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CHANGING PATTERNS OF SOCIAL CONTROLS AND SELF-CONTROLS

On the rise of crime since the 1950s and the sociogenesis of a 'third nature'

Cas Wouters¹

INTRODUCTION; RISING CRIME RATES AND INFORMALISATION

Among the authorities which lost much of their more or less automatic ascendancy since the 1950s is the psychic authority of conscience. Yet this change has received scant attention. To some extent, the same goes for the question of why crime rates in western countries rose considerably between the 1950s and 1980s, stabilizing at a relatively high level from then on. This paper will attempt to connect these two changes by suggesting an hypothesis and an approach which concentrate on some important connections between social and psychic changes over these decades. It will also focus on major changes in moral concern about crime. This approach draws on Elias's theory of civilising processes (Elias 1994) and on my own work on 'informalisation' (Wouters 1977, 1986, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1995). The latter concept refers to the relaxation of the social codes - usually referred to as 'permissiveness' - in combination with increasing social demands on self-control; it implies a change in the patterns of social control and self-control and also a higher level of reflexivity on the part of individual people. In accordance with this approach, the central hypothesis of this paper is that in most social relationships, as authoritarian social controls have been relaxed and as more calculative and flexible self-controls have come to be socially demanded, more - even most - people came more readily to consider the possibility of becoming involved in criminal activities. This has made these acts more likely in general, and more likely in particular to be committed by those sections of the population that are relatively deprived. The paper is suggestive rather than definitive; its hypothesis might be the subject of future empirical research.

Criminologists generally agree that in all Western countries criminal acts - not just crime rates - have been rising since the early 1950s. In the Netherlands, for example, there was a rise in registered crimes from some 100,000 each year in the early 1950s, to a million in 1984 (Kester and Junger-Tas 1994: 37).¹ Since 1984 this rise has been much smaller. Many criminologists

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have even concluded that, on the whole, since 1984 the level of crime has stabilized (Kester and Junger-Tas 1994).² However, since the early 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, political and public concern about crime has increased considerably (SCP 1994, 1996). Some researchers maintain that this rise is so disproportional that they speak of a 'moral panic' (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 1994; Baerveldt 1996).

Most attempts at explaining the rise in crime rates combine references to (1) economic growth and increased opportunities for crime (especially property offences), (2) an increase in feelings of 'relative deprivation' (envy and injustice), and (3) a decrease in the effectiveness of social controls, of socialisation, of social inclusion and of morality. Regarding social controls, most criminologists either tend to focus upon changing social controls and opportunities, or upon moral decline and the relaxation of social controls. What is generally overlooked is the fact that social controls have not only been relaxed but also intensified, that a new pattern of constraints has developed. A more encompassing understanding of changes in the crime rates will focus not only upon changes in the structure of social controls but will also take into account changes in the structure of self-controls, as well as changes in the balance between the two types of control.

AN EXAMPLE

Many of the changes relevant to the rise in crime are present in the history of the Dutch bank Van Lanschot. Directly after World War II, the family bank was established in a provincial town. It had two directors, members of the firm, and employed 16 people. Now it is a multinational corporation with more than a thousand employees. Until the end of the 1960s, the counters in its banking halls were open, and only a low swing door separated the area of public access from the office where, among other people, the chief cashier sat on his high chair with the money conveniently within reach. Everyone could walk into the bank, and the only protection consisted of two male employees with guns in their desk drawers.

In the latter half of the 1960s, increasing reports of bank robberies had started one of the directors worrying about safety. One morning in 1969, he asked casually who could jump over the counter - 'show us what you can do'. A few young counter clerks did so without great effort. Two weeks later, bars had been installed and the low swinging door was replaced by one which was solid.

In the same period, personnel policy in the bank changed from being rather patriarchal and authoritarian in form to a system which was more egalitarian and bureaucratic, that is,

regulated via fixed rules and procedures. In 1968, a pension system based on the number of years in service was introduced at the family-owned bank. Reactions were diverse. One employee remembers the cool reaction of a colleague to his enthusiasm. 'Don't you think that's great,' he had asked, and the colleague had replied: 'No, why should I? When I die, the Van Lanschot family will surely take care of my widow' (van Bergen 1995).

This statement indicates the security of patriarchal relationships which was both precarious and not universal, unlike the welfare state forms that succeeded them. In a few decades, this old type of patriarchal security system died out completely, to be replaced by the security of welfare state arrangements. This implies that the fears and dangers of poverty had been replaced to a lesser or greater extent by what has been called the 'equanimity of the welfare state' (Stolk and Wouters 1987). A change in the structure of the state was mirrored in a change in the structure of fears and anxieties: the provision of 'social security' by the state soon came to be taken for granted and generated greater personal security and confidence.³ During this period, together with national incomes and employment, crime rates have been rising. This seems to be a paradoxical development that needs explanation.

