

## **2 John Lea, "From integration to exclusion: the development of crime prevention policy in the United Kingdom"- Crime and individual responsibility**

In this ideological maelstrom crime and its control came to occupy an increasingly central place. [2] Firstly, crime had been rising more or less continuously since the 1960s. Crime rates in

England and Wales doubled in the 1980s according to police statistics, while the Home Office's British Crime Survey (BCS) indicated a smaller but still substantial rise in England and Wales.

Since 1992 theft has been falling slightly but crimes of violence have continued to rise. [...] It has to be added that the British Crime Survey also reveals that only about one third of crimes are reported to the police, a fact which both illustrates the unreliability of official statistics and says much about public confidence in the criminal justice system. Crime, according to both the BCS and other social surveys [3] was coming to be seen as a social problem second only to unemployment. [...]

Crime is unique among social problems in that, unlike perhaps unemployment or poverty, it presents itself as the activity of a responsible individual who could have chosen to act otherwise. Public concern with rising crime, particularly the petty criminality of young people in the poorer urban areas was therefore a very appropriate vehicle for the elaboration of the new ideology of individual responsibility. The older welfare-oriented notions of crime as a product of poverty were now met with the response: "there are plenty of poor people who are not criminals!" Traditional preoccupations with diversion and non-punitive treatment for young offenders were now joined and partially displaced by a renewed emphasis on juridical punishment and 'just deserts'.

Secondly, alongside a renewed emphasis on the individual responsibility of the criminal offender there was a similar stress on the responsibilities of the citizen to take action against crime. [...] The most popular manifestation of the active citizen in the sphere of crime prevention was the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.[...]

(From: Lea, J. (1997) "From integration to exclusion: the development of crime prevention policy in the United Kingdom")  
(309 words)