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Extrale

from

// Crime, Unemployment and the Police //

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Argument

A graph of the three variables "total serious offences", "actual daily strength of the police force" and "number of male unemployed" is provided in Figure 1. Male unemployment is probably a more reliable indicator of the state of the labour market than the sum for males and females (given difficulties of interpretation of registration data for females). As is clear from the figures in Table 1, all three variables rise over time.

The pair-wise correlation coefficients are:

total serious offences and number of male unemployed	0.630
actual daily strength of the police and numbers of male unemployed	0.945
total serious offences and actual daily strength of the police	0.872

and the high coefficients (all are highly significant in the statistical formal sense) reflect the fact that all three series are increasing.

Given that there is an upward trend in all three variables and that we are asking questions about increases in crime, unemployment and the police force, it is sensible to try to examine the relationship between increases in these variables from one year to the next. The data on these increases are set out in Table 2 and are displayed graphically in Figure 2. We see from the table and the graphs that there is a fairly clear association between increases in unemployment and the increases in actual daily strength of the force but it is hard to detect visually an

association between increases in offences and increases in the other two variables. This is supported by an examination of the correlation coefficients. The pair-wise correlation coefficients between the increases are:

	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
Increases in total serious offences and increases in numbers of male unemployed	0.460	0.090
Increases in actual daily strength and increases in numbers of male unemployed	0.829	0.002
Increases in total serious offences and increases in actual daily strength	0.241	0.251

Only the correlation between increases in actual daily strength and increases in numbers of male unemployed (0.829) is significant at conventional 5% level. Thus not even the most simple-minded interpretation of these statistics would lead one to accept the explanation which associates the increase in crime with the increase in unemployment.

Summary

Our conclusions from examining the data for England and Wales 1970-81 may be summarised as follows:

- i) There is no significant association between increases in recorded crime and increases in unemployment.
- ii) There is no significant association between increases in recorded crime and increases in the number of police.

	CRIMINAL STATISTICS ENGLAND AND WALES		POLICE STATISTICS ENGLAND AND WALES		UNEMPLOYMENT ENGLAND AND WALES	
	Total Serious Offences	Numbers Cleared Up	Actual Daily Strength (on December 31st)	Estab- lishment	Numbers of Males	Rate per cent
1970	1568	705	89,251	108,406	417.9	3.2
1971	1666	753	91,810	109,095	535.2	4.2
1972	1680	775	94,279	110,255	591.3	4.7
1973	1658	772	94,874	112,168	415.7	3.2
1974	1963	869	96,058	114,637	422.0	3.3
1975	2106	922	99,923	116,007	661.3	5.1
1976	2136	916	101,042	116,880	876.9	6.4
1977	2463	1006	98,935	116,980	901.8	6.7
1978	2396	998	99,134	117,668	871.5	6.5
1979	2377	981	102,360	118,322	800.9	54.9
1980	2521	996	105,513	118,930	1032.9	7.7
1981	2794	1056	119,575	120,008	1662.2	12.1

Sources: For columns 1 and 2 Criminal Statistics, England and Wales 1976, Cmd 6909 and 1981, Cmd 8668 HMSO, London.

For column 3 and 4, Report of HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, 1976, HC 414 and 1981 HC 463

For Columns 5 and 6 Employment Gazette, Summary 1976 and January 1982, Department of Employment.

iii) The increases in unemployment do seem to be significantly associated with increases in the number of policemen. The number of / is now close to the designated establishment for the first time in decades. The increase in relative payment to the police may also have been important in explaining the increase in recruitment.

iv) A major part, possibly most, of the increase in recorded crime may be due to the increase in the proportion of offences recorded rather than in the number of offences which occur.

This puts increases in crime and their possible relation with increases in unemployment in a very different perspective from that associated with the comments presented at the beginning of this note. It is quite wrong to pretend that there is a well-attested relationship. Similarly, it is absurd to lay great emphasis on increases in total serious offences when most of that increase is due to a change in the proportion that is recorded. The issues involved are / important to be treated in the casual way invoked in recent utterances. In particular, given that unemployment is likely to remain high for several years it is grossly unfair on those who may be or become unemployed to associate them with an increase in criminality when the link is not established and the increase itself may be spurious. The case against the high levels of unemployment we are seeing is surely overwhelming for a whole host of reasons. In arguing against these high levels of unemployment it is therefore both unnecessary and unhelpful to taint the unemployed with criminality.

Figure 1 Time Path of Main Variables

----- Total Serious Offences
----- Actual Daily Strength
----- Number of Male Unemployed

See Table 1 for numbers illustrated by graph. Vertical scale has been adjusted to facilitate comparison.

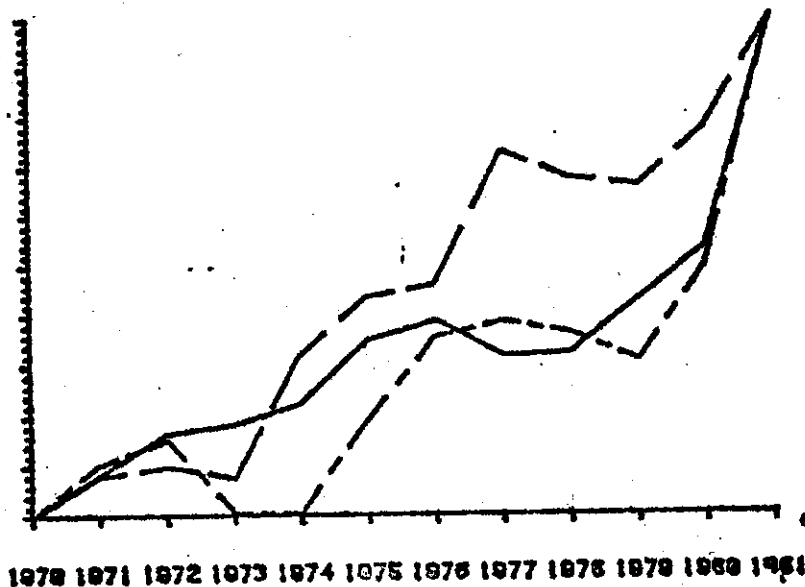


Figure 2 Time Path of Increases in Variables

----- Increases in Total Serious Offences
----- " " Actual Daily Strength
----- " " Number of Male Unemployed

See Table 2 for numbers illustrated by graph. Vertical scale has been adjusted to facilitate comparison.

