Developments in the Behavioural Codes between the Sexes: The Formalization of Informalization in the Netherlands, 1930-85

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This article is about changes in dominant modes of social conduct, particularly involving relationships between the sexes. Changes in behavioural codes and ideals were noted in the course of a comparative analysis of etiquette books published in the Netherlands from 1930 to 1985. There was a gap of approximately thirteen years (1966-79) during which, with one exception, no books on this subject were published. There was, however, an upsurge of books on liberation and self-realization, coupled with a relative loosening of behavioural codes and ideals. Since the start of the 1980s, there appears to have been a tightening of these codes and ideals, both as regards relationships between men and women and in general.

These changes are presented as developments in the sense of informalization and formalization, aspects of civilizing processes. The article commences with a short elaboration upon the concepts of informalization and formalization, goes on to present the results of the comparative analysis of the etiquette books, and concludes that nowadays a (re)formalization of preceding informalization is taking place, a stage in the long-term process of informalization.

This article is an attempt to deduce from books on Dutch etiquette the recent changes that have taken place in behavioural codes and ideals, particularly between men and women, and to interpret and explain them. On the basis of a comparison between the older and the more recent books published during the period studied (1930-85), certain structural changes have been noted and documented: a development that can be viewed as the standardization or formalization of the precious informalization. It can be assumed that similar developments will probably also have taken place in other Western countries.

Informalization is a process in which dominant modes of social conduct, symbolizing institutionalized power relationships, tend towards greater leniency, variety and differentiation (Wouters 1977, 1986). In the course of informalization processes, upwardly mobile groups violate the dominant code of conduct. Consequently their behavioural alternatives increase, as subsequently do those of the established groups as well, if and when they (are forced to) abandon their defensive attitude. In the same process by which relative outsiders succeed in reducing the inequality in their relations with their superiors, the dominant code of conduct - expressing the power relations - becomes less distinguishing and less distinguished.

Waves of informalization are part of more comprehensive processes of democratization and social equalization. Striking waves of informalization took place around the turn of the century, in the 'roaring twenties' and in the sixties and seventies. The most recent era of informalization ended in the late seventies. Certain informalization offshoots did perhaps remain operative in the lower classes, but generally speaking after that date it was a *formalization process* that gained the upper hand, with the dominant modes of social conduct tending towards greater strictness, hierarchy and consensus. One symptom of this change has been the publication of new books on manners and etiquette. The fact that there is a market for these books indicates the desire on the part of readers to find new bearings in a changed and changing world. The demand is sizeable; in the Netherlands, *Zo Hoort Het Nu* (This is How It Is Done Today) alone sold more than 25,000 copies in 1984.

The comparison presented here between older and newer etiquette books will illustrate the contours of the present-day formalization process.

Three Stages

Three stages can be distinguished in the period from 1930 to 1985. They will be dealt with in three separate sections outlined as follows.

1. From the end of the 'roaring twenties' up to the middle of the sixties, a large number of etiquette books were printed in the Netherlands and some of them were reprinted again and again. The most well-known book was published in 1939 and was called *Hoe hoort het eigenlijk?* (What's the Right Way?). The thirteenth edition came out in 1966. Generations of men and women, particularly in the bourgeoisie, consulted these books. The degree to which people actually lived up to their rules is not something that can be concluded from their contents, though the contents do make it clear what a dominant segment of the population viewed as being proper manners and desirable deportment: the behavioural codes and, more important, the *behavioural ideals.*

2. In the period from 1966 to 1979, only one of these manner books was reprinted and only one new book was published.[1] So there was a gap between the old etiquette books and the new ones, and this was when quite a different type of book flourished - the liberation and self-actualization literature. There was a vast assortment of manuals about how to acquire respect and self-respect, with new behavioural ideals. Books in the *I'm 0. K., You're 0. K.* - genre were popular. This type of book stimulated emancipation and informalization and seemed, in the first instance, to be written for people who were (becoming) equals.

3. In 1979, an unrevised fourteenth edition was printed of *Hoe hoort het eigenlijk?* (What's the Right Way?), but it wasn't until the eighties that there was a clear revival of the interest in etiquette. From 1982 to the end of the period studied (January 1985), no fewer than nine new etiquette books were published in the Netherlands. They are all cited here as references.

A. Thea Kranenburg, *Etiquette. Hoe hoort het nu eigenlijk ... ?* (Etiquette. What's the Right Way Today ... ?), Amersfoort, 1982.

B. Netty Bakker-Engelsman, *Etiquette in de jaren '80* (Etiquette in the Eighties), Utrecht, 1983.

C. Inez van Eijk, *Etiquette Vandaag* (Etiquette Today), Utrecht/Antwerp, 1983.

D. H. Görz, *Moderne Omgangsvormen. Etiquette voor jong en oud* (Modern Manners. Etiquette for All Ages), Antwerp/Bussum, 1983 (translated from German into Dutch).

E. Amy Groskamp-ten Have, *Hoe hoort het eigenlijk?* (What's the Right Way?), completely revised by Maja Krans and Wia Post, Amsterdam, 1983, second edition 1984.

