

I now want now to look at crime of all kinds, and ways it might be linked to the sexual revolution. The most obvious area this is likely to happen is over sexual abuse. There have been many attempts to predict families where sexual abuse is likely from ones where it is not, without much success.

Sexual abuse of children has been defined as "the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not fully comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violates social taboos of family roles."

Is there a link with fractured partnerships? I am not referring here to a marriage that breaks up because a mother discovers her husband has been abusing their daughter. Are children of divorce or relationship break-up more at risk of sexual abuse? They might be.

Surely it is very unfair to say that relationship breakdown is to blame for child sex abuse? Abusers are to blame. I agree. Child sex abuse traumatises children in a way which may dominate the whole of their lives, affecting all their relationships, especially sexual ones, affecting self esteem, self image, self worth and future marriage, making future sexual difficulties far more likely.

Those who abuse children for their own sexual gratification are rightly regarded as social deviants, criminals against which there are sanctions in a civilised society. Yet many child abusers were abused themselves. Thus an act of sexual abuse can have a knock on effect, carried down through generations of neglect, abuse, suffering, despair.

I am not justifying sex abuse or making light of it in any way just because an abuser may previously have been a victim of abuse. I just want us to understand the factors that may increase risk.

Making abuse more or less likely

If there are conditions which shape a man or woman's mental state so that abusing others sexually becomes attractive, there are also situations where that mental state is more likely to turn from fantasy to activity.

The first is a general culture which says "me" is important. As we have seen, we live in an age where "self" is everything and responsibilities to others mean less and less.

The argument basically is this: "the child did not scream, the child did not shout, the child took part without emotional threats or physical violence. It felt beautiful to me. The child continued to see me and took part in more - how can that be the equivalent of violent rape? All I have done is taken away innocence and replaced it with early knowledge."

At root, these are the arguments of self. My drives, my needs, my desires, my rights, my freedoms. As we have seen, the old sexual revolution is powered by an obsession with self and therefore sex abuse is linked with it. Why else have the sex abuse statistics soared?

Some say the rise in rape or sex abuse figures is mainly because people are less afraid to report what was going on before. The same kind of denial tells us that other crime is not really getting worse.

If that is the case, why is it that communities that never used to lock their doors, are now locking and bolting windows as well and alarming the whole house? Why is it that anyone who leaves a bicycle outside a shop for ten minutes and has it stolen is now looked on as stupid, when fifty years ago someone padlocking a bike in the same place would have been considered almost paranoid?

If crime is the same as it was, why have insurance premiums soared? In Britain the number of claims for theft rose from 410,000 in 1989 to 877,000 in 1992 - more than doubling in just three years - dropping slightly since.

Just as rape is on the increase, every other kind of socially unacceptable sexual behaviour has risen too - child sex abuse included. Indeed it would be strange if it were not so.

Perhaps another reason for the rise in child sex abuse is a rejection of previously accepted boundaries or guidelines for acceptable sexual expression.

Paedophilia more acceptable today

Paedophilia is more respectable than it was. Paedophilia magazines and clubs are a big growth industry, something unthinkable in such an open way half a century ago. The media increasingly shows the whole of life as a potential sexual experience from buying a car, to choosing the right brand of coffee, to going on holiday - to saying hello to a child.

We have seen how fashion editors recently came in for a hammering with a new look which seemed to be lifted straight from the classroom. Models chosen perhaps for their pre-pubescent looks were paraded in short skirts, frocks and hats that looked like school uniform.

The image was disturbing to many and there were a number of complaints. A British magazine showed a whole series of lingerie photographs, modelled as though by a young teenager beginning to explore her own sexuality.

These too were criticised. Many thought the images were about child pornography, not about selling lingerie. One reviewer at one of the shows said she felt she was being involved in child pornography by just taking part, by just being there.

So then, while a taboo may remain, images have given a positive message that it is acceptable to enjoy sexually arousing pictures of children or of adults looking like children. All part of the sexual revolution.

The taboo itself has also been weakened. We live in a culture where all matters sexual are aired and debated as never before. When it comes to sex there are few moral codes these days which are widely agreed. The philosophy of agony columns could be summarised in four

sentences:

1. Whatever you do on your own is fine.
2. Whatever you do with another person which is agreeable to you both is fine.
3. Don't do it with children.

but..