CHANGES IN THE INCIDENCE AND EXPLANATION OF CRIME AND IN THE BALANCE OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SOCIAL CONTROLS

In the period from the 1960s to the mid-1970s, the Dutch government operated a policy of lowering rates of imprisonment (Downes 1988), and the rising crime rates did not attract much public attention. They were played down or explained predominantly by reference to social inequality and relative deprivation, that is, by connecting crime to frustration and aggression. Although this connection certainly remained fairly obvious, it was also quite problematic because crime rates had been rising while social inequalities were in fact declining. And although most people at that time saw more 'unjustified' inequalities where before they had seen only 'bad luck', the explanatory power of this connection was limited because the rise in crime was not at all confined to the more deprived social classes. Although these classes remained over-represented in the crime statistics, so were young people, and this also allowed an interpretation in terms of a generational problem (Kapteyn 1989: 17). The point is that both the playing down of the rising crime rates, and the dominant explanation offered for them, were in harmony with the 'spirit of the times', characterised by a strong moral indignation about any giving of orders, expression of authority, or any other demonstration of social superiority, accompanied by an increasing mutual trust in everyone's capacity to internalize social codes of

behaviour: penal policy was liberalised in the expectation that crime rates would thus decline. This explains why the expansion of the caring functions of the state initially coincided with growing leniency in the exertion of its coercive and repressive functions.

The 1960s saw the relatively rapid social ascent of broader and broader groups, increasing their status and power relative to other groups. In contrast with individual social ascent, the ascent of entire social groups involves an upward pressure exerted by the rising groups for the acceptance of their own ways of life and codes of conduct, eventually resulting in some form of mixing of the codes and ideals of the groups that have risen with those of the previously superior groups. From the mid-1960s onward, the upward pressures of collective upward social mobility stimulated a huge wave of resistance to the established order and its formal codes, particularly among the large post-war generation. These pressures also stimulated the spread of an 'identification with underdogs' and a 'downstairs' perspective on society (Wouters 1986), which are perhaps best illustrated by the criminological theories that dominated the universities in the late 1960s and 1970s - labelling theory and radical criminology. Social movements based on these theories, like 'anti-psychiatry', tended to view patients and criminals as people like ourselves, with feelings that are perfectly understandable, and with an almost 'healthy' reaction to an 'unhealthy' and oppressive social code. From this perspective, transgressions of this code by various kinds of nonconformists, including those responsible for the rising crime rates, were played down while those who defended the old code were soon branded as petty bourgeois 'propriety constables' with an automatic, unthinking acceptance of authority and a rigid conscience, forbidding titillation of the senses out of the fear of immediately falling into an abyss of dissolution and anarchy. In a similar vein, concern about crime was soon interpreted as a symptom of petty-bourgeois fundamentalism - to use the terminology of today.

From the mid-1970s onward, rising unemployment rates went hand in hand with declining profits and investments, an exodus of capital, a declining supply of venture capital and declining national income. The public appeal of trade unions deteriorated and collective upward social mobility gradually came to a halt. In the 1980s, when budget cuts started to make headlines, the most striking social pressure unequivocally came from above (cf. Hall 1978). In order to maintain their life style and reputation, many people felt themselves to be much more strongly dependent upon their direct social superiors and upon the centres of commerce and administration. Thus, this downward pressure stimulated an 'identification with the established' and the spread of an 'upstairs' perspective. In keeping with these changes in social climate, the

rise in crime rates slowed down - sooner in some cases and in some countries than in others - and at the same time external social controls were strengthened (more cameras, more police, more prisons, etc.).⁴ The proportion of young people in the crime rates declined, while the proportion of the unemployed increased, to be followed somewhat later by an increase in the representation of immigrant groups (Jongman 1988, Kapteyn 1989, Junger 1990, Bovenkerk 1994). And although inequalities were increasing, the shift towards an 'identification with the established' undermined the appeal of deprivation theory.

In accordance with this shift in mentality and ideology, the rise in crime rates was no longer played down; on the contrary, it became a major issue. Violent criminality attracted a lot of attention, although this type of crime had not risen much (Franke 1994). The increase in crimes like corruption, bribery, tax evasion, shoplifting, insurance fraud and other offences against property attracted attention, too. In the 1980s, 'moral decay' became a popular diagnosis, perhaps because these crimes occurred in every layer of society, compromising bankers, doctors, lawyers and even royalty. From a long list of scandals about crimes like fraud, theft and corruption in traditionally highly respected circles, a Dutch journalist inferred a general change in the direction of 'kleptocracy' - national kleptomania - tending to lead people to expect the worst of everybody (Hofland 1985). Yet, however strong the impression of moral decay may be, its explanatory power is limited, because at the same time, the development of more egalitarian relationships has exerted pressure towards a rise in the moral standard and a higher level of mutually expected self-restraints. People became more immediately sensitive to expressions of superiority, such as issuing commands or expecting special treatment on the grounds of some inherited superiority, which came to be seen as an unnecessary humiliation. Both at work and in intimate relationships, the expectation of proceeding in mutual respect and mutual identification has clearly risen, and the same goes for the necessity to consult and to develop policies based upon a maximum of mutual consent. Accordingly, departures and transgressions are met with stricter social sanctions.