F. Frans Grosveld (ed.), *Zo hoort het nu. Etiquette voor de jaren tachtig* (This Is How It Is Done Today. Etiquette for the Eighties), Amsterdam/Brussels, 1983, second and third editions 1984.

G. H.F. van Loon, *Goede Manieren. Hoe Hoort Het Nu* (Good Manners. This is How It Is Done Today), Amsterdam, 1983.

H. Heleen van Nulandt, 100 *Vragen over Omgangsvormen (100* Questions about Etiquette), Utrecht/Antwerp, 1983.

1. H.P.M. van den Hout, M.A., *Omgangsvormen* (Etiquette), Rijswijk, 1982. This book was written as a textbook for students at Schoevers Institute, the largest secretarial school with branches throughout the Netherlands.

The propagation of emancipation and informalization would not seem to have been the aim of these books. In one of them, for example, there is a chapter entitled 'The Woman Has to Become A Woman Again' (G77)[2] and in their forewords some of the authors give the impression of yearning for the formal rules of yore: 'I enjoy courtesy and the ways it is expressed. I still always like my husband not to get into the car before he has opened the door on my side and let me in' (B7).

This author writes that her aim in mind is'. . . to write a book that shows how things should be done in the eighties. What the *formal* etiquette is, what the rules say' (B8). Sometimes there is even a menacing tone to the foreword:

> Unlike the legal world, the social world has no coercive measures to put people   on the right track and keep them there. But society does see to it that anyone who does not adhere to the proper rules of conduct - whether due to ignorance, a lack of understanding or even unwillingness - puts himself outside the social borders. He is out of the running, he barely counts any more. (E5)

The yearning expressed here for the more formal, stricter codes and ideals of the old manuals of correct behaviour will be shown here to be one aspect of a conflict taking place on two levels, *between* individuals and *within* them.

Behaviour between Men and Women: Codes and Ideals 1930-66

In *Vrouwen in Tweestrijd* (Women in Two Minds), Van Stolk and I have described the ideal presented in the marriage manuals of the period from 1930 to 1966 as a figuration-ideal of harmonious inequality (Van Stolk and Wouters, 1983; esp 152-70). That ideal held that women were subservient to men, but their subservience was counterbalanced by the socially acknowledged expectations their husbands had to meet, as well as by the possibility for women of satisfying a *me-ideal* as wives. A woman's belief in this me-ideal not only counterbalanced her subservience to her husband, but also obscured it.

There was a *you-ideal* as husband attached to the me-ideal as wife. As head of the family, he had to amiably make the decisions and provide physical protection and material support, while she backed him with loving devotion. The me-ideal and the youideal that emerge from numerous quotations in 'Women in Two Minds' not only fit together, they presuppose each other. The husband could not be the leader, provider and protector if the wife did not willingly care for him, while he took care of her and vice versa. The two ideals are complementary and together they constitute one interaction ideal, a *figuration ideal of harmonious inequality*. We introduced this concept in order to emphasize the fact that starting in early childhood, the me-ideal and you-ideal were both internalized in one and the same pattern of mutual dependence.

From the thirties to the sixties, there was very little change in the tenor of the etiquette and advisory books we studied. Even the female authors, who were in the majority, stressed the subservience of women and thus recommended a resigned, forgiving and humble attitude towards male superiority. Sometimes women were out rightly cautioned about what would happen if they went too far or refused to back down and compromise: 'In every husband, a tiny tyrant lies dormant. Do not do anything to arouse that unpleasant dictator' (Le Bourg, 1950: 36). The author, a woman, then went on to advise her readers how to deal with this kind of situation. For example: 'Learn the art of disarming him with a few sweet words with a kiss, with a facial expression of almost comical defeat ... (Le Bourg, 1950: 39).

Books like this served as manuals for relations of harmonious inequality, i.e. for the type of subservience that was apt to be repaid with protection and respect. The study of these books demonstrated that the behavioural codes for interaction between men and women were mainly based on the complementary functions they fulfilled for each other. In return for the protection from violence, poverty and status loss that men gave women, women gave men the right to their care and sexuality. Any tendency to change these codes met with disapproval: 'Among the young people of today, there are those who tacitly accept it if a lady pays for herself and sometimes for her escort as well, but a cultured gentleman will not tolerate this' (Groskamp-ten Have, 1939: 51).[3] In public and outside of the matrimonial situation, relations between men and women were also based on the leadership of men and their protection of women's bodies, possessions and reputations. (These relations could be analysed using the complementary concepts of a *we-ideal* and a *they-ideal.)*

The figuration-ideal of harmonious inequality also manifested itself in the *dances* popular at the time: the man led, the woman followed, and together they created harmonious figures. Each movement on his part presupposed one on her part and vice versa.