4. Children are sexual beings and part of growing up is that they will want to try out their sexuality on you - don't reject them.

The image of the old, gruff, sexually repressed, Victorian father who was too inhibited and disturbed by his daughter's developing sex appeal to ever give her a kiss, hug or even a compliment may have been replaced by a new, affectionate, sexually liberated, late twentieth century father who is too uninhibited and excited by his daughter's developing sexuality to prevent himself giving her a sensuous kiss, or an arousing cuddle.

Both extremes are of course ones most would reject. We are looking for a new model of fatherhood that affirms and respects, is affectionate yet restrained, is warm yet protecting.

So then, the obsession with "me" connected with the old sexual revolution, the changing moral framework, promotion of images arousing to paedophiles and relaxation of some taboos may well be contributing something to the increasing epidemic of child sex abuse.

Sex abuse by non-fathers

However perhaps the biggest new factor of all is another, related to partnership breakdown and relational chaos. Sexual abuse by men is common of their stepchildren.

Step-children are usually older. They usually have a non-parent or "friend" relationship with step-parents, more usually step-fathers, since natural mothers are most likely to have custody. The natural feelings of physical detachment, based on social taboos, may be far greater between a father and his natural, younger children, than between a man and a very attractive pre-adolescent girl, or girl in her early to middle teenage years with whom he has a "special friend status".

There is a further complication worth thinking about. If the girl has been greatly traumatised by the previous divorce or separation and disturbed by the new arrangements, she may well be expressing, herself, intense needs for affirmation, identity, value and affection.

This can then become an explosive mix, with the stepfather sliding step by step into an abusing situation with a girl who is also making some very encouraging gestures.

The situation is further complicated by the possible history of the girl's own mother. If she knows her own mother got pregnant with a boyfriend at the age of fifteen and had sex the first time when she was thirteen, that may also help create a culture where her daughter is half way to the point of sexual experimentation before she starts.

Role modelling on parents is a very powerful process. Children often oscillate between modelling and doing the opposite. Often they do the opposite of what their parents want or expect of them. If their parents have changed their own attitudes, opinions and lifestyle since they were teenagers many years ago, then their rebellious children now may find great amusement in justifying their rebellion as mere role modelling.

"But dad, you told me you did just the same when you were my age".

At-risk registers

I want to turn now from child sex abuse to other kinds of child abuse - what about at-risk registers or children who have to be taken into care because of well-substantiated fears of neglect, injury or death? Again, sadly, step-parenting features prominently. It is just too much to expect all non-biological parents to have the same feeling for a child as their biological parents. Of course, many natural parents are also abusers.

Adoption is a special case. Surveys show that adopted children do very well, they learn well at school, and in other measures also do favourably. However, there are unusual or unique factors here. As we have seen there is a severe shortage of babies to be adopted. This means that the criteria can be very strict indeed for selected couples - imagine the difference if there were a massive surplus of healthy new born babies and few persuaded to take them.

As a result we can be sure that the average "parenting experience" will be very different from the "normal" average. There is another factor. As we have seen, adopting parents may have waited a decade to begin trying to have a family, and a further decade before successfully adopting a first child. In addition they may feel this could be the only child they ever have.

It should not surprise us then to find that many of these children have marvellous care. For example, an adopting mother, having had all those extra years of joint income while trying to have a family may now be determined to enjoy every day with their new child and so give up work. "I can work any time of my life but these precious five years will never ever happen again".

When it comes to physical abuse of children, the surprising thing to me as a doctor is that it does not happen more often. Considering how basically selfish we all are it is quite extraordinary how few children do get starved, abandoned or beaten up. When a child is born, the instincts for care are extremely strong. It is a primeval bond, no doubt deeply entrenched in our genes, for without it the human species would not have survived. The parenting instinct is found in almost every mammal in one form or another.

Many future parents look with distaste and obvious detachment at the babies of others. They show no interest whatever. Perhaps more often this "allergic" reaction is seen in men. Yet

when their own children are born it is as if they have all had brain transplants. All of a sudden they are besotted with their own and now cannot understand at all why other adults around are not as captivated and entranced by the beauty and the charm as they are.