References to 'moral decay' went (and still go) hand in hand with the perception of deficient and/or absent social controls. Thus, the social control question 'how to increase the chance of getting nicked' rose to (and remains in) the centre of political and public attention. Accordingly, many measures were taken to sharpen and expand the repressive functions and the 'formal' social controls of the state and of other organisations. At the same time, attempts at explaining the rise in crime focused on the decline of the 'informal' social controls of traditional social networks. In increasingly anonymous social networks the possibilities of effectively

exercising these controls had declined (see, for example Duerr 1991: 134). This explanation seems partly correct - indeed, urban areas show higher crime rates. From this rise it would seem that the increase in 'formal' social controls (Cohen 1985: Foucault 1977) did not compensate the decline in the informal ones, but this 'zero-sum' approach in terms only of formal and informal social controls is rather limited and one-sided: both are external controls or controls by others. This means that *internal* controls - social constraints toward self-constraints - are disregarded, and the same goes for the *balance* between external and internal controls. Whereas, at first sight, the formal and informal social controls seem to have changed in opposite directions, the internal forms of social control have clearly risen. The latter follows from the rise in the standard of morality and in mutually expected self-controls, *and* from the increased necessity in - all social relationships - of developing a more reflexive and flexible self-regulation. In growing webs of interdependence, as functional democratization developed and social hierarchies flattened, so did more lenient and differentiated social codes of behaviour and feeling develop. Whether co-operating or competing, in less unequal relationships people have pressured each other to become more conscious of social and individual options and restrictions, and this put social and self-knowledge in greater demand. The same goes for the ability to empathise and to take on others' roles. In the course of this development, most social codes and sanctions became more flexible and differentiated, although on the other hand, the social ban upon self-aggrandizement and the social requirement of mutual consent became all the more significant and imperative. In the jostling for power, possessions and status, the way someone behaves has become a more decisive criterion for more people. Respect and respectable behaviour has become more dependent upon self-regulation, particularly on the functioning of internal controls. Thus, the pressures of social controls on each individual have clearly intensified, which means that the focal and main point of the balance between external and internal social controls has moved in the direction of internal social controls; in this sense, self-controls have increasingly become both the focus and the locus of social controls.

The measures to increase formal and semi-formal controls were also based upon the view that opportunities for committing crimes had grown. This explanation also seems partly correct, but limited. Indeed, in many respects opportunities have increased (cf. Cohen and Felson 1979), but in other respects they have declined. From the end of the 1960s, houses and other buildings like shops and banks have been made increasingly secure. Previously, they offered much greater rather than smaller opportunities for robbing. However, at that time the thought of taking advantage of this hardly arose - it was still more or less automatically repressed. In the

following decades, however, this attitude tended to shift towards the other extreme: this kind of thought arose more or less automatically, and so did the temptations. An example is the casual self-observation of a respectable Dutch writer and comedian: 'It is a self-service petrol station and when I walk inside to pay (after an habitual quick look to see how I could avoid paying by tearing away unnoticed from the place) I receive a Free Drinking Glass' (Kooten 1986: 9). The phrase in parentheses indicates the spread of this new attitude of always observing both legal and illegal opportunities (and constraints). This shift in consciousness is at the heart of my attempt at explaining the rise in crime more fully. It is directly connected to the process of informalisation in which social codes have become less rigid, more varied, and are acted upon in more personal and flexible ways. This connection between social and psychic processes will be discussed next.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION DEMANDS PSYCHIC INTEGRATION

During the twentieth century, but especially after World War II, as the working classes became emancipated the webs of interdependency in all western countries grew, bonds between increasing numbers of people expanded and hierarchical differences diminished. In these processes, people's dependence upon patriarchal and family relationships diminished, although as members of large and expanding organizations and also as members of welfare states, that is, in less direct ways, the dependence of all on all others has increased. These emancipation and social integration processes implied growing pressures upon all individuals to negotiate and to proceed through mutual consent, and thus growing pressures toward closer and more alert observation of oneself and others (cf. Swaan 1990). As previously-superior groups and those who had risen socially became obliged to take more and more account of each other, more and more ways of inflicting humiliation and injustice came to be perceived and branded as such. They were increasingly seen as intolerable displays of arrogance or self-aggrandizement and were sanctioned accordingly with stronger individual shame, collective repugnance, and moral indignation.

As emancipation and integration movements and ideals limited the power to express social distance and distinction, the display of all kinds of superiority and inferiority feelings had to be increasingly curbed. It was on this basis that the social codes of behaviour and emotions relaxed and a strong spurt of informalisation occurred: on the one hand, the spectrum of accepted emotional and behavioural alternatives expanded; on the other hand an acceptable and respectable use of these alternatives implies increased demands on self-regulation. In short, decreasing power inequalities and the social integration of former outsider groups into welfare

states have been the basis for a relaxation in prevailing social codes and ideals, for a spread of the principle of mutual consent and for permitting a rising level of mutual trust and morality. Of course, not all classes and age groups were equally involved, yet it was an overall development: in all Western societies, changes towards social emancipation, social integration, and informalisation prevailed.