The Gap in Etiquette Books:
The Most Recent Wave of Informalization
As everyone knows, a wide range of emancipation and informalization movements came to the fore in the sixties. More and more men as well as women grew aware of the inequality in their relations with each other, and for many of them it became increasingly difficult to imagine how a relationship of inequality could possibly be harmonious. There was less and less acceptance or even tolerance of the figuration ideal of harmonious inequality. The question of the 'right way' was soon replaced by the question of how to treat each other as equals. In the self-actualization and emancipation literature, new codes of conduct and new ideals were formulated, which seemed to provide an answer to the new question. Starting in the mid-sixties, this literature was also studied at the schools of social work and the universities of the Netherlands. In this sense, the question of 'good manners' and the 'right way' was discussed in -the centres of the social sciences and caring professions, although in different jargon. At the time, the problems of physical safety and material security seemed to have been solved to an extent that social emancipation, and personal growth could become the targets of public interest. This interest was intensified by the fact that the more material security seemed to be guaranteed, and the more 'the equanimity of the welfare state' became established immaterial anxieties arose: doubts about the quality of life, uncertainty about personal relations and insecurity about psychological well-being (see van Stolk and Wouters, 1983: 74-91; van Stolk and Wouters, 1984). Emancipation literature even became so popular that, as an outgrowth, a new academic discipline flourished in the Netherlands; it was called *androgologie,* which was even recognized as an independent branch of study at some universities. The main raison d'être of this adult educational theory was the claim that it could transform the knowledge acquired by the social sciences into practical and comprehensible recommendations for a better society. Just about the time when etiquette books came back into fashion, however, *androgologie* was closed down as an independent branch of study.

The Newest Codes and Ideals of Conduct between the Sexes, 1979-85

An examination of the newer etiquette books makes it clear what a touchy topic relations between men and women still are. Most of the authors explicitly cites the man-woman relation as a problem. altogether. They do so in various ways. In her introduction, one of the authors explicitly cites the man-women relation as a problem. 'What should be said, what shouldn't', she wonders, but this question appears to be mainly rhetorical; she continues to be evasive. Only three authors (F, G and 1) go to any trouble to provide a well-founded integration of the old and new codes of conduct between the sexes. With one exception (A), who totally avoids the whole topic, the other authors nevertheless give adequate indications of where they stand in these matters. An extreme and telling solution is that of one author (C) who eliminates any distinction between men and women except in cases where to make the distinction is obviously no problem, for instance in remarks about clothing. She consistently refers to her readers as an asexual 'you'. In her book, 'you' very frequently appears to be a single (in the sense of unmarried) person. Even in the chapter entitled 'At home', only one mention is made of the possibility of some other person also living there:

> If you receive guests together, you can decide beforehand who is going to do what. It used to be common practice among married couples for the husband to pour the drinks, slice the meat and carve the game and poultry. Now that this role division is no longer as rigid, it does not matter who does things, as long as someone does. (C94)

H.F. van Loon (G) writes three chapters about male-female relations that betray traces of the old double standard, particularly in his advice to married men and women. The husband, for example, should not flirt 'in her presence', and the wife should not go to sleep before making up after a quarrel, since it is usually too hard for men 'to be the first to take a step towards reconciliation' (G87). The author implicitly explains his effort to restore the old figuration-ideal of harmonious inequality as follows:

> On the one hand she is becoming more and more equal, if not already completely so. On the other hand the man, deep in his heart, still wants to be a little more equal than the woman, and likes to be the leader, the protector, and the main bread-winner. (G77)

He goes on to reason that 'men ... still view her as being subservient', which is why she should accept male protection once more and should 'remain a woman or become one again' (G69). But even in the work of this author, clear signs of women's emancipation are evident, as in the following passage:

> Everything a man can say to another man he can also say to a woman.... Conversation nowadays is completely straightforward - and I can hardly imagine any topic or any word that would now be really taboo in the presence of women. (G80)

Van den Hout (I) also deals rather extensively with modes of conduct between the sexes. Here the conflict, among and within individuals as mentioned above, is evident, for instance, in the acknowledgement that 'many a modern woman views the small courtesies on the part of a man as something that maintains the inequality between the sexes', in combination with the statement that courtesies 'are always appreciated if they take place as a natural matter of course' (I22). According to Van den Hout, however, courtesy of this type is no longer as widespread as it used to be: 'Now that men and women hold equal positions in society and the emancipation of women has become reality, it can no longer be expected as a matter of course that men should get up (in trains, buses or streetcars) to offer women their seat.' (I24) At work, courtesy has become the

exception rather than the rule because 'The firm brings men and women together in an *equal* role as workers and colleagues' (I70), which is why the author objects to 'the assumption that women should always do the *little things* that have traditionally been their task ... such as making coffee and putting papers on other people's desks.' (I71)

Frans Grosveld et al. (F) work from an assumption that fits into a long tradition of etiquette books. Their book 'tries to make it clear what is commonly accepted in interpersonal conduct, what has been discarded as useless, and what is still in the process of coming into fashion'. After summing up some important recent social changes, they conclude that, 'In a society like this, you can no longer really say how things should be done, but only how they *are* done - and why.... Instead of fixed rules of etiquette, we now need flexible *guidelines* that everyone should be able to interpret depending on the situation.' (F6)

All that the book tries to do is to show what is common practice among 'well-bred' people in the eighties:

> The authors began their study by drawing a comparison between the classical rules of etiquette and the opinions of training institutes in this field, the practical experience of specialists on the 'front line' and of other modern people who live in good harmony with the world around them. Their ideas were surprisingly parallel. There is thus a new consensus ... (F7)

The authors are not only familiar with contemporary modes of conduct, but also with their history. Traces of the work of Norbert Elias can be noted: in dealing with the history of modes of conduct, the authors specify two 'primal principles', the principle of 'subservience' which they date back to before court society - when the 'rivaling and frequently rebellious knights (were) transformed into a more or less homogeneous and mainly submissive court nobility' - and the primal principle of 'the late medieval court: "mutual consideration"'. The authors then go on to describe a new principle that has come into existence 'in a society that honours the equality of all human beings ... *: the* ability to react properly to a wide variety of changing situations in a society that is no longer static and uniform' (F10/11).

The new principle of sensitivity to situations as a means of determining proper conduct is elaborated upon in a number of ways:

> In daily practice, the use of the informal or formal word for 'you' is thus no longer as much a question of distinctions between individuals (man/woman, older/ younger, higher/lower) as it is of distinctions between situations (formal/ informal, business/personal, public/private). A development from altimeter to planimeter. (F50)

At the end of the book, the authors write by way of conclusion:

> ... in order to feel comfortable with the etiquette of the eighties, all we really need is just one thing. It is the capacity, without forcing ourselves, to have understanding for other people in the most widely divergent situations, based on essential respect for whoever the other person might be. (F347)

Grosveld et al. also present a synthesis of the old, traditional modes of conduct and their informalized versions with respect to relations between men and women:

> Nowadays modem women stand up when they are introduced to someone, just as men do, although officially women can remain seated if they prefer. They do not even have to extend a hand ... but can make do with a nod of the bead. However, even the sweetest nod is now viewed as being very aloof and cool, and the other person thinks: why doesn't she

shake my hand? Am I not good enough? So it can seem impolite and that is why as women we stand up and shake hands. (F32)

Under the heading 'Women in the Armed Services', the following advice is given: 'In the military as well as the civilian world, the woman's right to a career of her own has become a part of everyday life, though she retains her right to some extra courtesy if she so pleases' (F86).

The Comparison between Old and New Etiquette Books

The way men and women behave towards each other was and is a touchstone of society's status hierarchy and a criterion of civilization. More attention was devoted to this interaction in the older etiquette books than in the more recent ones. No matter how evasive and sometimes even contradictory the newer etiquette books might be, the comparison with the older ones still clearly reveals a number of interconnected changes.

1. A first difference does not pertain as much to the tone of the new etiquette books (which is sometimes just as categorical and strict) as it does to the fact that the tone is accompanied by an almost casually formulated tolerance. One introduction notes that there is a good chance that the younger generation will have the following reaction to some of the rules of etiquette: 'That might be the done thing, but this is how we do it! ... Of course that is everyone's right' (B8). There were no such *escape clauses* in the older etiquette books, and they undeniably bear witness to a double standard of the authors, an inner conflict.

2. A second change pertains to the new etiquette's *differentiation of relations and situations,* a development most clearly formulated and elaborated upon by Grosveld et al. As has been noted already, they make every effort to provide 'flexible guidelines that everyone should be able to interpret depending on the situation' - from altimeter to planimeter. The following example also clearly illustrates the differentiation of relations:

> Then we have the dinner party at home with friends or relatives or with the firm's managing director as the guest. The word 'or' might indicate a shift from strictly informal to somewhat more formal behaviour, depending on the relationship with the boss (or with some other special guest). (F223)

In most of the other books - sometimes merely in passing and sometimes very explicitly - this development towards more differentiated manners in accordance with the particular situation or type of relation can be traced. General rules of etiquette are increasingly marked by delicate differences in their shades of meaning, turning as they have into guidelines differentiated according to the demands of the situation and relationship. The authors bear witness to this development as follows:

> Modes of conduct ... have become more difficult to formulate in 'rules' and often depend on the circumstances. (H15)

> Unfortunately cut-and-dried answers cannot always be given. Sometimes one has to apply one's own norms and ask oneself in which situation one would feel most comfortable. (C7)

> But giving examples is still risky. Here again, everything depends on the occasion, the environment and the situation. And what might be witty in one person can become coarse in another. (E85)

3. In connection with the increased differentiation of situations, there is also a growing *awareness of the changeability* of etiquette. This manifests itself in the very titles and subtitles of the new manner and etiquette books. Here are two further examples of this growing awareness:

> A woman just should not give a man a light. Perhaps this custom could have changed in the course of time, but it didn't. (E155)

> Our society changes from one generation to the next, and what used to be the epitome of politeness is now totally outdated.... And perhaps our grandchildren will laugh about certain customs of today. (D7)

4. The decrease in the power differences between the various social classes and groups has been accompanied by a diminution in behavioural, emotional and moral contrasts, a *process of social equalization,* also pertaining to the way men and women behave towards each other:

> It is more frequently possible for a woman to be and to remain relatively independent. If she has a job herself, then - assuming she doesn't prefer to sponge on someone else -she will like being able to pay her own bills so that she is free in her relations to others. (E54)

When rounds of drinks are ordered in a pub, no one is exempt from the obligation to take turns in footing the bill: 'That has nothing to do with being a man or being a woman, but with sponging' (F17 1). If a guest has had too much to drink: 'Make a bed for the person and if need be, inform the *partner* waiting at home - or call a taxi' (E35).

