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Social Change and Social Order in Late Modernity

The crime control changes of the last twenty years were driven not just by criminological considerations but also by historical forces that transformed social and economic life in the second half of the twentieth century. For our purposes it is useful to distinguish two sets of transformative forces:

First, the social, economic, and cultural changes characteristic of late modernity: changes that were experienced to a greater or lesser extent by all Western industrialized democracies after the Second World War and which became most pronounced from the 1960s onwards.

Secondly, the political realignments and policy initiatives that developed in response to these changes, and in reaction to the perceived crisis of the welfare state, in the USA and the UK from the late 1970s onwards. These changes in social and economic policy—a combination of free-market 'neo-liberalism' and social conservatism—had echoes in other states such as New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. But they were developed in their most thoroughgoing form in America under the Reagan and Bush administrations (1981–92) and in Britain under Prime Minister Thatcher (1979–92) and they have continued in more muted forms in the New Democrat administrations of Bill Clinton (1993–2000) and, in Britain, under the Conservative government of John Major (1992–7) and the New Labour government of Tony Blair from 1997 onwards.[1]

Leaving aside for a moment the national differences that distinguished the American experience from that of Britain, one can summarize the impact of these developments as follows: The first set of forces—the coming of late modernity—transformed some of the social and political conditions upon which the modern crime control field relied. It also posed new problems of crime and insecurity, challenged the legitimacy and effectiveness of welfare institutions, and placed new limits on the powers of the nation-state. The second set of forces—the politics of post-welfarism—produced a new set of class and race relations and a dominant political block that defined itself in opposition to old style 'welfarism' and the social and cultural ideals upon which it was based.

Without this political realignment, the most likely response to the critique of correctionalism would have been incremental reform, improved safeguards, enhanced resources, the refinement of procedures. Instead, what occurred was a

The Culture of Control. David Garland.

sharp reversal of policy and opinion and a remaking of the whole crime control field. This chapter will argue that the turn against penal-welfarism took a 'reactionary', all-encompassing form because underlying the debate about crime and punishment was a fundamental shift of interests and sensibilities. This historical shift, which had both political and cultural dimensions, gave rise to new group relations and social attitudes—attitudes that were most sharply defined in relation to the problems of crime, welfare, and social order. These new group relations—often experienced and expressed as highly charged emotions of fear, resentment and hostility—formed the social terrain upon which crime control policies were built in the 1980s and 1990s.

The causes of this historical shift had little to do with criminal justice, but that did not prevent it from being massively consequential in its criminological effects. Broad social classes that had once supported welfare state policies (out of self-interest as well as cross-class solidarity) came to think and feel about the issues quite differently. Changes in demography, in stratification and in political allegiance led important sections of the working and middle classes to change their attitudes towards many of these policies—to see them as being at odds with their actuarial interests and as benefiting groups that were undeserving and increasingly dangerous. In this new political context, welfare policies for the poor were increasingly represented as expensive luxuries that hard working tax-payers could no longer afford. The corollary was that penal-welfare measures for offenders were depicted as absurdly indulgent and self-defeating.

If the searing experience of Depression and war had been the social surface on which the welfare state and penal-welfarism were built in the 1930s and 1940s, by the early 1980s that matrix of politics and culture was a dim historical memory. The politics of the later period addressed a different set of problems—many of which were perceived as being caused by welfarism rather than solved by it. I will argue that the gradual formation of new class interests and sensibilities came about in response to the crisis of the welfare state and the transforming dynamics of late modern social life, but I will also insist that this response was the result of political and cultural choices that were by no means inevitable. In the following pages I give an account of this social and political realignment. This account looks at the social and historical processes that have reconfigured the way that we live in the last third of the twentieth century and the ways in which we have come to think and act in relation to crime. It is the story of the development of late modernity, our political and cultural reactions to it, and the implications that these have had for crime, crime-control, and criminal justice.

My account is not intended as a history of the period, but rather as an exploration of social changes that influenced, or posed problems for, the crime control field. Much of what follows will be familiar to the reader—part of 'what everyone knows' about the late twentieth century. But it is important to recall it nevertheless. By calling to mind some of the great social facts of our recent history, I hope to unseat the 'presentist' mindset that so often dominates our discussions and diagnoses. All too often we tend to see contemporary events as

having only contemporary causes, when in fact we are caught up in long-term processes of historical change and affected by the continuing effects of now-forgotten events. Our present-day choices are heavily path dependent, reflecting the patterns of earlier decisions and institutional arrangements, just as our habits of thought reflect the circumstances and problems of the periods in which they were first developed.