The twentieth-century process of informalisation was preceded by a long-term formalising or disciplinary phase. The social code expanded to include more kinds of behaviour that had come to seem wild, violent, dirty, indecent or lecherous and they came to be increasingly rejected, avoided, repressed and denied. Via laws and manners, the social controls of increasingly hierarchical relationships exercised pressure to constrain these 'lower' or 'animalic' impulses and emotions. In this phase, the threat of losing status and other compelling sanctions on behaviour that would betray these 'dangerous' emotions and impulses, stimulated the development of rather rigid ways of avoiding them. Together with the fears and anxieties linked to them, these more primary urges, impulses and emotions were muffled up and constrained; they were internalized and transformed into the more or less automatically functioning fears of an authoritative conscience. This authoritarian type of conscience-formation was expressed in the old conviction that all people would almost automatically 'fall onto temptation' if 'unacceptable' emotions and impulses, for example to 'covet thy neighbour's wife', were allowed into consciousness. In the long-term formalising phase, the austere and inexorable repression of urges and affects was mainly accomplished by effacing them both socially and individually from consciousness, and by warding off everything reminiscent of them with a rigour similar to that demanded in the original process of disciplining and suppressing.

Everything that came to be defined as 'dangerous' or 'unacceptable' was to be nipped in the bud, particularly in children. Right up to the present day, for love and fear of parents and others on whom they are dependent, children learn to ignore, conceal and suppress the connected emotions and impulses, in which process the fears of others are transformed into the more or less automatically functioning inner fears of conscience. This long-term phase of formalisation probably reached its peak in the 'Victorian Era', together with the 'stiff upper lip', a metaphor indicating a kind of ritualistic self-control which is heavily based upon an authoritative conscience or superego, functioning more or less automatically as 'second nature'. In the nineteenth century, such a 'Superego'-dominated type of personality was spreading to become dominant. In this phase of formalisation, social constraints towards self-constraint have stimulated such an authoritative conscience-formation. Therefore, the main tensions in this

phase centred on the balance between external social controls and a superego-control functioning more or less as 'second nature' (Waldhoff 1995).

In the twentieth century, a phase of informalisation has become dominant.⁵ In processes of social emancipation and integration, the more or less automatic and unthinking acceptance of social and psychic authorities have decreased. People have increasingly pressured each other into more reflexive and flexible relationships, and at the same time towards a more reflexive and flexible self-regulation (Wouters 1995a; 1995b). The status, respect and self-respect of all citizens became *less directly* dependent upon internalized social controls of a fixed kind - on an authoritative conscience - and *more directly* dependent upon their reflexive and calculating abilities, and therefore upon a particular pattern of self-control in which the more or less automatic and unthinking acceptance of the dictates of psychic authority or conscience has also decreased. In developing such a pattern, it became increasingly necessary to overcome the fear of punishing social as well as psychic authorities. This implied that all kinds of emotions and impulses re-entered both consciousness and public discussion. It also implied destruction of the old conviction that being open to 'dangerous' impulses and emotions would almost irrevocably be followed by acting upon them: there was an 'emancipation of emotions' - impulses and emotions were allowed into the centre of personality: consciousness. Particularly since the 1950s, fixed hierarchical rules have changed in a spurt of informalisation in the direction of flexible guidelines on the basis of which people to a far greater extent have consciously to decide where to draw the lines. Today, for example, to 'covet thy neighbour's wife' is no longer perceived as dangerous, nor is acting upon this longing perceived as such, if only the principle of mutual consent is respected. In summary: the overall emancipation and integration of 'lower' social groups in (western) society allowed for *and* demanded the emancipation and integration of 'lower' impulses and emotions in personality: only a more ego-dominated form of self-regulation could allow for the reflexive and flexible calculation that came to be expected. As social dividing lines became less hierarchical, more open and flowing, psychic dividing lines - in Freudian terms, the dividing lines between Id, Superego and Ego - have on the whole also become less hierarchical, more open and flowing. More and more people came under pressure to develop a type of self-regulation that is more flexible, more individually malleable and more easily accessible to emotions and impulses - in short, more 'Ego'-dominated. In the informalising phase, therefore, the main tensions surround the balance between Superego-controls and Ego-controls (Waldhoff 1995).⁶

FROM 'SECOND NATURE' TO 'THIRD NATURE'

These changes can be illuminated by introducing the term 'third nature' as a 'sensitizing concept'. The term 'second nature' refers to a conscience and self-regulation which functions automatically to a high degree. The term 'third nature' draws attention to the development of a more reflexive and flexible self-regulation in which 'consciousness' becomes more permeable by drives, and drives become more permeable by 'consciousness' (against Elias 1994: 487). The concept ideally indicates a personality structure in which Ego functions have become dominant to the extent that it has become 'natural' to perceive the pulls and pushes of both first and second nature as well as the dangers and chances, short term and long term, of any particular situation. The term refers to a level of consciousness and calculation on which all types of constraints and possibilities are taken into account. It marks a rise to a new level of reflexive civilisation, reaching a higher floor on 'the spiral staircase of consciousness' (Elias 1991).