5. An important difference between the old and the new etiquette books is the *individualization* -'to apply one's own norms' - to be traced repeatedly in the books of virtually all the authors:

> With increasing frequency, people introduce themselves. This holds true for women as well as men. (E269)

> On amorous affairs at the office: ... soberly consider the growth of such an affair, accepting in principle that the people concerned should know for themselves what they are doing. (172)

> . . . all the more since nowadays people no longer want to be held responsible if any relative of theirs makes a faux *pas. (G* 135)

> It used to be the task of 'the attentive hostess or host, whatever the case may be' to see to it that everyone had a good time. Now that the host or hostess, besides being the much-appreciated organizer of a party, has become more a primus *inter pares,* a pleasant course of events depends much more on the entire group. And on each member of it individually. (F312)

When authors render an account of these individualized manners, they do so according to an old device, namely in terms of the traditional contrast between external and internal civilization. Once again, this bears witness to an increasing social constraint towards self-constraint: 'Whereas we used to be pleasant and polite because etiquette required it, now we are because we ourselves want to be!' (C37).

Someone who 'himself' wants to act in a certain way no longer feels as beholden to others or to external rules. Thus internal rules or self-constraint mask social constraint. Wanting to adhere to the rules of one's own accord implies a higher level of self-constraint. Individuals who have brought those codes under

their own control can observe them more flexibly, smoothly and subtly, thus concealing from themselves and others any hint of unevenness in the power balances of their relationships. In the course of the most recent period of informalization, overt references to these matters or to status differences and status anxiety have increasingly come to be experienced as painful. In order to minimize the perception of social constraint, self-constraint has to be highly flexible and operate virtually automatically. At any rate this is the prerequisite for what Grosveld et al. refer to as '. . . the capacity, *without forcing ourselves*, to have understanding for other people in the most widely divergent situations . . .' (F347). This capacity also indicates an increase in the required degree of identification of people with each other, and thus a higher level of integration in the delicate tension balance between (ideals of) individuality and solidarity.

These five changes are all interconnected, a cohesion that manifests itself in broader developmental processes, two of which are dealt with in the following sections.

From Male Protection to Self-Protection

Every recent etiquette book makes some mention of women' newly established independence. This is new. 'The weaker sex' has grown stronger and accordingly this expression is no longer used. These changes are also evident from passages about work. In the old books, it was noted that: 'There is nothing against a woman being 100 per cent woman, but if a businesswoman is to succeed, she will have to be more than specifically feminine' (Groskamp-ten Have, 1939: 313; 1966: 328). It can be deduced from this quote that in the work situation, the '100 per cent woman' would be very soon subjected to male protection. In the more recent books, there is no trace of this attitude, and there are matter-of-fact remarks like these:

> More and more women do the kind of work that used to belong to an hermetically closed men's world. (F344)

> Just like a female colleague at work, a female colleague in a sport is an *equal.* (F187) (Though it did have to be italicized.)

> More and more women want to have a professional career in much the same way men do. The existing social and legal facilities have not yet been completely adapted to this new situation. (176)

Greater equality in power chances for men and women is evident from women's greater degree of self-protection, replacing the male protection they used to depend on. Accordingly, in the new etiquette books, for the first time passages are included about how women themselves can ward off unwelcome advances. Women are advised not to hesitate to speak up for themselves and fight back:

> At any rate she should let him know from the very beginning that she doesn't like it. If he makes an indecent gesture ... Slap his face. (G82)

> ... Repeat what he has said loud and clear: 'Oh, so you want...'. (F48)

> However ... level-headedly or critically raising one's eyebrows is frequently sufficient ... (173)

Increased equality also implies less passivity on the part of women when it comes to welcome advances. Nowadays women introduce themselves to a man even though some of the authors do express a preference for the old way, being

introduced by someone else: 'A girl or woman who would like to become acquainted with a certain person would do well to do it the official way, especially if that certain person is a nice man' (B13). The following advice is less formal:

> If there is no opportunity for you to get into a conversation with someone in an inconspicuous way that does not seem forced, perhaps the best thing would be to simply walk up to him/her and say you would like to make his/her acquaintance .... (CI62)

After several examples of how one might do this, the sound of individualization is heard again in the following lamentation: 'It is difficult to give advice, since it is largely you yourself who will have to decide which way of "getting acquainted" suits you best' (C162). Where once behavioural codes and ideals based on male protection determined the possibilities and limits of relationships between the sexes, today men and women are invited and compelled to negotiate[4] - with themselves and each other - the borders of each individual's private territory or (right to) privacy and about the balance between formal and informal, between aloof and intimate. The increased social constraint to determine these borders and balance in the arena of negotiation processes has placed a higher social value on such negotiative qualities as subtlety, sensitivity, flexibility, tact and diplomacy, all depending on the level of identification with others. The lack of abilities of this kind, evident in opening lines like 'Don't we know each other from somewhere? Your face looks so familiar . . .' or 'What an unusual pin you are wearing, you must have been in India' (C162), is rejected as 'transparent pretext' and 'pretentious'.

