proudly assertive posture of 'knowing no shame'".<sup>270</sup> This relationship is explored by Rainwater who, in his study of a notorious public-housing project in St. Louis in the 1960s, suggests that "when shame is overwhelming, pride becomes the major adaptive strategy"<sup>271</sup> which could in turn lead to more violence. "Parents and friends instruct children in how to conceal an underlying sense of shame. If others try to 'cut them down to size' in the local status pecking order they will resort to violence in the last resort to ward off shame".<sup>272</sup>

The first of these, concerning the perceived legitimacy of the arrest, seems to be related to structural inequality. The remainder are related, to varying degrees with stigmatisation (anti-authoritarian sub-cultural values), shame (or the apparent lack of it) and the concept of 'stake in conformity' generally. The fact that the different responses are related to the key indicator of current unemployment should alert us to the importance of

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263 *ibid*  
264 *ibid*  
265 *ibid*  
266 *ibid*  
267 *ibid*  
268 *ibid*  
269 *ibid*  
270 *ibid*  
271 *ibid*  
272 *ibid*

structural equality to the effective operation of the criminal justice system, and it affirms, in relational terms, the importance of parity. Not only parity, but commonality seems to be involved.

It is plausible to suggest that 'stake in conformity' bears some relation to commonality, which, as identified above, is an important dimension of Relational proximity. One could argue that to the extent that individuals share a common set of values, material possession and prospects for the future, the more likely they are to respond in a uniformly co-operative way towards law enforcement agencies whose mandate it is to uphold that common purpose.

As a result Sherman wonders whether the problems of domestic violence or crime in general would be better addressed through "a wide range of non-police programmes, from industrial policy, to Head Start, to counselling and therapy for victims and batterers".<sup>273</sup> <sup>274</sup> The possible merits of preventive intervention programmes are considered below.

Public policy however, in the United States as in the United Kingdom emphasises the importance of "getting tough on crime".<sup>275</sup> It pays "scant attention"<sup>276</sup> to the "underlying causes of violent crime"<sup>277</sup> which, in Sherman's view, include structural unemployment for unskilled males, rising illegitimacy and divorce rates, poor prenatal and parental care and inadequate public education".<sup>278</sup> "The terrible irony of this public policy is that the effectiveness of the criminal sanction may depend on the strength of the social fabric in which it is used. The weaker that fabric becomes, the stronger the argument to use criminal sanctions in its place: if the family cannot control the problem, let police and prisons do it. But the weaker the social fabric becomes ... the more danger there may be that criminal sanctions will fail or backfire by provoking anger rather than reintegration".<sup>279</sup>

It is the central thesis of Relational thinking that a society's most vital asset is the network of interpersonal relations which binds it. It has been well-observed that the early flourishing of capitalism in Western Europe owed much of its success to the strong network of relationships which in turn owed much to the widespread acceptance of Christian values.

In the same way, the criminal justice system appears to be dependent upon a strong network of relationships in order to be effective in deterring, punishing and reintegrating offenders. The breakdown of relationships within society may not only make its role ineffective but possible counter-productive. If the effect

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<sup>273</sup>

<sup>274</sup> *ibid*

<sup>275</sup> *ibid*

<sup>276</sup> *ibid*

<sup>277</sup> *ibid*

<sup>278</sup> *ibid*

<sup>279</sup> *ibid*

of punishment is to increase antisocial behaviour among those it is designed to correct, then it seems as though there may be more to criminal justice than meets the eye. The recurrence of such motifs as stigmatisation, shame, alienation, structural inequality and stake in conformity, that have been encountered elsewhere, underlies the interdependent nature of the various dimensions which comprise Relational proximity.

If it is the case that multiplexity is dependent upon directness and continuity, and that the loss of all three leads to stigmatisation and alienation then arguably the existence of structural inequality and the resulting lack of stake in conformity owes at least something to the loss of parity and commonality. The entropy spreads, unravelling the Relational fabric of society.

## **Summary**

A ceiling is set to the value of Relational thinking by its inability to contribute towards an understanding of genetic and biological influences upon antisocial tendency. Given the importance of these factors in explaining crime. This constitutes a major limitation.

