

Crime, work and business

Zoran Kanduč, LL.D., Research Associate, Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Poljanski nasip 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Most of officially handled crime is by its nature a property crime, committed either directly or indirectly. However, this does not mean that such crimes (committed mostly by relatively poor or socially powerless perpetrators without repute) are always and necessarily determined by economic motives and are therefore strictly instrumental. Such views on a criminalized "state of affairs" are nevertheless oversimplified, leading to insupportable reductionism. However, there are a fair number of criminal (or illegal) practices, which seem or are perceived (rationalized) as "ordinary" work or business, i.e. as a trivial economic activity, supposed to bring to "homo economicus" (that thrilling abstract monster without passion and feelings, who presumably always and everywhere seeks maximum pleasure / benefit with unshakeable and immoral self-interest) the largest possible profits, (and eo ipso, also a number of other valuable attributes, such as power, reputation, importance, a feeling of "self-realization" or respect). There is nothing amazing in that.

Should we declare as a novelty the increasingly evident fact, that battalions of people who have taken advantage and obtained material gain in illegal ways (or even worse, in accordance with the "rules of game" which were obtained by force or were even written down by the same people), consist of reputable and more than well provided individuals? It is not necessary, since it is well known that capitalism (i.e. a social form in which the economically ruling class not only has control over the economy, but also over other auxiliary "systems", which are important for the reproduction of their domination, freedom to exploit and oppress people) has been in the past, as well as in the present time, so tightly interwoven with all kinds of violence, robbery, frauds, destruction and plunder. The key problem is not the extent of illegal or (at least potentially) criminal economic practices (which serve either to maintain or to accumulate capital), but the (in)direct harmfulness - and illegitimacy - of a quite normal economic system because it does not contribute to the improvement of the quality of life (nor to meeting the elementary needs) of all people (and to a constant increase in their leisure time, the only criterion and condition for human prosperity), to a non-destructive attitude of respect towards nature and to curbing social inequalities/fragmentation.

Keywords: crime, economy, work, business, illegal work, criminal economy, illegal acquisition of property, capitalism

UDC: 343.53 + 343.7