The theory of historical change I bring to bear in what follows is an action-centred, problem-solving one in which socially situated actors reproduce (or else transform) the structures that enable and constrain their actions. My substantive claim is that the political, economic and cultural supports that had previously underpinned modern crime control were increasingly eroded by late modern social trends and the intellectual and political shifts that accompanied them. These trends, in turn, posed novel problems, gave rise to new perceptions, and shaped a variety of practical adaptations, out of which gradually emerged the crime control and criminal justice practices of the present period. The theory assumes that the emergence of these practices is typically the outcome of practical problem-solving and of political and cultural selection. In consequence, it is a complex process in which competing accounts of problems and solutions are always in play, different interests and sensibilities are always at issue, and the capacity to select solutions on the basis of hard information is only ever partial at best.

The dynamics of change in late twentieth-century modernity

The large-scale social changes of the second half of the twentieth century have been the subject of much sociological reflection and debate. For some analysts these changes herald the coming of post-modernity and a form of social organization and consciousness that is quite distinct from modernity. Others, wishing to mark the distinctiveness of the world these changes have brought into being, but also to recognize its continuity with what went before, talk of 'late modernity', 'high modernity', or 'reflexive modernity'. Terms such 'New Times', 'post-Fordism', 'post-welfare', and 'neo-liberalism' also identify the peculiarities of the present, but the first of these is rather too vague and the others are rather too specific. My own preferred term is 'late twentieth-century modernity'—which indicates an historical phase of the modernization process without assuming that we are coming to the end, or even to the high point, of a centuries-old dynamic that shows no signs of letting up. Unfortunately such a phrase is even more cumbersome than the others and is of limited use for theoretical generalization. So I will use the term 'late modernity' for convenience, though readers should bear in mind the sense of my usage.

The major transformations that swept society in the second half of the twentieth century were at once economic, social, cultural, and political. To the extent that these can be disentangled, they can be summarized under the following headings: (i) the dynamic of capitalist production and market exchange

and the corresponding advances in technology, transport and communications; (ii) the restructuring of the family and the household; (iii) changes in the social ecology of cities and suburbs; (iv) the rise of the electronic mass media; and (v) the democratization of social and cultural life.

These great forces of historical change transformed the texture of the developed world in the second half of the twentieth century—all the way up to global economic markets and the nation-state system, all the way down to the daily lives and psychological dynamics of families and individuals. While the contours of capitalist, democratic modernity still frame our social existence, the second half of the twentieth century has ushered in profound changes in the way that life is lived—changes that have had important implications for issues of crime and its control. To begin a discussion of any one of these interwoven threads of social change inevitably leads on to all the others. Here I begin and end with what I take to be the most basic transformative forces of modern times: the economic force of capitalist competition and the political struggle for social and political equality.

The modernizing dynamic of capitalist production and market exchange

The most powerful and fateful of these historical forces—as vigorous today as it was in the time of Karl Marx—was the unfolding dynamic of capitalist production and exchange. Directly or indirectly, all of the major transformations of the second half of the twentieth century can be traced back to the process of capital accumulation and the unceasing drive for new markets, enhanced profits, and competitive advantage. Military undertakings such as the arms race and the Cold War no doubt played a part, but it was the profit-motive above all else that drove the ultra-rapid transformation of technology, transportation and communications that has characterized the last forty years. Automobiles and aeroplanes, electronic valves and microchips, telephones and fax machines, personal computers and the Internet—each of these has had dramatic consequences for social relations and the texture of daily life. They gave rise to the 'information society' that we now inhabit; made possible the cities and suburbs in which we dwell; linked the four corners of the globe into a single accessible world; and created new social divisions between those who have access to the high-tech world and those who do not.

It was the mass production and mass marketing of goods that gave rise to the world of supermarkets and shopping malls, labour-saving devices and electronic gadgetry, hire purchase and extended credit, the fashion industry and built-in-obsolescence—in short to a whole ethos of 'consumption' and 'consumerism' and the cultural attitudes that go with it.[2] It was the iconoclasm of economic rationality that helped diminish age-old social divisions that had for centuries allocated men and women, blacks and whites, to different social roles. Contrariwise, it was these same 'bottom-line' considerations that allowed ram-

pant inequalities and the social exclusion of groups who could not easily be turned to profitable use. It was the unending search for new markets, for higher returns, and for a more efficient division of labour that created international markets, non-stop flows of information and money around the planet, and a globalized economy in which nation-states are less and less able to control the economic and social destinies of their subjects.