Relational dysfunction is relevant at the micro-level of the family, particularly in view of the role played by poor parental suspension, lack of discipline, marital disharmony and other factors in encouraging certain influences upon antisocial tendency.

It is also relevant when it comes to underfunding the rise in situational opportunities for offending within certain companies and neighbourhoods.

Further, it is relevant at the macro-social level to understanding the social forces which give rise to materialism and a prevailing anti-Relational societal ethos. By directly addressing the values upon which society is based, Relational dysfunction may help to explain the existence of certain long-term motivating factors and the warring influence of shame as a form of societal constraint.

## ***Intervention Policies***

Successful intervention policies are needed to break the cycle of crime. Crime costs too much, in both Relational and financial terms.

In Relational terms, the cost of crime is unquantifiable. Like a stone going through a spider's web, crime destroys relationships between the victim and the offender, their families, the community and the state. It includes not only the human misery caused to particular individuals but the all-pervasive fear of crime which transforms formerly harmonious relationships into an atmosphere of hostility and distrust.

In financial terms, again, whilst some suffer more than others, the cost is borne by all. This cost, which includes "stolen and damaged property, medical care, injuries compensation, policing, the courts probation and prison" runs to "many thousands of millions of pounds"<sup>280</sup> each year. The figure may be "comparable to the costs of running the entire National Health Service"<sup>281</sup>, estimated to be £18bn in 1988. The cost of running the criminal justice system in England and Wales alone amounted to "more than £9bn in 1992-3"<sup>282</sup> and that represents "a 100 per cent increase since 1978-9".<sup>283</sup> This is in spite of the fact that "at least two thirds of crimes are never reported to the police and only a small minority of these are ever, in any sense 'solved'".<sup>284</sup> In fact, "crime surveys suggest that just 3% of offences result in a known perpetrator being cautioned or prosecuted".<sup>285</sup> As Simon Jenkins observes, "[criminal justice] is one area of spending which the Treasury does not validate by any test of performance".<sup>286</sup>

Intervention policy initiatives are expensive, but in view of the costs already involved "policy makers can no longer afford *not* to act."<sup>287</sup>

A brave attempt at developing a 'criminal prevention' strategy was launched by Kenneth Baker in 1991 - but its momentum was not sustained.<sup>288</sup> It is not too hard to see why: effective intervention means making accurate value judgements about the causes of crime which are unlikely to flatter either the track record of the present government or its future plans. Possibly by corollary, it is a popular idea among the Opposition<sup>289</sup>, yet here too it runs up against the limits of politics: this time the tendency to favour short-term advantage over long-term commitment.

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<sup>280</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre

<sup>281</sup> *ibid*

<sup>282</sup> *ibid*

<sup>283</sup> *ibid*

<sup>284</sup> *ibid*

<sup>285</sup> *ibid*

<sup>286</sup> Jenkins, S. (1993) 'Brainwashed by hysteria', *The Times* 24th February 1993

<sup>287</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre

<sup>288</sup> [File cuttings]

<sup>289</sup> [File cuttings]

As a result, "far more attention, energy and money has been devoted to rehabilitative and diversionary work with young offenders than to primary prevention with families".<sup>290</sup>

From a Relational perspective, the failure of this approach is all too apparent. We have already seen that Relational dysfunction on both the micro and the macro level plays some rôle in causing crime. Intervention strategies are therefore needed to prevent relational dysfunction within families and communities. There is increasing evidence to suggest that such initiatives are feasible and moreover that they are successful.

First, to consider what policies can be developed to prevent Relational dysfunction within the family.

### *I Parenting Support*

We have already seen that "the relationship between parent and child is the direct mechanism that determines whether tendencies towards aggressive and antisocial behaviour are inhibited or allowed to develop".<sup>291</sup> One approach would therefore be to teach parents better child-rearing practices. This would involve teaching them to supervise and discipline their children more effectively and showing them how to interact more positively with their children. "Contrary to theories about a workshy, inherently anti-social 'underclass' appearing in Britain, there is strong evidence that impoverished parents are at least as 'pro-work' and 'pro-children' as anyone else. They may, however, lack the knowledge, skills and self-confidence that would make the effective parents when their children are young."<sup>292</sup> Naturally-occurring parent education has become increasingly less likely for large groups of parents. This is due to the loss of traditional sources of support, including partners, relatives, others in the community and religious values.