Developments in this direction can be discerned from the 1950s onward. Since then, conscience has lost automatic ascendancy. Internalised controls of a rather fixed kind - 'inner-direction' in Riesman's term - definitely changed from being an advantage into being a handicap; they became too predictable, too rigid and stiff. The feeling that 'there is a time and place for everything' gained significance whereas 'always a gentleman or lady' lost importance in social life. Expanding and intensified cooperation and competition have put people under the pressure to calculate and to observe themselves and each other more sharply, while showing flexibility and a greater willingness to compromise. In this process, almost everywhere in the West once highly elevated ideologies and great ideals - and with them 'great' conflicts and wars - have to a large extent been superseded by more pragmatic and flexible points of departure. This process brought with it a continued relativisation of the once rather narrow and blind - that is, more or less automatic - identification with one's own group, one's family, religion, nationality, race, class and sex, for which a more varied and wider circle of identification was substituted. Thus, in recent decades, the traditional submission of the interests of the individual to those of one's group and its honour has significantly diminished. Most people are now expected to have more individual means of defense at their disposal. Social success has come to depend more strongly upon a reflexive and flexible self-regulation, upon the ability to combine firmness and flexibility, directness and tactfulness (Cf. McCall *et al.* 1983; Mastenbroek 1989). Not only in the realms of work, love and care, but also in 'having fun' there arose an increased necessity to be more open to all kinds of extreme and 'deeper' impulses and emotions. As early as the 1950s, Martha Wolfenstein observed

Where formerly there was felt to be the danger that, in seeking fun, one might be carried away into the depths of wickedness, today there is a recognizable fear that one may not be able to let go sufficiently, that one may not have enough fun. (Wolfenstein 1955: 168/171/174)⁷

Over this same period, an important characteristic of informalisation and the development of a 'third nature' consisted of a strong decline in social as well as psychic censorship. Until the 1960s, many thoughts were generally branded as dangerous out of the prevailing conviction that they would almost automatically lead to dangerous action. Because of this direct, second-nature connection between thoughts and actions, a relatively high degree of social and psychic censorship was common practice. Rigorous and violent censorship in more strict and authoritarian regimes demonstrates to what extent authorities and others believe(d) in the danger of thoughts, imagination or fantasy. In most western countries, especially since the 1960s, both the fear and awe⁸ of fantasy or dissident imagination have diminished together with the fear and awe of the authorities of state and conscience. As 'third nature' developed, particularly in the realm of imagination and amusement, there was a significant spread of more and more unconcealed expressions of insubordination, sex and violence.

A harbinger of these changes is George Orwell's essay 'Raffles and Miss Blandish,' in which he compared two types of detective novels. The first is a series of stories, written (by Ernest William Hornung) in the early twentieth century, about a gentleman crook, Raffles, for whom 'certain things are "not done", and the idea of doing them hardly arises' (1944: 66).

Raffles ... has no real moral code, no religion, certainly no social consciousness. All he has is a set of reflexes - the nervous system, as it were, of a gentleman. Give him a sharp tap on this reflex or that (they are called 'sport', 'pal', 'woman', 'king and country' and so forth), and you get a predictable reaction' (1944: 79).

There are 'very few corpses, hardly any blood, no sex crimes, no sadism, no perversions of any kind' (1944: 67). All these are, however, central to *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (by James Hadley Chase), about an American type of detective, published in 1939. This book exudes an attitude of indifference towards crime, and criminals are admired as long as they are successful. The pursuit of power is a pervasive motive, and 'if ultimately one sides with the police against the gangsters, it is merely ... because, in fact, the law is a bigger racket than crime' (1944: 71).

In *No Orchids* anything is "done" so long as it leads to power. All the barriers are down, all the motives are out in the open. ... there are no gentlemen and no taboos.

Emancipation is complete. Freud and Machiavelli have reached the outer suburbs. (1944:

75,79)

Since Orwell wrote his essay, the emancipation he refers to as being complete has in fact continued. On the whole, the development implies that the fear of being inevitably 'carried away into the depths of wickedness' by indulging in these 'dangerous' imaginings can be faced and controlled. This also means that the dividing lines, and the increasingly complex and subtle connections, between imagination and reality have come to be more sharply perceived. In fact, much of the pleasurable excitement found in reading or seeing these products derives precisely from facing and controlling these dangers.⁹

The same goes for many activities outside the realm of imagination. A relevant example is the use of drugs. From the 1960s onward it was widely advocated as a way to explore and expand the mind. In a recent newspaper article on the rise of 'headshops' in the Netherlands, the appeal of hallucinogenic mushrooms is reported to lie in their 'power to amplify and intensify feelings' and in the 'healing confrontation' with one's 'deepest inner self' (Arjen Schreuder, *NRC Handelsblad*, 2 May 1996). This example is relevant not only because it illustrates the 'emancipation of emotions', but also because much crime is drugs-related. Both the use of drugs and the 'war on drugs' have caused an increase of drug-related crimes.¹⁰

From the 1960s onward, many people participated in social and psychical experiments searching for the limits of self-regulation and the pleasure of sniffing the dangers on the other side of the boundaries. This provocative and experimental attitude, demonstrating a 'quest for excitement' (Elias and Dunning 1986), is characteristic of a new level of social and psychic integration: before the 1950s social and psychic authorities would have banned it as too subversive and dangerous. This 'quest for excitement' and risks can also be understood as the direct counterpart of the 'equanimity of the welfare state'. In the relatively long period of peace and rising 'social and personal security', the arrangements of a caring welfare state were increasingly taken for granted, and this 'peace' in material respects functioned as a breeding ground in which much relational and individual unrest took root, including an enhanced 'quest for excitement', tensions and risks. Young people in particular became fascinated by new questions like 'What follows freedom and prosperity?' and 'What lies beyond the boundaries set by conscience and morality?' The latter question is characteristic of the development towards a 'third nature', a more Ego-dominated type of personality.