All these changes are so many illustrations of the extent to which women today protect and guide themselves. Nowadays, according to the behavioural codes and ideals, women walk up and make themselves acquainted with whoever they like, just as they reject the advances they don't like. Their right to a career of their own has been acknowledged, the 'hermetically closed men's world 'has been opened up, and there are no words or topics that are not used and discussed in their presence. Their appreciation of the protection men traditionally offered them has been reduced even further as a result of the introduction of a wide range of welfare arrangements, a process in which the state has come to fulfil protecting functions. The relatively generous social security system (Algemene Bijstandswet, 1965) and the simplification of the legal procedure for divorce - in combination with a sharp decline in the loss of status involved - have both offered women in welfare states like the Netherlands a kind of protection they were previously dependent on their husband or parents for. So in relation to women, men have come to be placed in a competitive position with the welfare state (van Stolk and Wouters, 1983, 1984).

At the same time, the new etiquette books make it clear that the old figuration-ideal of harmonious inequality has regained some of its attractiveness and, elsewhere as well, it is being more openly propagated again. But even though the behavioural codes and ideals formulated in the books exhibit clearer features of harmonious inequality, they still allow for more flexibility and more variations compared with the shibboleths of the period from 1930 to 1966. The tension now comes more from spontaneous improvisations and less from power inequality.

Like the traditional standards, the contemporary behavioural codes and ideals are also reflected in dances. In modern individualized dances, each individual tries to adjust his or her movements to the music as well as to those of the partner. The dancers follow less of a set pattern, their movements are more informal and more varied. It is less easy to see who is leading and who is

following, and it is less predictable. Different shades and gradations of leading and following are possible. If the two partners are well-matched, there can very well be moments when all the separate, loose movements nevertheless seem to flow together into joint harmonious figures. This would seem to be the lofty ideal of individualized dancing, and it visually expresses the most recent figuration ideal of harmonious interaction between the sexes.

From Social Distance to Privacy

The developments referred to in the previous section, such as the simplification of legal divorce proceedings, the rise in prosperity and the distribution of this prosperity via the social facilities of the welfare state, all help to explain the shifts in the power balance between the sexes, but not sufficiently. In this section, attention will be focused on two other developments that were necessary conditions for the changes in the interaction between the sexes: the rise in the level of affect control and self-regulation and in the level of identification with each other.

Here the rise in these two levels has been deduced from social changes in the direction of a diminution of the social distance between superiors and inferiors, older and younger people, men and women. Since transgressions of the social dividing-lines generate the fear of losing one's (self-)control, this process has gone hand in hand with a growing ability to cope with these fears (Wouters, 1986). Changes in the prescribed behavioural codes also show that people have come to identify more strongly with each other and have developed greater sensitivity and flexibility, qualities that have come to be more - and more clearly - required in all social interaction. It is mainly on this basis that the success of the moral appeal of women (through the women's movements) to the conscience and behaviour of men can be explained. These developments in affect control and mutual identification will be illustrated here with the example of the rise of the need for privacy.

The concept of privacy was not mentioned at all in the old etiquette books, though it is highly praised in most of the new ones:

> Loneliness is something very abominable, but there is perhaps one thing that is even worse: the lack of privacy. (E193)

> In as far as it is within our capacity, we should not begrudge them [people who want to be alone] their right to privacy and should make it possible for them. Parents should also respect their children's right to be alone and, if possible, create the conditions for it. (B162)

The closest the old etiquette books came to broaching the subject of privacy was to write about 'The Art of Shunning and Excluding' (Van Zutphen van Dedem, 1928: 150) and 'Keeping One's Distance' (Groskamp-ten Have, 1939: 25). No mention of these skills is made in the new etiquette books.

Keeping one's distance mainly referred to dealing with subordinates. They were kept at as much of a distance as possible, just as persons of lower social rank were to be shunned or avoided as much as possible, graciously or otherwise. To refrain from doing so was called 'to stoop' or 'to consort with'. From the first to the twelfth edition (1939-57), the best known Dutch etiquette book had it that:

> Under all conditions, we would do well to keep some distance. Keeping one's distance means avoiding excessive familiarity. We all know that there is such a thing as excessive familiarity with subordinates, but ... is there such as thing as excessive familiarity with our friends and relatives?

Yes! (Groskamp-ten Have, 1939: 26)[5]

Failing to keep a proper distance was thought to endanger the 'safety' and 'good harmony' of social life. It was direct references like these to social traffic and to the status hierarchy it entailed that were later overshadowed when the concept of privacy came into fashion. Nowadays the right to privacy is explained as being rooted in an altogether human, universal psychological need, and is legitimized as such.