Emotional "re-wiring" at birth

This emotional "rewiring" happens inside our brains, taking us over in a new all-consuming parental role. Of course, as "higher" creatures there is much more to us than instinct and these "natural" feelings, pre-programmed in us for survival of our species, are often subsumed or obliterated by other emotions, events and demands.

The mother who feels nothing for her baby but resentment - is it because of relational chaos that she feels so trapped, so unsupported? The father who is totally rejecting of the child and violent towards it - is it because he feels trapped by an unwanted pregnancy into a relationship he would rather walk away from?

There are many reasons why people do not feel a great surge of maternal or paternal feelings. However, most people do feel them, and very few feel the same strength of feeling towards other people's children except in the unique adoptive situation, and to a lesser extent in fostering arrangements.

When your partner is the biological mother or father and you have no genetic link at all - only that you have had sex with the child's mother or father, and perhaps live together - those protective feelings are unlikely to be there to the same extent as if the children are your own and the child may be vulnerable.

Averages are important things as we have seen throughout the book. Someone might say here is a man who is not the father, who is an infinitely better carer than the man who is. Within every generalisation you will find a huge overlap between the averages between two extremes. However, generalisations can still be true.

So then, children are paying a terrible price of abuse whether sexual or physical, emotional or

mental, much of which can be directly linked in one way or another to the results of the old sexual revolution.

They are the broken generation, the silent majority of affected people. How does this brokenness affect them later on? In particular, does this brokenness encourage deviant behaviour?

I want to look at a detailed examination of youth crime and new patterns emerging, because the evidence of a link with the old sexual revolution is growing rapidly, and is highly disturbing.

New patterns of crime

First, let us look at the pattern of crime, and then at the evidence for a link between crime and family life.

It is a well known fact that much crime is committed by male teenagers. One in five of all crimes are committed by those under fourteen and one in twenty boys has a criminal record by that age, while 45% of all crime is committed by those ten to twenty years old, particularly burglary and car crime.

A third of all adult males have a criminal record in the UK by the time they are thirty three. What is going on?

A number of explanations have been given for rising youth vandalism, street violence, car crime, burglaries and other misdemeanours.

As we have seen, some try to make out that the rise in reported crime figures is an illusion - "it is just that people are reporting crime more". In that case presumably the small dip in figures in the UK over 1992 to 1994 was just caused by people not bothering to go to the police?

In 1861 the rate of recorded crime was 500 per 100,000 people. By 1990 it was 8,600 - a rise of seventeen times, and most of the increase took place in just thirty years from 1960 to 1990. The increase in crime from 1990 to 1991 of 733,000 cases was greater than the entire annual total at the turn of the century. Some of the increase may be due to increasing population from 20 million in 1861 to 50 million in 1991, but something else happened.

In the United States the rises have been horrifying to many, seen in the daily diet of headlines and television news stories. In 1993 crime was the main topic on the ABC, CBS and NBC nightly

news programmes. Their coverage of crime doubled in a year from 1992, news of murders tripled. One in five of all stories covered by the Washington Post in typical week in 1994 were crime related.

Crime "greatest threat to America"

Surveys show that the American public now regards crime as the gravest problem affecting the country. Some have argued that some rises are just an increase in media reporting. For example, the level of violent crime per 100,000 people fell slightly from 1973 (32.6) to 1993 (32.1). Not much perhaps, but certainly not a dramatic rise.

However the risks of being murdered increased 23% between 1985 and 1990. It more than doubled in black males between fifteen and twenty four and increased in white males of the same ages by 40%.

The numbers are huge whether rising, static or falling. Over 26,000 homicides in 1990, and 31,000 suicides. From 1985 to 1990 the number of murdered babies under a year old doubled. The homicide rate for children between the ages of one and four has increased fourfold in the past forty years. Coincidentally this has almost exactly coincided with the sexual revolution, and the breakdown of stable family life.