Taken together, these examples illustrate how the social integration of welfare states implied a general rise of demands on self-controls in all walks of life and exerted pressure to develop a 'third nature' type of personality.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'THIRD NATURE' AND THE INCREASE OF CRIME

In developing such a personality, people had somehow to surmount the hidden or inner fears of conscience. As the deeper and 'unacceptable' feelings and hidden fears are closely linked in the mind - just as they were once simultaneously excluded from people's consciousness, they come out into the open at the same time. Therefore, in the process of an 'emancipation of emotions', there is always the danger that stirring up such feelings as violent rage, anxiety, lust, greed or aggrandizement might arouse so much bewilderment that people may not be able to control them according to the prevailing standards and thus, after all, provoke social degradation, loss of respect and self-respect. For this reason, these kinds of conflicts in processes of psychic integration may result in criminal behaviour.

In the social transition towards a new level of social and psychic integration, these integration conflicts must have abounded. Particularly from the 1950s onward, increasing numbers of people have become aware of emotions and temptations in circumstances where fears and dangers had been dominant before - not only of the temptations of 'sex, drugs and rock and roll', but also those of tax evasion, insurance fraud and shoplifting, among other things. As social integration via intensified social competition and co-operation exerted pressures towards psychic integration, many people will have competed in the search for the limits of self-regulation and for the excitement of having an outlook on the dangers on the other side of the boundaries. In this process, they will have discovered 'unacceptable' feelings and longings and at the same time discovered opportunities, loopholes in the net of social controls where they had not looked before. An increasing number of people will have succumbed to the temptations. My argument is that this collective transition, from rather rigid discipline to reflexive and flexible calculation, was so drastic and risky that it may largely explain the *overall* rise in crime rates. Particularly in the period of transition, from the 1950s until the early 1980s, an increasing number of people will have developed a widening gap between the pattern of self-controls that had become socially expected and the pattern that they had individually realized. Therefore, many among the socially rising will have felt more *liberated* from direct and authoritarian controls than *burdened*¹¹ by the higher level of demands on self-controls. Those who gave in to the tensions and temptations in criminal ways, demonstrated that their process of psychic integration - the development of a stronger Ego and of more flowing relationships between Id, Superego and Ego - was lagging behind the social integration process of social classes within welfare states. It would indicate an integration conflict. At the time, the increased

interdependence via the state was not (yet) reflected (fully) in the level of self-controls or in the scope of group-identification. This lagging behind (both a 'time lag' and a 'cultural lag') gave rise to many social as well as psychic tensions and conflicts. In summary, my argument is that *the overall rise in crimes can be understood from this increase of psychic integration conflicts in developing a 'third nature' personality structure, an increase which in turn resulted from a conflict between social and psychic integration processes.*

Although it remains unclear how much of the increase in crime can be explained this way, the tensions and conflicts inherent in these social and psychic integration processes, and the risks inherent in developing a 'third nature' seem to provide a 'missing link' to the present data and explanations.

The relatively recent necessity to acquire a more ego-dominated pattern of self-controls - and its explanatory power - is generally overlooked and easily underestimated. One reason may be that the new pattern was soon taken for granted. In 1981, for example, a Dutch author's point of departure in an essay on vandalism was that 'from time to time, we are all inclined to venture over the borderline of what is permissible and to do something which is not allowed' (Reve 1995: 39). However, until the 1950s or 1960s such an inclination, if observed at all, would have been hidden and kept unexpressed as much as possible. Another reason for overlooking the new pattern of social controls and self-controls, and their implications, may be found in a rather one-sided focus upon external social controls, formal and/or informal, as a major factor in explaining crime. Many social scientists, criminologists as well as policy makers, do proclaim the view that these have only become weakened. However, the social controls on self-controls did in fact strengthen considerably: betraying feelings of inferiority and superiority is punished much more severely, and in other respects too, the importance of one's personality or 'personality capital' - the functioning of one's internal controls - has become much more decisive for social success, that is, in the process of ranking or social stratification (Wouters 1989; 1992). Even educational diplomas and professional skill have come to stand in the shadow of the power of one's personality, just as *corporate identity* - the 'personality of a company' - has grown in importance as differences between organizations (and their products) diminished. However, reports on ministerial policy in the Netherlands, for instance, disproportionately emphasize the rise of anonymity, the decline of supervision (Ministerie van Justitie 1985) and the weakening of (informal) social control by fellow-citizens. They mention the 1960s and 1970s predominantly as a period in which latitude and the attitude of tolerance went over the top and ran wild (Ministerie van Justitie 1990). Here, strategies of crime control collided with 'the limits of the

sovereign state' (Garland 1996).