The events of the late 1980s may have consigned Marx and Engels to the scapheap of failed ideologies, but their description of capitalist modernity in the *Communist Manifesto* remains as true today as it ever was:

> Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.[3]

'The Golden Years': 1950 to 1973

For a quarter century after 1950 the economies of Britain and America—like most of the developed industrial world—experienced a remarkable and continuous process of growth and rising living standards. Thanks to the spread of mass production techniques, the expansion of consumer markets at home and abroad, the low cost of energy, and the success of Keynsian demand management, they succeeded in warding off the cyclical booms and slumps of previous eras and enjoyed almost three decades of uninterrupted expansion and prosperity. For the mass of working people 'full employment' and the new welfare safety net lent an unprecedented level of economic security to their lives, and the growth of trade unions, rising wage levels and progressive taxation had the effect of reducing the gap between the rich and the poor.[4]

In the USA the spread of consumerism and middle-class affluence that had begun before Second World War resumed and accelerated in the years after, and the American suburban family quickly became a universal symbol of a comfortable and desirable 'lifestyle' equipped with all 'modern conveniences'. Once the period of post-war rationing and reconstruction was at an end, Britain embarked on the same trajectory, catching up with the new consumption patterns established across the Atlantic. By the 1950s the mass production of affordable consumer durables such as cars, washing machines, refrigerators, radios, and television sets, allowed large sections of the working population routine access to goods that had previously been available only to the very rich. By the 1960s, this *embourgoisement* had reached a level where many of the skilled working class took for granted luxuries—new cars, foreign holidays, homes of their own, fashionable clothes—that their parents had only dreamed of possessing.[5]

The technological revolution in manufacturing brought portable electronic devices—televisions, radios, stereos, and later computers—into virtually every home and opened up huge new markets in home entertainment and advertising. Shopping—in the new malls, supermarkets, boutiques, and tourist resorts—ceased to be a mere necessity and became something of a pleasurable pastime, as more and more people found themselves with disposable income to spend and greater leisure time in which to spend it. And if sections of the work-force were not sufficiently well paid to acquire those commodities that increasingly defined individuals' identities, then the wide availability of credit and hire-purchase agreements ensured that they were not entirely left out.

For the first time, the masses were able to imitate the rich in passing on some of their wealth to their offspring—not in the form of inheritances and landed estates, but by paying them allowances and spending money. This, together with wages from part-time employment, opened up an important new market sector that expanded rapidly in the 1960s. Within a few years the 'youth culture' and 'teenagers' became a major market sector to which advertising executives in the clothes, music, and entertainment industries directed their attention. With the extension of compulsory schooling, the expansion of higher education, and, thanks to improved diet, the earlier onset of puberty, this age cohort occupied a newly extended period between childhood and full-time work and family commitments. With its numbers swelled in the 1960s by the large post-war birth cohort then reaching its teenage years, this newly defined social stratum took on a distinctive identity and became a leading force in cultural change, at least at the level of lifestyle and consumer preferences.

It was during this post-war period that monopoly capitalism re-invented itself as consumer capitalism. This consumption-oriented system was sustained by the purchasing power of a mass of active consumers, marketing techniques that helped generate a constant flow of unfulfilled desires, and corporatist agreements between government, employers and unions that stabilized the system and gave an economic basis to its inflationary dynamic. New occupational groups emerged (management, public service professionals, knowledge workers, finance and banking, marketing, media, and service industry) and the institutions of higher education grew in order to equip a workforce with the skills and technical training that these new occupations required.[6]

Whichever political party was in power, the politics of expansion was always the dominant theme—its critics would come to call it 'tax and spend' politics—as governments responded to the tide of rising expectations and the demand for what T. H. Marshall called 'social rights'. In these decades a massive new public sector grew up—providing social work and social services, health care, child support, education, and housing, as well as income support for those who fell out of the workforce. This was funded, of course, by tax revenues and therefore depended on the continued capacity of the private sector to generate wealth and employment. Whether or not their politicians welcomed the name, the America and British states became 'welfare states', 'regulatory states', 'big governments'—

increasingly responsible for managing economic life, increasingly expected to guarantee the wellbeing and prosperity of its population, increasingly the insurer and social problem-solver of last resort.[7]