Better child-rearing can be taught in a number of different ways and at a number of different levels. The range of options are thoroughly reviewed by Utting *et al.*<sup>293</sup> They identify three levels of support. These are 'universal support services' which could be made available to every family, 'neighbourhood services' that are targeted on "high crime and socially disadvantaged areas"<sup>294</sup> and 'family preservation services' designed for "individual families of children who risk abuse or whose behaviour is seriously disturbed".<sup>295</sup> The three tiers represent different ways of striking the balance between, on the one hand, the need for economy and, on the other, the danger of stigma. Resources must be channelled to those in need yet one cannot be too selective in targeting families in case one ends up "labelling children below the age of criminal responsibility as 'potential offenders in need of treatment'".<sup>296</sup> That would be "practically as well as morally unjustified".<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) *Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency* London: Family Policy Studies Centre

<sup>291</sup> *ibid*

<sup>292</sup> *ibid*

<sup>293</sup> *ibid*

<sup>294</sup> *ibid*

<sup>295</sup> *ibid*

<sup>296</sup> *ibid*

Universal support services get around the latter problem by being available to all. Examples might include the provision of parent-education through a national voluntary organisation such as Parent Network. However, if support services are "too specialised or expensive to provide on a universal basis"<sup>298</sup> and neighbourhood centres only succeed in reaching a minority of disadvantaged families "[some] form of 'outreach' services must extend to the delivery of services in their own homes".<sup>299</sup> In doing so it is possible to avoid stigma, as demonstrated by the 'Home-Start' scheme. Help is provided by volunteer parents and can include anything from practical help in tidying up the house to practical advice on parenting. Such help "is made acceptable by being offered as an act of friendship".<sup>300</sup> The authors conclude "families can be coaxed into coping without being made to feel inadequate or 'de-skilled'".<sup>301</sup>

Treatment studies "partly support"<sup>302</sup> the conclusion that parent training initiatives are likely to be more effective and less arduous with younger children than with older children. Indeed Utting *et al* recommended that resources should be concentrated on the parents of pre-adolescent children "since the first ten years are so clearly the period where parents' potential to influence long-term values and behaviour is at its peak".<sup>303</sup>

However, for those children who already show high rates of serious problem behaviours "early age does not necessarily mean easier intervention".<sup>304</sup> Indeed, "the earlier the age at which serious conduct problems begin, the more persistent the behaviours tend to be".<sup>305</sup> Given the well-documented links between parental criminality and juvenile delinquency, it is "common sense"<sup>306</sup> to expand parent education programmes in prison and to increase the level of support given to prisoners' partners and their wives.

However, teaching parents better child-rearing methods will not of itself constitute an effective intervention if the external pressures which contribute towards family stress remain. "Parents face problems other than those presented by their children."<sup>307</sup> Sometimes it is these external factors, which may include unemployment, mental depression or other kinds of social disadvantage that interrupt their parenting skills.

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297 *ibid*

298 *ibid*

299 *ibid*

300 *ibid*

301 *ibid*

302 Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, P. 117

303 Utting, D., *et al* (1993) *Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency* London: Family Policy Studies Centre

304 *ibid*

305 *ibid*

306 *ibid*

307 *ibid*

As Utting *et al* write, "parents struggling to raise their families in poverty and isolation on badly-designed housing estates might well benefit from new ways of listening to children or exerting consistent discipline. But their interest in learning and their ability to apply new parenting skills is bound to be limited if the external pressures remain unchanged".<sup>308</sup>

Economic deprivation is a key area which Farrington and West claim would benefit from social prevention experiments. They discovered that of all the factors measured in the Cambridge Study between the ages of 8-10, "low family income was the best predictor of general social failure at age 32".<sup>309</sup> They recommend that "more economic resources should be targeted selectively on the poorest families, to try to improve their economic circumstances in comparison with other families".<sup>310</sup>

Utting *et al* suggest that "the wider availability of affordable and accessible childcare, in the form of community nurseries and family centres, might make it worthwhile for parents to escape from the 'safety net' of 'Income Support'".<sup>311</sup>