Another difficulty in perceiving the importance of this transformation might be located in the rather radical change in collective identification and in the connected increase of moral concern about crime. In the 1980s, as the collective social rise of whole groups came to an end and the social and economic climate exerted pressures towards all kinds of budget cuts, collective identification with the social groups that had been rising shifted towards a renewed collective identification with the established. This shift was reinforced in the 1990s by the tensions, conflicts and insecurities associated with the collapse of the Iron Curtain. Accordingly, social protest was no longer mainly directed at the establishment, as was the case in the 1960s and 1970s, but towards anything perceived as threatening the established order, criminality in particular. While the rise in crime declined, feelings of insecurity and moral concern about crime increased. These feelings tend to express themselves in a perception of insufficient social controls (and in a demand for their expansion).

The same changes can also illuminate why the rise in crime rates declined from the early 1980s onward. This turning point can be demonstrated from a poster that appeared at that time in the streets of Amsterdam. The poster had a Robert Crumb drawing of a sneaky Fritz the Cat, masked like a crook, and the text read:

STEAL DELIBERATELY

Further cuts in the dole and minimum wages and rent increases
force you to steal just to live reasonably

RAID THE DEPARTMENT STORES AND TAKE WHAT YOU NEED

PROLETARIAN SHOPPING

TAKE AND EAT!

This poster symbolizes the possibility in welfare states of withdrawing from the social pressures that prevail in such states to develop the reflexive and flexible personality structure that shows a larger willingness to compromise and an increased moral standard. Due to some welfare-state allowance and under the protection of the prevailing collective identification with outsiders, a rather small group of predominantly young people had succeeded in resisting the pressures of the prevailing social network of interdependencies. On this basis, they were able to develop an illusion of autonomy or independence: 'without having to resign themselves to authoritarian relationships, they retained the prospect of material welfare and an equal chance to take part in leisure activities' (Franke 1994: 92,3). For them, the benefits from welfare state arrangements had come to be taken for granted and had resulted in both the 'equanimity' and the 'quest for

risks' of such a state, but still without a corresponding extension of group-identification and feelings of responsibility for its functioning (cf. Hirschi 1969). The poster was symptomatic of the short transitional phase in which a prevailing identification with outsiders changed towards an identification with the established, a time in which the shock of the budget cuts together with the demands of highly integrated societies began to sink in. The poster marked the end of an era; when it appeared, it was already almost an anachronism and a comparable kind of resistance to authorities (including conscience: to 'steal deliberately' is to do it consciously) in a public threat of shoplifting, was never repeated.¹² This response to budget cuts, furnished with Marxian and religious phrases in an attempt to 'legitimize' the appeal to illegal activity, shows that the increased level of social integration via the arrangements of the welfare state was not met on the level of psychological integration. The latter process went at a slower pace and lagged behind.

My argument is that these differences in pace and level of the processes of social integration and psychic integration, in combination with the risks inherent in the development of a 'third nature', present an additional explanation of the rising crime rates. Together, they help to explain why crimes increased *in all classes and in all Western states*, and stabilized at a relatively high level.

EPILOGUE: A SKETCH OF DIFFERENTIATIONS WITHIN THE POPULATION

In the individual transitional phase of becoming adults, young people were, of course, particularly vulnerable to the dangers of growing up in this period of social transition. At a time when the demands of their highly-integrated societies had not yet sunk in deeply, they had to learn to follow the directions of morality and conscience less automatically than previous generations. Whether their attempt turned out to be more or less successful will have varied with the type of family regime in which they were raised. In the social and psychic integration process of growing up and preparing for adult positions, those raised in more tolerant (but not negligent) regimes will on the whole have been more adequately equipped to develop their personality in the direction of a 'third nature'. They stood a relatively good chance of confronting the general quest for risks and excitement, combining some involvement in this quest with living up to the demands of a less formalised society. In contrast, those young people who were raised in stricter family regimes, in which conscience-formation and development of sensitivities had been based more strongly upon the more direct social constraints of relatively authoritarian relationships, will have been more likely *either* to clam up and avoid further involvement in the quest for risks, clinging to older codes and lifestyles, *or* to run wild. For them, the transition from conscience to

consciousness - if I may use this shorthand expression - was much more problematic, fraught with more dangers and risks than they could cope with. If (young) people, *in addition* come from classes and families who also lag behind in economic, educational and social capital, their chances of overcoming the difficulties of lagging behind in psychic integration or 'personality capital' will have been further diminished. Then they will be more likely to fall into circumstances and circles in which they give in to the temptation of doing some of the things called crime. The same goes for the other groups who, somewhat later, came to be disproportionately represented in the crime rates: the unemployed and immigrants or citizens of foreign background. As a rule, both are short in economic, educational and social capital, while immigrants in addition usually come from families and countries in which rather strict regimes prevail, which makes them also lag behind in 'personality capital'.