Economic prosperity provided the motor for civil rights, for a 'politics of solidarity', and for progressive policies like correctionalism and rehabilitation. It also provided the basis for the expansion of democracy, for increased egalitarianism, and for the widespread cultural changes that followed in their wake. The long economic boom underpinned the political optimism and progressivism that marked these decades, especially the late 1960s. Two decades of sustained post-war growth, in a world that looked very different from its pre-war predecessor, markedly raised expectations, gave a sense of 'post-scarcity' possibilities, and helped erase the memories of depression and insecurity that had made the welfare state so essential and its ethos so widespread. But the very success of this post-war settlement gave rise to contradictory currents and new forms of opposition. For instance, it was precisely this economic buoyancy and the pervasive sense that much more was possible that funded the youth radicalism of the late 1960s and the newly critical stance that these radicals took up towards the wefare state.[8]

The Crisis Decades: 1970s and 1980s

What capitalist markets give, so also do they take away. With a sudden and unexpected jolt, the oil crisis of the early 1970s ushered in a period of economic recession and political instability throughout the Western industrialized nations. The re-appearance of 'negative growth', now complicated by a built-in inflation and the politically underwritten expectations of unionized workers, exposed the underlying problems of the UK and US economies and opened them up to harsh competition from newly developing economies abroad. In this recessionary context, the tools of Keynsian demand management failed to bring supply and demand into line; wage and price inflation continued; production and trade fell precipitously; balance of payments crises appeared as public expenditures outran income; and bitter strife began to mar the relations between the erstwhile 'social partners' of government, employers and unions. Within a decade, mass unemployment re-appeared, industrial production collapsed, trade union membership massively declined, and the labour market restructured itself in ways that were to have dramatic social significance in the years to come.[9]

This restructuring of the labour market—which had begun some time before but which now accelerated in response to the downturn—saw the collapse of industrial production, and with it the shedding of millions of jobs that were previously occupied by unskilled male workers. Where it continued, industrial manufacturing became more capital-intensive and technologically sophisticated, resulting in fewer jobs and demanding more skilled workforces. And as international investment markets grew, making capital more mobile and less

closely linked to nations and regions, the pressure to increase productivity or decrease wages exposed the inefficiencies of the older industries and undermined the capacity of trade unions to protect their low-skilled members. When economic recovery came—as it did after the recessions of 1973–5 and 1981–3—it was slower and more modest than before, and it was concentrated in service sectors and high technology. The result was a different kind of employment pattern: one that leaned towards low-paid, part-time, usually female workers, or else highly skilled, highly trained graduate employees.[10]

From the late 1970s onwards, the labour markets of the USA and the UK became increasingly precarious and 'dualized'. The life-time job security that industries and the public sector had offered in the post-war years became a thing of the past as workers were forced to become more mobile, more willing to develop transferable skills, more used to retraining and relocating. The male wage-earner bringing home a family wage was increasingly displaced by female, part-time labour with little job-security and few benefits.[11] And while the best-qualified strata of the work-force could command high salaries and lucrative benefits packages, at the bottom end of the market were masses of low-skilled, poorly educated, jobless people—a large percentage of them young, urban, and minority—for whom continuous unemployment was a long-term prospect. These new wage patterns, which in the 1980s were reinforced by increasingly regressive tax structures and declining welfare benefits, reversed the gains of the last half century, as income inequalities increased, and large sectors of the population (especially those with children) fell below the poverty line.[12]

Nor were these changes temporary. Even in the 1990s, when a strong stock-market and low-wage costs led to a sustained period of growth and high levels of employment, whole sectors of the population—particularly inner-city youths in poor or minority communities—were systematically excluded from the labour market just as many of their parents had been before them. The consequence was a more sharply stratified labour market, with growing inequalities separating the top and bottom tiers; a diminished sense of shared interests as the power and membership of mass unions declined; greater contrasts in working conditions, lifestyle and residence; and ultimately, fewer ties of solidarity between these groups.[13]

Changes in the structure of the family and the household

One of the central social changes of post-war Britain and America was the mass entry of married women and mothers into the paid workforce. In 1941 married women who lived with their husband and worked for pay formed less than 14 per cent of the total female population in the USA. By 1980 they formed more than half. In the UK, the pattern was the same, with women forming 29 per cent of the active workforce in 1951 and 43 per cent by 1991.[14]

Over the same period, the structure of the family was substantially transformed. There was a marked decline (and concentration in time) of fertility,

with women marrying later, having fewer children, and re-entering the paid workforce sooner after giving birth.[15] There was also a sudden and remarkable rise in the frequency of divorce, particularly in England, where the ratio of divorces to weddings went from 1 to 58.0 in 1938 to 1 to 2.2 by the mid-1980s. This new pattern of divorce and separation sharply increased the numbers of children living in single-parent households, bringing in its wake new problems of child and female poverty. The occurrence in the same period of a steep rise in the numbers of children born to single mothers strongly reinforced this trend, particularly in the USA, where by the early 1990s, more than 30 per cent of all children were born to unmarried women, a figure that rose to nearly 70 per cent in African American communities, where 58 per cent of all families were headed by a single woman. In the space of only forty years, the traditional image of the nuclear family—a married couple living together with children—had come to bear little relation to the real domestic lives of most of the population in America and Britain.[16]