Finally, it is important that parents find support and encouragement in the local community. "Changing parental behaviour requires effort and persistence which may be barriers for some parents. Parents "often need positive support in the community for pursuing a more firm and loving approach with their children".<sup>312</sup>

Utting *et al* recommended that "reluctance to participate in parental skills education could be overcome and greater understanding of child development stimulated, by a government-endorsed parenting campaign, widely available videos and a national television series".<sup>313</sup>

Intervention, whatever form it takes, requires an ethical base to inform its limits. Exaggerated respect is paid, in this country, to the so-called "right to privacy." It is perhaps worth stating that this right is nowhere formally recognised, although it does find practical expression in legislation governing planning, nuisance and the limits of medical intervention.<sup>314</sup> It is important to bear in mind the jurisprudential maxim that every right

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<sup>308</sup> *ibid*

<sup>309</sup> Farrington, D.P. and West, D.J. (1990) 'The Cambridge study in delinquent development: a long-term follow-up of 411 London males', in: *Kriminalitat*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag, p. 132

<sup>310</sup> *ibid*, p. 132

<sup>311</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre

<sup>312</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 116

<sup>313</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre

<sup>314</sup> Give Examples

has a corresponding duty.<sup>315</sup> Here the duty is that owed by parents to the rest of society to bring up adequately-socialized children.

The twin concepts of consent and autonomy play a major role in defining the limits of intervention. Where there is consent, whether in relation to universal support services, neighbourhood support or family preservation, there is no moral dilemma. The crunch comes when 'high-risk' families refuse help or support. Can such parents be required to give their co-operation?

This is an important issue because one is likely to find that in practice the most high-risk families are also the most likely to display anti-social behaviour and to be the most resistant to outside help and change. Little precedent for foisting intervention programmes upon unwilling parents can be found, although the compulsory inoculation of infants against diseases provides a possible analogy. [Looking for an argument in favour of 'Compulsory specialisation': what about truancy and school? extent to which can establish obligatory facilities for the effective socialisation of the child - what is the purpose of education?].

The limits of State intervention in the family were recently set by the Children Act 1989 which placed great emphasis on "the welfare of the child" (s.). One could argue that it is in the interests of the whole of society, not just those of the child, that he or she does not become delinquent. Compliance might be required on the grounds that individuals have a duty "[not] to rear career offenders who will eventually leave in their wake a multitude of victims."<sup>316</sup>

The problem is that intervention, by definition, seeks to avoid something that has not yet happened. "Reasonable suspicion" is all that is required under section of the Children Act to make a child a ward of court, but that suspicion must be based on evidence (s. ).

Here, the only evidence which can be adduced to justify forcing parents to take part in training programmes is the presence within the home of predictive factors which forecast future delinquency. However, these remain *predictions*. Utilitarianism, whose stated goal is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, could justify forcible intervention in inappropriately-diagnosed cases. A system based on Relational values could not, because of their profound respect for the integrity of the person.

The irony is that only better predictive techniques could extend the limits of intervention, but such research is partly dependent on bold intervention techniques being tried.

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<sup>315</sup> As famously observed by H.L.A. Hart

<sup>316</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 128

The danger with all of this of course is that "parenting ... carries a kind of product orientation that sees the family as an assembly line, with parents manipulating different factors to produce a different kind of kid".<sup>317</sup> A Relational approach would keep this in check by emphasising the positive aspects of parent-child relationships. What is not implied is any desire to "[turn] the clock back to moral and religious authoritarianism".<sup>318</sup> Relational thinking "does not ride the train of history in a rear-facing seat".<sup>319</sup> In any case, as Utting *et al* point out, "the 'working father - stay at home mother' model of family life are no longer options, let alone solutions".<sup>320</sup> Perhaps what is needed is a more dynamic concept of parenting which recognises the value of "shared parenthood".<sup>321</sup>

Relational thinking could go a long way towards creating a new cultural ethos which asserted the value of all relationships and in which men's rôles as fathers were seen to be as important as their rôles as workers".<sup>322</sup>

"Family factors", as we have seen, "never operate in a vacuum, but take place against a backdrop of other influences such as those exercised by children's peers, their school and society in general".<sup>323</sup> Thus we need to turn from the question of "[whether families] can be helped to secure the stable door before the horse has bolted?"<sup>324</sup> to the question whether the same can be expected of society in general.