In the past twenty years more than 50,000 juveniles were shot by other juveniles. The former head of the US child protection agency came on the television news and said: "When children produce children and then try to bring them up in single families, in essence there will be a greater likelihood of them shooting other children". Children shooting children in an age when children are having children.

In Britain we tend to think cities like New York have so much crime they must be almost unbearable to live in. But Manchester has a far worse crime rate for burglaries and car thefts than New York. With a mere 440,000 population there were 64,000 burglaries and 58,000 stolen cars in 1991, compared to New York with 7.3 million population (around sixteen times as large) with only 100,000 burglaries and 125,000 stolen cars.

Different theories on crime

Depending on our world view, we tend to interpret social problems as caused by different things. For example, poverty, unemployment and social deprivation are often cited as major factors in spiralling crime rates on some estates.

Janet Daley expressed the views of many in the Times:

"Who is to blame for juvenile crime? Not us, say the courts and the judges: we have no powers to deal with under-age thugs. Not us, say the teachers: these children turn up at the school gates already out of control - when they turn up at all. And besides, the parents don't support our efforts. If we criticise a child's behaviour, his parents are likely to take the child's side. Not us, say the parents. "I can't deal with him" wails the hapless mother whose 3ft 6in demon has just committed his 100th burglary, or absconded from his latest "secure accommodation". It's all the television he watches, or the estates we live on, or the rotten school he goes to, or the bigger children in the neighbourhood...

"So the courts do not punish, and police do not apprehend, and the schools cannot threaten and the parents do not restrain. and they all deny they are responsible. Stepping into this vacuum, politicians have rather guilelessly allowed themselves to become a target for all the frustrated rage which everyone feels.... It is a brave politician indeed who dares to say that the government is largely impotent in the matter of making people better."

Let us look at the possibilities in more detail. Here are some suggestions that have been made.

Explanations for big rise in crime

1. Poverty
2. Poor housing
3. Unemployment
4. Attention of young
5. Peer pressure
6. Lack of parental control
7. Bad estate design
8. Carelessness - for example failure to lock doors
9. Divorce or conflict at home - a direct effect

Separating different factors

Can we separate out these different possibilities? Many seem closely related. For example there is an estate near our home where four out of ten are unemployed. Local community workers refer to it as the "sink" estate, where "problem" families tend to land up, It's the one area no one ever asks to be transferred to and is almost entirely council owned property. Hundreds are housed in high rise blocks, while the low rise housing is a rabbit run of walkways, passageways, short cuts and other ways of disappearing to avoid arrest.

There is no community centre. There are many single parent families. Many elderly people living on their own are too afraid to go out.

Surely in such a complex situation all the factors listed above could be operating and a whole load more?

David Farrington, Professor of Psychological Criminology at Cambridge University looked at persistent youth offenders and found as a group they had six things in common: low income family, parent with a criminal record by the time the youngster was ten, harsh and erratic discipline at home, behaviour problems at school by the age of eight, willing to be daring by the time they were eight, low intelligence and poor educational attainment.

He found persistent offenders were often sexually adventurous but "they rarely used contraceptives. they often had to get married because they had fathered a child." They often got divorced and many had already been married three times with several other living together relationships by the age of 32. The majority were using drugs before they were 18.

Perhaps we will conclude that there are many reasons why people turn to crime and many factors which may make that more likely. However almost all of these factors can be made worse by the sexual revolution, linking sexual chaos with youth crime. Let us consider each factor or explanation in turn.

"Poverty is the cause"

Many are convinced there is a link between poverty and crime. The Association of British Insurers can predict some crime trends from trends in unemployment figures. For example burglary peaked at the height of the 1989 - 1993 recession, falling since.

But as Rosie Waterhouse wrote in the Independent on Sunday recently: "if poverty in childhood is indeed the root of later criminality, it must be conceded that lone parenthood is the quickest route to poverty", including separation and divorce. Separation creates poorer housing. Divorce often means a home sale or a move down the ladder of home size.

A relative of ours is now thinking of separation. The biggest question is how will they finance the purchase of an extra home while keeping the one they have?

More income? More hours for one or other to work with less energy and less time at home for the children? Less money to spend? Less choices, fewer luxuries, no holidays, no treats, no outings?