The post-1960s expansion of college education and professional opportunities for middle-class women, and the growth of jobs (especially part-time jobs) in the new service industries and in light manufacturing for their working-class sisters gradually transformed the post-marriage career paths of the average woman. So did the greater effectiveness of birth control and the new, more tolerant norms surrounding its use. Over time, many families came to be 'two-income' families, with consequences for everything from expenditure patterns, child-care needs, and time spent in the home to the average price of family houses, the numbers of cars per household, and the levels of stress reported by males and females.[17]

A related change occurring over the same period concerned the changing characteristics of households. Since 1950 there has been a steady decline in the average household size, with more and more people living alone or in small family units. During the first third of the century, only about 6 per cent of households in the UK were people living alone. By 1991 the proportion had reached 25 per cent, and as high as 50 per cent in many big cities. Average household size decreased over the same period from 3.4 persons to 2.7. These changes were a result of the patterns of child-birth and family-formation mentioned already, but they were also caused by a larger number of teenagers going to college and by more older people living on their own.[18]

Social forces operating outside as well as inside the family brought about these changes. Higher income levels, better healthcare, and increased welfare benefits allowed the elderly to live longer and more independently; enabled single parents to survive on benefits or with part-time jobs; provided teenagers with state funds to go to college; relieved families of some of their traditional caring tasks and gradually changed the norms and expectation that surrounded these. Changes in the labour market allowed more women to enter the workforce, and brought about the decline of the family wage. Movements in cultural and legal norms—particularly the rise of feminist ideals in the 1970s, the growing

tolerance for 'alternative' family forms, and the diminishing stigma of divorce, illegitimacy and homosexuality—also contributed. And of course the relationship was reciprocal. As we will see, these changes in family structure brought about important practical consequences in every aspect of daily life.

As a result of these changes, households and families today look quite different, and operate quite differently from those that were typical of the 1950s or early 1960s. The question of what functional effects follow from these structural changes is, of course, one of the most contentious issues of our time. But what is not in doubt is that the question of the changing family and its social meaning has formed a central theme of political and cultural debate throughout the last quarter century. And these debates have repeatedly highlighted issues of crime and welfare.

Changes in social ecology and demography

The post-war decades saw two major developments in social ecology: the spread of the private automobile and the development of new dwelling patterns, the most important of which were suburban private housing tracts and public housing estates on the peripheries of large cities. The advent of the motor-car and the network of roads and highways that was built to accommodate it, were well established in the USA before the war, and developed rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s in the UK. Between 1950 and 1994 the total number of registered automobiles, trucks, and buses in the USA quadrupled, rising from 49.2 to 198 million. In the UK, car-ownership was slower to develop, and never so extensive, but the basic pattern was much the same.[19]

One consequence of car-ownership and the spread of mass transport was a relaxation of the need for close proximity between home and work. In the post-war decades there was a large-scale migration of people from the cities to the commuter suburbs, and the average distance travelled between home and work, home and shops or leisure, and home and school all increased markedly.[20] In both the USA and the UK this shift was prompted, in part, by the growing demand for new family housing and the desire of young families to escape the decaying inner cities and their social problems. The urban renewal projects of the 1960s continued this process by demolishing many of the inner city neighbourhoods that got in the way of the new highways and traffic systems, and rehousing the council tenants in new, high density housing projects. The effect was often to concentrate the poor and minority families in areas quite far removed from the city and lacking in basic amenities such as shops, jobs and good public transport.[21]

These two ecological developments have together transformed the way in which the elements of everyday life are bound together in time and space, with major consequences for how daily life is lived. Between them, they account for a multiplicity of social changes—the out of town shopping mall; the lengthy commute to work and school; the depopulation of the inner cities; the mobility

of the labour force; the suburbanization of employment; the declining importance of local loyalties and face-to-face interaction settings; and the increased privatization of individual and family life.