## *II Education*

Preventing school failure was also identified by Farrington and West as a causal and modifiable predictor of offending which could benefit from social prevention experiments. They recommend as "highly desirable ... offer[ing] free high-quality, pre-school intellectual enrichment programmes to children at risk".<sup>325</sup> Research evidence suggests that stimulating pre-school experiences give children an educational 'head start'. As mentioned, the success of Project Head Start in the United States and the Perry Preschool Programme indicate that delinquency prevention benefits can be linked to child-initiated learning so that children "learn to make their own decisions and think ahead".<sup>326</sup>

<sup>317</sup> York *et al* (1984). Cited in Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

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<sup>319</sup> Schluter, M. and Lee, D. (1993) *The R Factor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

<sup>320</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) *Crime and The Family: Improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency* London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

<sup>321</sup> Pugh, G. and De'ath, E. Cited in Utting, D., *et al* (1993) *Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency* London: Family Policy Studies Centre, nr end.

<sup>322</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> Loeber, R. and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986) 'Family factors as correlated and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency', in: M. Tonry and N. Morris (Eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol.7*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.128.

<sup>324</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) *Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency* London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

<sup>325</sup> Farrington, D.P. and West, D.J. (1990) 'The Cambridge study in delinquent development: a long-term follow-up of 411 London males', in: *Kriminalität*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

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Much of their success may depend on how far families are acknowledged as partners in the educative process and how willing they are to get involved.

### *III Urban Planning*

Building and developing safer neighbourhoods is also a critical aspect of intervention policy. It is particularly important in view of the impact that neighbourhood design and management can have on the ability of families to socialise and supervise their children.

Jon Bright, of *Crime Concern* has provided a thorough overview of the ways in which neighbourhood intervention initiatives can reduce the risk of delinquency. The ideal type of residential neighbourhoods seems to consist of "traditional streetscapes with families living in conventional houses with gardens".<sup>327</sup> Improvements to non-traditional design might include better lighting, the removal of walkways connecting blocks and a reduction in the amount of undesignated open space, and in the number of households using each access point. New designs should aim to maximise natural surveillance, restrict access to residents and create 'defensible space' around individual houses and blocks so that unwelcome non-residents are deterred from entering.

Of course, as Bright points out, "there are many estates composed of conventionally designed houses and streetscapes which have high crime (offender and offence) rates and many flatted estates which have low crime rates. Much .... depends on who lives in the estates and how they are managed".<sup>328</sup> Three aspects of the latter which provide pointers for intervention policies include housing services, community policing and community involvement.

Given that there are a wide range of intervention initiatives which could be successful, what advantages, if any, are to be obtained by their being pursued within a Relational framework?

The main advantage lies in the fact that Relational values provide a consistent strategy for social policy. The same degree of consistency does not "mismatch" between various pieces of legislation dealing for example, with the family. In the absence of a unified body of thought bound together by the central theme of the importance of relationships, there is inevitably going to be some "mismatch"<sup>329</sup> in the various pieces of legislation which concern, for example, the family. Utting *et al* point to the 'punitive approach to enforcing parental responsibility adopted in the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and the Child Support Act' which in their view "sends out confusing signals and risks undermining the 'supportive' approach towards families envisaged under

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<sup>327</sup> Bright, J.

<sup>328</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>329</sup> Utting, D., *et al* (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

the Children Act 1989.<sup>330</sup> They claim that such inconsistency "could undermine the capacity of central and local government to assist stressed and disadvantaged families whose children are at risk of delinquency".<sup>331</sup>

A Relational system, by contrast, would not experience this difficulty to the same degree because it constitutes a holistic system which integrates ideas about Relational democracy, Relational finance, Relational welfare, Relational justice and so on.

Another major advantage, which derives from this integrated approach, is the merit of pursuing pro-Relational aims within a pro-Relational framework. Trying to encourage individuals to act Relationally within a social environment which rates relationships poorly is an uphill struggle. To the extent that social structures help or hinder relationships it makes sense that intervention policies should be promulgated within a system sympathetic to the values it expresses. Again, intervention policies of the type we have been considering would appear to sit most comfortably within a Relational framework.