In one's intimate circle of friends and relatives, something similar has also taken place. In this circle, not keeping the proper distance used to be called 'letting yourself go' and was reproached as follows:

> Anyone who gets too close to us sees too much, too much of the petty, too much of the not so nice side of us, and the glimpse that we thus give others into our innermost regions can be a surprisingly unpleasant one that can never ever be eradicated. (Groskamp-ten Have, 1939: 27)[6]

These words of caution against excessive familiarity and insufficient distance not only indicate the existence of status anxieties but also of the fears people have of themselves, 'self-anxieties'. With the help of inhibited, aloof, formal behaviour, people keep their 'not so nice' and dangerous impulses and emotions under control by constraining them for themselves as well as for others. This pattern of affect control is in keeping with the strong emphasis on the dangers entailed by revealing one's inner self, one's secret anxieties and fantasies: the fear of 'falling', of losing respect and self-respect. In the course of the processes of 'psychologization' and 'intimization' that took place during the most recent period of informalization, these dangers have faded and been brought under individual control. Examples of increased social familiarity and intimacy are:

> We do an awful lot of kissing nowadays. Much more frequently and much more easily than we used to. (E175)

> Nowadays the daily contact among male and female colleagues has become much freer and less constrained. (D133)

People now feel free to think and talk about much more of what is going on inside them than was once the case, and the old way of keeping one's distance no longer seems 'natural' but 'forced' or 'constrained'. The taboo[7] on exchanging intimacies has weakened as people have gained more individual control over the fears and dangers connected with these exchanges. Many of the fears and fantasies that people were initially not even willing to admit to themselves were first covertly and then increasingly overtly exchanged with others, thereby losing their threatening character. They were acknowledged as part of the collective pattern of affects and thus gave less rise to stigmatization. The feeling of being connected by one and the same fate, this identification of people with each other, has increased in the most recent period of informalization under the pressure of growing social interdependencies. There has been a rise in Mutually Expected Self-restraint (MES),[8] a growing expectation that people should no longer constrain their 'petty' and dangerous feelings in accordance with the old formal patterns, but should be capable of subtly restraining or channelling them, depending on the situation and the relations between the persons involved: 'controlled decontrolling of emotional controls'.[9]

The more people pressure each other into greater and yet 'free and easy' familiarity and intimacy, the greater the social constraint towards self-constraint

has become and this greater, more extensive and more permanent pressure explains the development from 'distance' to 'privacy'. In the intensified pressures that people exert on themselves and others in order to meet with the required level of mutually expected self-restraint (MES), is rooted the desire to feel free of these pressures every so often, to be alone for a while.

Without taking due note of these changes in affect control and in mutual identification, the alterations in the interaction between men and women can be only partially explained. In particular the 'moral incapacity' on the part of men to resist the higher demands women have been making of male-female relations would otherwise remain largely in the dark.

Conclusions

Changes in behavioural codes and ideals reflect changes in the power and dependence relations they are rooted in. Although the conflict between the old and the new modes of conduct is still going on - within individuals as well as among them - the comparison of old and new etiquette books has made it clear that at the present stage of formalization, many of the informalized aspects of behaviour from the previous stage are being incorporated into a tighter set of behavioural standards and, in this sense, are surviving in a formalized version. This holds true for behaviour in general as well as between men and women. Traces of earlier waves of informalization could similarly be found in the stages of formalization (cf. Elias, *1982: 311-17;* Wouters, *1986)* that followed them. The development as a whole appears to be a long-term process of informalization, whose contours have become increasingly visible ever since the turn of the century.

As has been clear from the work of Norbert Elias, ever since the Middle Ages a wide range of natural 'animalistic' acts such as eating, drinking and sleeping as well as the more primary impulses and emotions have become increasingly subjected to more - and more differentiated - regulations which have been standardized as 'good manners'. The dangers of social living, the chances of physical and psychological humiliation or annihilation have been subdued by a growing intertwining of social functions and interests. These changing relations of interdependence have been expressed in laws and other formal codes of behaviour or 'good manners'. This development can be viewed as a long-term process of formalization. Michael Schöter *(1985: 2)* was implicitly referring to this process when he said: 'Perhaps the present informalization is just bringing previous processes of formalization ... into the field of view.'

Reduced inequality of power chances will have always gone hand in hand with various types of informalization, some of them more conspicuous than others. But it has only been since the end of the nineteenth century that the hitherto dominant formalization - the more extensive, more detailed and stricter regulation of behaviour - would seem to have been overshadowed by a long-term process of informalization. So many people from all social classes attained such high levels of self-constraint and self-regulation that the social regulation of behaviour - the behavioural standard - could generally become more informal, more flexible and more differentiated. Up to now, the informalization waves of the twentieth century have been decisive in determining the direction of the civilizing process.