Even the very wealthiest find separation or divorce affects their standard of living. When you are at the bottom of the earnings league before you start, where do you land up? On social security is the answer for many people.

Some resent what they see as generous handouts to people who by their own actions (for example having several children as a single adult) are almost completely unable to generate income of their own. But it is hard to live off such benefits as exist. Even if you are intelligent and brave enough to understand the benefit maze and fight until you get them, you will not be well off. You will struggle to survive.

That struggle may continue through old age. A new generation of elderly-poor is likely to emerge because of the rising divorce rate. Divorce reduces the amount families save and can cause long term investments to be cashed in.

Split houses lose economy of scale

Split households lose all the economic benefits of larger scale living. Two homes, two cars, two packets of cornflakes. As any careful shopper knows, retailers heavily penalise small eaters. You can buy almost anything at a big discount if you buy in bulk. The lower your income, the more as a proportion you spend on food. Poverty means no cash flow. Poverty means accommodation is tight and storage facilities are cramped. Poverty means you survive from meal to meal, from day to day. You cannot afford to stock up for a month.

Poverty also means living in run down areas where food prices are higher. In 1994 a survey by Barnado's Charity of the Allerton estate outside Bradford was compared with Kensington in London. Seven out of ten on the Allerton estate are on benefits and one in three is out of work, yet the cost of living is higher than in up-market London.

On some large estates the only shops left are small ones, struggling to survive with lower turnover, higher costs and constant security problems from vandalism, arson and theft. Larger supermarkets are some distance away beyond the reach of those without cars.

Price differences are striking. In a poor area of Cardiff mothers were paying £1.74 more for a pack of disposable nappies than in Kensington.

Poverty kills adults and babies

We know poverty is linked to many things. For example, a study in the British Medical Journal found people on lower incomes die younger. Their babies and children are at greater risk of serious illness and death. Life expectancy in some of the poorest in Britain has fallen to 1940s levels.

Poverty and deprivation have also been linked to drug addiction, and addiction to crime to pay for the habit. Glasgow has more drug addicts per head of population than any other European city. Over 10,000 young people use £132 million of drugs every year. A House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee concluded recently "there is a clear correlation if not a causal

relation" between drug addiction and poverty or deprivation. "In areas where people are poor and families disintegrate more regularly... using drugs as a way of having a good time is more likely to be on the menu".

Iowa State University carried out a study of 622 teenagers from 9th to 12th grades, and found that financial problems at home were linked directly to adolescent emotional difficulties, delinquency and drug use.

So then, the revolution in sexual relationships creates poverty and poverty may well be linked to crime, as it is to health problems and addiction.

"Unemployment is the cause"

Some say unemployment can also lead to crime by damaging morale - not just because of a lack of income, but because it causes alienation, depression and despair among the young, leading to vandalism, mindless violence and petty crime.

Let us suppose for a moment such an assumption is true. We have seen already that one way to help guarantee your own children are unemployable is to separate, create constant emotional turmoil at home and possibly introduce a step-parent arrangement.

I did not say these things put teenagers on the dole or that marriage breakdown makes people unemployable, or that great unhappiness in a surviving will have less effect than a marriage that breaks up. marriage

...but family break-up can make children unemployable

All I am saying is that we have already seen how emotional distress in children often damages academic performance, with some dropping out of school altogether. Early school leavers are the very group most likely to be unemployed - by definition. The rest are "employed" at school

or college.

Early school leavers often stay unemployed. After a year So then, divorce, separation, complex new living arrangements, single parenting and other effects of the sexual revolution are all likely to result in increased numbers of unemployed teenagers and unemployable adults.

If we think that hopelessness about the job situation helps encourage a rise of teenage crime, then we have found another possible link between crime and the sexual revolution.

"Lack of community feeling is the cause"

Some say soaring teenage crime is made worse by bad estate design, and lack of community feeling. Bad design certainly makes it easier to commit offenses and get away with it. We know that lack of sense of community in many areas is also linked with crime. People tend not to steal from their friends, or neighbours they know, respect and trust. You are more likely to be recognised and traced in a small tight-knit local community.

