

### **Editorial: Crime and Criminology in Times of Corona**

This editorial touches on two separate subjects: the first part consists of reflections on the part of the editorial team, led by the Associate editor, on the impact that the current crisis precipitated by the Covid-19 and what it might mean for our understanding of crime and criminology. The second part, as it is customary, briefly introduces the papers that are included in this issue.

The aforementioned global crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has impacted almost every notable aspect of life. Crime, criminal justice system and inevitably criminology is no exception. Writing in the *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, Miller and Blumstein opine that the lockdowns and the extensive rescheduling resulting from the pandemic have created opportunities and limitations for different type of crimes and have posed challenges for the criminal justice system. More interestingly, they point out that the measures that have been introduced, and sometimes enforced, for dealing with the pandemic provide a useful new framework for criminology research. Writing in the same journal, Stickle and Felson take an empirical look at how the pandemic and the subsequent measures may correlate with each other. Their research also calls for future research into how these containment measures might have changed the manner and extent of crime.

Kathryn Farrow of the Center for Criminology at the Oxford University's Faculty of Law reflects on the issue of policing during a pandemic. She holds that the crisis added new dimensions to the mandate of police forces. Even in developed democracies, with a measure of respect and regard for private spaces, this puts unprecedented responsibilities and powers in the hands of police forces. Her argument fits into the discourse surrounding the extensive role of state in managing, often private, lives of the citizens.

At an empirical level, a BBC report by Tara McKelvey reveals that crime numbers have generally come down since the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns. The report highlights that the incidence of crime in areas as far apart as New York, Atlanta and South Africa have tended to come down. However, the pandemic put new types of strains on police forces. For instance, in some areas, police, due to the essential nature of their services, have been exposed to the risks from the virus to a greater degree than the common population. Similarly, police officers reported that the risk and incidence of some types of crime, particularly domestic abuse, have spiked during the last few months.

At the broadest level, the pandemic has prompted states around the world to invest in and use new types of technologies to regulate the lives of people. For the need of contact tracing and managing isolation and social distancing, states have used

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technologies towards common citizens that were previously reserved for terrorists and hardened criminals. There needs to be a greater discussion surrounding these capabilities that states have developed and what it means for individual liberties and, more importantly to our current discussion, the future of crime and criminal justice system.

Lastly, the issue comes to its valued audience during, and in some ways shaped by, the precarious times. I am thankful to the numerous individuals who help make the current issue and all the past issues a reality. These include the scholars who send us their work. Not all of these works can be included in the journal, but I have to mention that many, if not most, such contributions are indeed appreciated by us. I also thank the diligent support of the various members of the editorial board and the journal team who, if the fact may be stated, spend a lot more time on making this journal a reality than I am usually able to spare. I also thank the audience, many of whom provide us valuable feedback on the quality and content of the journal.

I am very pleased with the papers we received and those that have been included in the current issue. As a researcher, I find my association with *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* personally reinvigorating. I feel that there are few things that provide us a clearer sense of how the challenges and problems of our times are changing and are shaped than the most recent issue of the journal. A look at the titles and the discussions tells us about what the problems, especially around but not limited to the criminal, legal and justice systems are, how they are being understood by the thinking minds of our times and what solutions are key to deal with these issues and challenges.

The current issue also reflects what lies at the heart of the criminal justice system. Whereas Muhammad Kaleem, Gauhar Ali and Asif Salim write about the delayed justice system and its consequences in Pakistan, Sajjad Hussain looks at the growing number of women who serve in the law enforcement.

There are novel ways in which some authors have approached age-old questions. In a very interesting article, Umm-e-Kalsom and Shehla Gul take a psychological approach to understanding the personality disorders and its relationship with the type of criminality. In a similar vein, Haider, Arif and Abbas correlate language and discourse with drug addiction. Gillani, Gill and Ranjha focus on the issue of theft and its correlation with economic situation, specifically unemployment. All of these authors make interesting arguments with well-defined dependent and independent variables.

As noted earlier, there are changes taking place in the region that are reflected in the articles contributed to the present issue. Khan and Hussain focus on the change of status of the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas, now

called the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs), and the inevitable changes made to the criminal justice system. They provide a useful insight for policymakers to assess the positions of the local population regarding these changes. Bano and Khan highlight the relationship between terrorism and Pakistan Stock Exchange and how the rise or fall in the incidence of one may cause a change in the other. Finally, like always, we look forward to contributions from the academic fraternity in Pakistan and beyond. We also encourage and appreciate the feedback we receive from our valuable readers.

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