These ecological shifts interacted with other demographic factors to bring about new forms of segregation and social division. In the USA one of the dynamics of suburbanization was 'white flight', as the mass migration of southern blacks to the Northern and Mid-Western cities from the 1940s onwards prompted many white city residents to move away. By the 1960s the combination of white suburbanization and extensive black in-migration had led to an unprecedented increase in the size of the ghetto in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, Newark, and Detroit.[22] In the UK a similar, if less visible, segregation was effected as the housing policies of local authorities combined with the market choices of more affluent householders to produce a concentration of the worst-off residents in 'sink estates' and decaying inner city areas. In the 1980s the contrasts between the middle-class white suburbs and the poor, often black, urban neighbourhoods, were exacerbated by the cut-back of government support associated with the 'New Federalism' of Reagan and Bush and the local government spending caps imposed by Mrs Thatcher's government.[23]

The social impact of electronic mass media

If the automobile and the suburb transformed social space in physical terms, the coming of television and the broadcast media did so in a psychological sense that was equally profound and consequential. Mass circulation newspapers had established a national news community as early as the nineteenth century, and already by the First World War the industry had begun to consolidate in the form of national press conglomerates. But it was not until the development of broadcast radio in the 1920s and 1930s and the spread of television a decade or two later, that the 'mass media' established itself as a central institution of modern life. In the UK and the US, the television viewing audience grew from nothing to virtually universal coverage in less than a generation. In 1950 9 per cent of American homes and 10 per cent of British ones had television sets. By 1963 fewer than 10 per cent of homes were without them.[24]

The television revolution transformed the rest of the media. As its viewing figures increased, television's impact upon popular tastes and its increased share of advertising revenues forced newspapers to compete more and more on television's terms. The consequence was a further consolidation of the newspaper industry, the advent of the tabloid newspaper, and a growing tendency towards an imperceptible merging of news and entertainment.

The TV revolution also changed social relations and cultural sensibilities. The emergence of a single nation-wide information system to which everyone has constant access had major consequences for group identities and relations, particularly somewhere as large and diverse as the USA, or as class divided as the UK. National and cosmopolitan perspectives became available to groups

whose experience was previously shaped by the more inward cultures of localism, social class, and ethnic group. Members of groups that were previously isolated were better able to recognize their disadvantage and to demand equal rights and treatment. The electronic media thus rendered the experience of being excluded or relatively disadvantaged much more readily apparent and therefore, much less acceptable. It was hardly surprising, then, that 'tensions over racial and other forms of integration peaked as television completed its invasion of the American home'.[25]

Consumption patterns and lifestyles that were once confined to the rich and famous were now held out to everyone, with disturbing consequences for the expectations of masses of would-be consumers. As Joshua Meyrowitz pointed out in 1985, 'through television, today's ghetto children have more points of reference and higher standards for comparison. They see what they are deprived of in every program and commercial'.[26] At the same time, risks and problems that were previously localized and limited in significance, or else were associated with specific groups of victims, increasingly came to be perceived as everyone's problem, as the images of the behaviours in question (racism, sexism, crime, violence, child abuse, wars, famines . . .) began to appear in the living rooms of the whole population. The visibility of events and individuals ceased to depend on a shared locale and direct experience, and came instead to depend upon the media and its decisions about what and how to broadcast.

Television also changed other aspects of cultural life. Unlike the other news media, television was capable of conveying intimate, 'expressive' information—impressions of the speaking subject that were previously available only in direct encounters. Television news conveyed a sense of immediacy and intimacy, bringing the viewer 'face to face' with the subject of the interview or presentation. This led to a new emphasis upon the emotive and intimate aspects of events, and a tendency to reveal more and more of the 'personalities' involved.[27] It also led to a greater exposure of what Erving Goffman called 'backstage behaviour'. Authority figures, celebrities and members of the public were shown in more revealing ways, as interviewers sought to provoke unrehearsed reactions and reveal the feelings that lay behind prepared statements and public personas. Institutions too, were subjected to closer scrutiny, as the prying eye of the camera sought to get behind the outward appearances and show the viewer 'how it really is'. In this way, television has tended to undermine propriety. The media, in the name of realism and candid reporting, no longer respect the traditional demands of privacy and intimacy. More back-stage behaviour is routinely revealed, as are the failings and foibles of public figures and institutions. Its self-serving and much abused—but none the less democratic—shibboleth is that 'the public has a right to know'.[28]

These changes in the media have helped create a greater level of transparency and accountability in our social and governmental institutions. Bad decisions and shoddy practices are now much more visible that ever before and there is a closer scrutiny of what is going on behind the scenes. Official secrecy and gov-

ernment privilege are increasingly challenged by an emboldened and popular press. As Meyrowitz observes:

> As the confines of the prison, the convent, the family house, the neighbourhood, the executive suite, the university campus and the oval office are all invaded through electronics, we must expect a fundamental shift in our perceptions of society, our authorities and ourselves.[29]

The democratization of social life and culture

The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s were decades in which democratic institutions in Britain and America were broadened and made more all-encompassing. The civil rights of groups such as blacks, women, gays, prisoners, and mental patients, were increasingly affirmed and extended in this period, and important shifts occurred in the balance of power between government and governed, employers and employees, organizations and consumers. These changes were the result of prolonged struggles by members of the disadvantaged groups and are testimony to the power of egalitarian ideals, the liberal mood of political elites, and the activism of reforming governments and, in the USA, of the Supreme Court. But they also had roots in the structural conditions of late modern society. Welfare state institutions, corporatist politics, the mass media, and the new culture of consumerism all contributed to this end. So did the functional democratization that grew out of the ever-lengthening chains of interdependency that characterized the division of labour, giving specialized workers, managers, and technicians a greater measure of power in the workplace, particularly where they were scarce or else well organized.

In this period the discourse of equality and the politics of equal rights came to play a major role in political culture, however often their claims were breached in practice. In principle, there was no reason why any individual should be treated unequally or denied the full benefits of citizenship.[30] There was a cultural expectation of fair treatment for the individual in the face of authority or large organizations, and new mechanisms (employment tribunals, rent reviews, sex discrimination laws, TV consumer shows) were developed to enforce these claims. A similar expectation of equal rights and social inclusion transformed the expectations (if not always the life chances) of minority groups who had previously been assigned low rank and status. And while these new expectations did not always lead to the diminution of social distinctions and class barriers, they did produce a cultural effect that Ralph Miliband termed 'desubordination'—a decline in the levels of deference and respect for social superiors that previously reinforced the stratification system. In the 1960s and 1970s this push for democracy and egalitarianism extended beyond the political sphere into private domains of the family, the workplace, the universities, the schools—with major consequences for authority and control in these settings.[31]

In many organizations, and especially in larger, well-run corporations and public institutions, this shift brought about a change in management styles and

balances of power. 'Management by command', where a superior orders an inferior to behave in particular ways, was increasingly displaced by 'management by negotiation'.[32] Workers, particularly skilled, organized workers, were no longer prepared to act like the servants of their employers. The clients of government bureaucracies began to act like customers. Women demanded more power in the home. Pupils and students and children and prisoners wanted some say in running the institutions that housed them. Experts and expert knowledge were subject to popular scepticism, even as the public became more and more reliant upon them.[33] And although the result was often a change in form, rather than a real shift in status and power, these changing forms did make a difference—not least to people's expectations and their sense of entitlement. From the 1960s onwards, and in more and more social settings, absolute authority and top-down decision making became much more difficult to sustain.[34]

In the post-war period, moral absolutes and unquestionable prohibitions lost their force and credibility, as the rigid and long-standing social hierarchies on which they relied began to be dismantled. This, in turn, weakened the moral powers of the church and the state, and encouraged the spread of a more relativistic, more 'situational' moral sensibility.[35] In the course of a few years, quite radical changes occurred in the norms governing such matters as divorce, sexual conduct, illegitimacy, and drug taking. With the development of new social movements, and more and more groups asserting the legitimacy of their particular values and lifestyles, a much more pluralistic politics began to take shape. The result was an identity politics that disrupted the old political party system and a more diversified public opinion that questioned the possibility of moral consensus and the power of a singular dominant culture that it implied.[36]

The 1960s assault on established social hierarchies and moral authorities also encouraged the development of a different intellectual culture and worldview—one that would become increasingly pervasive in the decades that followed. The characteristic thinking of this period tended to be more sceptical, more pragmatic, and more perspectival than before. The ending of absolutes and the development of a more pluralistic culture had consequences for intellectual life as well. 'Positivist' thinking became increasingly untenable—not just in criminology but in every sphere of social thought. The positivist notion that there were widely shared observations, a universally experienced reality, a given realm of real facts, the possibility of a theory-free science—none of this seemed very plausible once pluralism and relativism became part of the cultural atmosphere. Even 'rationality' was subject to challenge, as post-modern intellectuals and excluded groups rejected the idea of single shared standard. In cultural life, as in world of social institutions, the Enlightenment's legacy of scientific reason was increasingly put in question and its social engineering ambitions were no longer viewed as an unquestioned human good.[37]