As noted above, social problems, including crime, drinking, drink driving, drug use, sexual promiscuity and family violence have many causes and are "undoubtedly"<sup>332</sup> influenced by environmental as well as individual factors. However, to the extent which these problems, as well as "school failure, unemployment and marital disharmony"<sup>333</sup> reflect an underlying antisocial tendency, intervention initiatives which [succeed] in reducing crime will probably have benefits that go far beyond this".<sup>334</sup> To tinker with changes in the criminal justice system and to neglect a "long-term programme of funded research on the causes and prevention of offending and antisocial behaviour"<sup>335</sup> strikes Farrington as a case of "fiddling while Rome burns".<sup>336 337 338 339</sup>

Successful intervention requires commitment and commitment, as we have argued, is in short supply. As a result "at a time when public finance is under considerable pressure, social investments which may not appear to have immediate, direct benefit ... can become targets for short-term savings".<sup>340</sup>

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*ibid.*

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*ibid.*

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Farrington, D.P. and West, D.J. (1990) 'The Cambridge study in delinquent development: a long-term follow-up of 411 London males', in: *Kriminalität*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag, p.131.

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*ibid.*, p.132.

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*ibid.*, p.132.

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Farrington, D.P. (1992) 'Editorial', *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, (2), iii-v.

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*ibid.*

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*ibid.*

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*ibid.*

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*ibid.*

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Cited in: Utting, D., et al (1993) 'Crime and The Family: improving child-rearing and preventing delinquency' London: Family Policy Studies Centre

Clearly the tendency to sacrifice long-term consequences in favour of immediate gratification is not a characteristic exclusive to delinquents.

## Conclusion

The contribution of Relational thinking to the over-worked terrain of criminological explanation lies in its recognition of the value of relationships as an independent category of social analysis and in its identification of Relational dysfunction a partial explanation of criminal behaviour. In this respect it represents the rediscovery of the wheel. Indeed, its spokes have been well-established in criminological circles for years. But, like the wheel, the value of Relational thinking lies less in its novelty than in its utility. Its specific contribution is the ability to act as a framework within which to weave interrelated ideas. It is a theme, not a theory.

The loss of Relational proximity, in other words, Relational dysfunction, may be linked to crime in the following way.

Micro-relational dysfunction occurs at the individual level and is characterised by parent-child rejection, inadequate discipline, lack of parent-child involvement, poor marital relations, parental criminality and divorce. These factors may result in low empathy, a weak conscience and a set of internalised norms which favour antisocial behaviour. These may in turn influence the development of antisocial tendency within a given individual.

Macro-relational dysfunction occurs at the societal level and represents the accumulation of numerous micro-relational dysfunctions. Its characteristics include materialism, an anti-Relational societal ethos, excessive social mobility, gigantism and the cultural loss of guilt and shame. These may in turn affect the formation of long-term motivating factors which may encourage the development of antisocial tendency. They may also increase situational opportunities for offending and, by undermining commitment and constraint, weaken the influence of shame and increase the chances that an individual will decide to offend. Structural inequality and a lack of 'stake in conformity' are further symptoms of macro-relational dysfunction and these may undermine the ability of the criminal justice system to respond to crime effectively.

An upper limit to the explanatory power of Relational thinking is set by its lack of relevance to the rôle played by genetic and biological factors. Given their importance in explaining criminal behaviour, this constitutes a severe limitation.

The ability of Relational values to expound a consistent social and economic strategy may be useful in developing crime prevention initiatives since it underlines the fallacy of trying to tackle crime through criminal justice reforms which either bypass or are inconsistent with other aspects of social and economic policy.

If much has been said in this paper about Relational proximity and the need for a greater sense of obligation, then it ought perhaps finally be said that crime is generally the product of choice. It is a product of the society we choose to create or which is chosen for us by others, and it is the product of the individual moral choice to offend. So far as the former is concerned, significant reductions in crime are unlikely unless accompanied by changes to our way of life which strike a new, and very different, balance, between choice and obligation. So far as the latter is concerned, the goal of social policy is to devise a framework which facilitates the making of better moral choices and which is informed by a set of values which tend to replenish social resources of commitment and constraint. No social framework can in itself guarantee that better choices will be made and to that extent criminals, like the poor, will always be with us.

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