My wife's parents live on the Isle of Wight off the South Coast of England. The ferry takes forty minutes across almost four miles of water. The island is a small community.

Although there are thousands of tourists in Summer, in Winter the place battens down against the sea storms and becomes very insular. Car theft is unusual compared to places like London - where would you go with a car? Burglary and vandalism are also less common.

In London a car can be broken into and driven off in seconds. In ten minutes on a fast road at night, its occupant will have driven within five miles of a million homes. What chance of capture? Who has he or she stolen from? An anonymous face perhaps. Another statistic.

The more people move around from place to place the less roots they have and the more anonymous life becomes. But divorce and separation increase mobility. Children after

separation still have two parents, two loyalties, two sets of relationships, two addresses to give a social worker or police officer, and as we have seen they are more likely to change address several times.

If the parent with custody enters into a new relationship and the accommodation the new partner has is better, then the new relationship may involve yet another move.

All these factors tend to compound each other: children shunted around because of the sexual revolution are more likely to feel a stranger where they live, encouraging alienation. They are also more likely to feel insecure, vulnerable to peer pressure, searching for love and affection, vulnerable to sexual predators, missing out on schooling, unemployed or unemployable in a situation where money is extremely tight. The conditions are set for delinquency.

"Lack of parenting is the cause"

Some say the main reason for escalating teenage crime is not poverty or alienation but lack of parental control. The sex revolution makes parental control more difficult.

Bringing up teenagers is hard work. The struggle for their own identity is emotionally wearing to live with. The natural challenge of authority as part of establishing independence, the contrariness and lack of consistency can be vexing and confusing.

Teenagers need time. Yet time is the one thing separating parents may find it hardest to provide - and after separation it can be even more difficult. One parent struggling to go out to work, also to do the shopping, cleaning, ironing, laundry, gardening, changing light bulbs, mending fires, arranging for the television to be seen to, paying the bills, doing the accounts, mending clothes, sewing on Brownie badges. Time, time, time.

The one without custody has loads of time - possibly more than for years, yet with loneliness, isolation, probably the poorest housing and limited access or finances. The very parent who has time is in the wrong place watching television, while the other may be at the point of total distraction trying to juggle a hundred different tasks.

So if you have the view that the rise in teenage crime and delinquency is related to parenting it is obvious that the sexual revolution is making parenting more difficult. There is a simple oversight function: two parents can more easily keep an eye on what their children are up to than one.

Finding a new partner is unlikely to help in the short term because the process of building a new relationship is itself very time consuming. It is very hard for many single mothers to develop new sexual relationships, because former spouses, children and children of current partners can make life complicated, together with guilt over neglecting children for the sake of the new partner.

"Divorce and conflict at home directly causes youth crime"

While we have seen a number of reasons why there could be a strong link in theory between the sexual revolution and crime, is there really any evidence in practice?

A large group of babies in New Zealand were studied over ten years of childhood, and then their risks of offending by the age of thirteen were analysed. It was found in 1992 that exposure to parental discord during middle and early childhood led to increased risks of offending later. Major changes at home of various kinds did not have the same effect. This was a direct link between delinquency and parental strife.

Another 1992 study of sixty five families in Texas with teenage sons looked at difficult child behaviour and parental relationship as perceived by the child. There was a strong link between parents who said they had great difficulties with their sons (out of control), and sons who said there was a lot of parental conflict at home.

Many reasons why break-up may add to crime rate

So then, in conclusion we have looked at the unavoidable and disturbing fact that crime is

increasing and that much of it is carried out by teenagers. We have looked at a whole range of possible factors which may be encouraging such a trend - ranging from poverty to unemployment or lack of parental control.

Whatever explanations we prefer may depend on our own personal experience, politics or perspectives on life, but we have seen the sexual revolution may have made things worse directly

We see therefore, overwhelming evidence to convict the sexual revolution as guilty in answering a charge of influence on young people to commit crime. We may debate which elements are more significant and the degree, but the link is beyond doubt.

We will be looking in a later chapter at what governments can or should do, but I now want to look at the total economic costs to society from the sex revolution. Even if some people still want it and like it, can we all afford it?

* Rising Price of Love - book by Patrick Dixon - published 1995