In the most recent period of informalization *(1966-79),* the circles of people from whom the prevailing behavioural codes and ideals were taken were apparently on the defensive, forced into that position by social strata undergoing emancipation. Once the latter came to be on the offensive, these segments of the

population found their ideals and future expectations not only expressed in the emancipation literature but also represented by social scientists and the social professions - in addition to artists and journalists - in centres where relatively large numbers of women are employed and have careers. More and more people were attracted at the time to the equality-oriented behaviour models exemplified by the people at these centres whereas, with or without the help of etiquette books, they had previously been much more attracted to the distinction-oriented examples set by leading figures at the centres of violence and money, the managerial and commercial centres. At this stage, the emancipation and self-actualization literature fulfilled the same function and probably had a similar social significance to that of the etiquette books in the past. In this we follow the reasoning of Horst-Volker Krumrey (1984: 24)

> that the large majority of the etiquette books were focused on the behavioural standards and sanctions of the social classes, segments and groups that had the social strength of a social establishment or 'good society'.

We can conclude that during the most recent period of informalization, the academic, artistic and social professional centres constituted a 'good-society', or at any rate had enough social strength to warrant the introduction of 'andragology' as an independent academic discipline.

Etiquette or manner books were waved aside at these centres as being handbooks for the perpetuation of social inequality and were viewed as being superficial, unsystematic and hypocritical. Once the stage of formalization got the upper hand, the balance within this conflict was also altered. Then representatives of the traditional 'good society', spokesmen of the commercial and managerial centres, increasingly and more publicly expressed derogatory feelings about the social 'would-be' sciences and professions or artists.

In this sense, the tension balance between the academic, artistic or social care centres and the commercial or managerial centres resembles the tension balance Elias described between the nobility and the bourgeois intelligentsia in eighteenth-century Germany. At the time there was a similar distinction between the 'depth (of feeling)', 'true virtue' and 'honesty' (of the bourgeois intelligentsia) and the 'superficiality', 'falsity', 'ceremony' and 'outward politeness' (of the nobility) (Elias, 1978: 16-29).

This tension balance is also related to the one between the more quantitative and the more qualitative problems of social living. In the most recent period of informalization, there was such an increase in physical safety and material security - solutions to quantitative problems of social living - that C. Wright Mills's (1970) prediction that 'the social sciences are becoming the common denominator of our cultural period' seemed to be coming true. There was a widespread process of secularization and a growing and differentiated public insistently reduced an increasing number of problems of social living to worldly problems of social arrangements. This precedent in the history of mankind led to great expectations for the future, particularly with respect to the social sciences, the professions and the arts.

The stagnation in the economy and the rise in unemployment lowered the level of these expectations for the future. The feeling of material security was shaken, the level of dangers and fears was heightened, and there was a concurrent rise in the interest and respect for businessmen and other commercial authorities. When the collective chances for upward mobility diminished, the attractive aura of the centres of the social sciences and professions and the arts also faded, as did the

ideal of equality articulated there. Without collective chances for upward mobility, in order to safeguard their standard of living and uphold their status, many people once again felt much more dependent on their immediate superiors and on the elites in the commercial and managerial centres. The values and decisions of these people were felt to be more decisive in determining their status and prospects for the future, which is why they now exerted greater effort to model their behaviour according to the codes of these commercial and managerial elites (which also explains the interest in 'yuppies' and in rich 'old families'). Their way of doing things was more widely accepted again as the proper example to follow and was presented as such in the etiquette books. Consequently, the traditional protection that men could offer women - particularly financial security and status -were once again more appreciated by women (and by men), and the same accordingly held true for the traditional kinds of care that women could offer men.

This type of change in collective feelings has always been a component of more general transitions from stages of emancipation and resistance to stages of stabilization and resignation (Wouters, 1986; van Stolk and Wouters, 1983; Elias, 1982: 311-17), in other words from informalization to formalization. In the development of behavioural codes and ideals in general and of those pertaining to the interaction between men and women in particular, a certain degree of formalization of previous informalization can be observed. In the recent period of formalization, there has been a, slight decline in the upward line of the informalization process, but without the process having changed its long-term direction. This long-term informalization process is not over yet.

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Notes

[1] The book that was reprinted was R.A. Breen-Engelen (1959), *Etiquette. Een boekje voor moderne mensen* (Etiquette. A Book for Modern People), 4th edition 1969. The new book that was first published in 1972 was H.F. van Loon, *Hoe hoort het nu?* (What's the Right Way Today?). It was not long before both these books were available at discount shops at sharply reduced prices.

[2] After each passage quoted from one of the new etiquette books listed here, the reference letter (A-I) of the particular book is given in brackets, followed by the page number of the quote.

[3] It was not until the thirteenth edition (1966) that the part after the last comma was left out. (The dates of publication were not given in the books themselves; this information was, however, given to me by the publisher.)

[4] In a comparable context, Abram de Swaan (1981) referred to a shift from a management through command to a management through negotiation.

[5] In the thirteenth edition (1966), the last sentence was left out so that there was no longer the comparison between familiarity with inferiors and with friends or relatives; by then this kind of comparison was probably considered repugnant.

[6] In the thirteenth edition, this sentence has been left out.

[7] Paul Kapteyn used the terms 'tabooization' and 'detabooization' for what I referred to as formalization and informalization, but for the rest our approaches are similar. See Paul Kapteyn (1980).

[8] The concept of 'mutually expected self-restraint' (MES) has been taken from J. Goudsblorn (1986).

[9] Norbert Elias used this expression in lectures he gave at the University of Amsterdam in 1970-1.