Immigrants, young and unemployed people all have in common that they are members of relative outsider groups whose integration into a society, in which they are regularly looked down upon, is all the more difficult if they also lag behind in 'personality capital'. They most probably do lag behind if they come from countries in which in the balance between internal and external social controls, external and superego-controls prevail. In those cases, they will have developed a pattern of self-controls that is more dependent upon external social controls, which usually also means that the power of their 'automatic counter-impulses', of a conscience functioning as 'second nature', is relatively weak. If people with this type of personality make-up have to integrate into a society in which the level of mutually expected self-restraints has risen in the direction of a 'third nature', the dykes of their 'counter-impulses' may turn out to be full of breaches (cf. Kapteyn 1985,1989).

This brief overview of differentiations within the population of a country could have been sketched more elaborately. At this point, however, it will suffice to corroborate the hypothesis of this paper. To summarise once more: the most general and at the same time least perceived source of the rise in crime is this change in the dominant type of personality structure: from Superego- or conscience-dominated to Ego-dominated, or, more specifically, the transition from more or less automatic repression of 'unacceptable' impulses, emotions and motives to allowing them into consciousness and public discussion. From this perspective, therefore, the increase in crime rates is a symptom of integration conflicts that were inherent in the processes of social and psychic integration. This explanation may correct some others - particularly those presupposing a decline in collective morality and/or which one-sidedly emphasize external social controls - but above all it supplements and qualifies all current explanations.

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NOTES

1. The use of violence in crime has, however, only increased since the 1970s. Until then, 'the magnitude of violent crime in Dutch society remained practically the same. The number of incidents of assault almost certainly even decreased' (Franke 1994: 86). With regard to violent crime, 'much points to the fact that developments have diverged which, until the 1970s, were

convergent. ... it would seem that '*instrumental violence* (violence that is used to acquire money and property illegally) and the threat thereof has increased while *impulsive violence* (the use of violence in daily intercourse between people, solving their emotional and social problems, both in public life and private) continues to decrease or has become stable' (Franke 1994: 90,91).

2. In recent years, police statistics in the Netherlands have showed a decline in crime rates and the victim surveys of 1996 even reported a substantial decline in the crimes that occur most often. The number of registered crimes in 1996 was 1,16 million (CBS 1997).
3. Cf.: 'the structure of fears and anxieties is nothing other than the psychological counterpart of the constraints which people exert on one another through the intertwining of their activities' (Elias 1994: 519).
4. This is not to suggest that stricter social controls are the *cause* of the decline in the rise of crime rates. The change in social climate may explain both changes; an indication for this view can be found in the following words of a Dutch judge, who is reported in 1986 to have said: 'Today, punishments are more harsh than ten, five years ago. I've noticed it in myself... I myself also rule heavier sentences. Yet, I never made any decision to do so, nor did the members of my court ever discuss the subject. It just happened' (Reve 1995: 195/6).
5. Trends toward formalization and informalization are likely to have been operative throughout history; there will have always been groups trying to enforce formal rules, and others trying to resist them or evade them. If one such group has a winning streak for any length of time, a corresponding phase of formalization or informalization will be dominant. In the long run, too, one of these trends may be stronger than the other, corresponding to long-term phases of formalization or informalization. Particularly in the long-term process of informalization, established groups and conservative influences again and again have interpreted the process in terms of moral decay, communal loss and psychic imbalance (Pearson 1985)
6. The German sociologist Waldhoff has suggested that Elias's use of the term 'self-constraints' predominantly refers to 'Superego'-constraints and that his concept of the *homo clausus* in most cases refers to a 'Superego'-dominated type of personality.
7. In 1937, Emily Post added a new paragraph to her well-known American etiquette book (only to take it out again in the 1950-edition). It was called 'When Young Women Are Not Particular' and it contained serious warnings against the 'quest for excitement': 'Continuous pursuit of thrill and consequent craving for greater and greater excitement gradually produces the same result as that which a drug produces in an addict; or, to change the metaphor, promiscuous crowding and shoving, petting and cuddling have the same cheapening effect as that produced on merchandise which has through constant handling become faded and rumpled, smudged or frayed and thrown out on the bargain counter in a marked-down lot' (Post 1937: 355).
8. Since the uniting of Germany, many artists from former East Germany have expressed the (nostalgic) feeling that under the new conditions they are met mostly with indifference, whereas they were taken much more seriously under the old regime. A statement like 'Of course, a dictatorship is more colourful than a democracy' (Heiner Müller) expresses a similar nostalgia.
9. The moral discussion about the MTV figures of Beavis and Butt-Head, for instance, demonstrates that some of the demands of self-regulation, characteristic of informalised societies, are demonstrated in a taken-for-granted way by the MTV watching youngsters.
10. '...the prohibition of intoxicants has a multiplier-effect on criminal organizations who can operate from a (semi) monopoly position - even free from taxation. All police activities to

suppress the illegal trade, in fact stimulate illegal suppliers to increase their scale of production and to cooperate on a supra-local, and even an international level' (Gerritsen 1993: 258).

11. Elsewhere, this feeling sequence is specified as one of four regularities in all processes of integration and civilisation (Wouters 1997).

12. The poster I succeeded in peeling off had a cross all over it and contained the following additional text in handwriting: 'Bullshit. Who do you think you are. We work hard for it and you steal it, you bunch of assholes.'