One of the most profound consequences of these social and cultural changes was the emergence of a more pronounced and widespread moral individualism. In one setting after another, individuals were made less subject to the con-

straining influence of group demands and absolutist moral codes. More and more of the population were encouraged to pursue the goals of individual expression, self-fashioning, and gratification that the consumer society held out to everyone. The grip of tradition, community, church and family upon the individual grew more relaxed and less compelling in a culture that stressed individual rights and freedoms and which dismantled the legal, economic, and moral barriers that had previously kept men, women, and young people 'in their place'. The result was a shift in the balance of power between the individual and group, a relaxation of traditional social controls, and a new emphasis upon the freedom and importance of the individual. Some aspects of this new culture had an egoistic, hedonistic quality, linked to the non-stop consumption ethos of the new capitalism. But to the extent that it did entail a morality it was that of liberal individualism—a morality in which mutual toleration, prudent self-restraint, and respect for other individuals take the place of group commands and moral imperatives. In this moral universe, the worst sin was cruelty to individuals or the restriction of their freedom; obligations to the group or even to families were much more conditional.[38]

It is true that as 'communities of fate' declined, and loosened their social grip upon individuals, new 'communities of choice' emerged—subcultures, consumer and lifestyle identities, professional associations, internet chat rooms—bringing people together in new ways, and subjecting them to new social norms. But these new forms of solidarity did not press so close in the controls that they exerted. They were not face-to-face, not local, not grounded in a shared sense of place or in the tight bonds of kinship. They did not affect people in the same intimate ways as the old family and neighbourhood ties had done. Instead individuals checked in and out of multiple networks, relating to them in a segmental fashion, rather than as 'whole persons' who derive most of their identity from belonging to that particular group. Moreover, these new modes of association were not all encompassing. They excluded as well as included. Typically they operated to the exclusion of the poor, and minorities, many of whom were set apart from the community and controls of the workplace, the new social movements, and the legitimate sources of consumer identity. The declining hold of the family and the local community thus affected the poor more adversely than others.

The impact of late modern social change upon crime and welfare

The broad changes just described left their mark across the whole terrain of late modern social organization, and in every case, their impact was mediated by the ways in which policy makers and social actors understood and responded to the new developments. But before going on to outline the differing responses and adaptations that these changes provoked, I want to pause to consider some of the ways in which they impacted upon the two domains that are at the heart of

this study: (i) crime and social control and (ii) the institutions of the welfare state.

Crime and social control

The transformative dynamics of late modernity had their most pronounced and dramatic effects in the two decades after 1960. That period coincided, more or less exactly, with a rapid and sustained increase in recorded crime rates—not just in the USA and the UK, but in every Western industrialized nation.[39] The growth of crime in this period is a massive and incontestable social fact, notwithstanding the evidentiary problems inherent in criminal statistics and the possibility that these statistics were affected by changes in reporting and recording patterns. Between 1955 and 1964 the number of crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales doubled—from half a million a year to a million. It doubled again by 1975 and yet again by 1990. Recorded offences thus rose from about one per 100 people in 1950 to five per 100 in the 1970s to ten per hundred in 1994.[40] In the USA, crime rates rose sharply from 1960 onwards, reaching a peak in the early 1980s when the rate was three times that of twenty years before, the years between 1965 and 1973 recording the biggest rise on record. Moreover, the increases occurred in all the main offence categories, including property crime, crimes of violence and drug offending.[41]

This correlation between late modern social change and increased crime rates was no mere coincidence. The most likely explanation for a cross-national pattern of rapid and sustained increase is a social structural one that points to common patterns of social development. Despite considerable variation from place to place and in respect of the various offence categories, and despite the impact of different regimes of social and legal control, the evidence strongly suggests a causal link between the coming of late modernity and society's increased susceptibility to crime.[42] Furthermore, one can give a plausible account of the mechanisms that link the specific social, economic and cultural changes of the late twentieth century with an increased susceptibility to crime. This increased susceptibility is by no means an inevitable, inexorable feature of late modern life. Some societies, most notably Japan and Switzerland, maintained a high and effective level of (largely informal) crime control, while most others eventually found methods of stemming the rising tide of crime. But the initial impact of late modernity was to make high rates of crime much more probable as a direct consequence of the new social and economic arrangements that it put in place.

Late modernity's impact upon crime rates was a multi-dimensional one that involved: (i) increased opportunities for crime, (ii) reduced situational controls, (iii) an increase in the population 'at risk', and (iv) a reduction in the efficacy of social and self controls as a consequence of shifts in social ecology and changing cultural norms.[43] The consumer boom of the post-war decades put into circulation a mass of portable, high-value goods that presented attractive new targets for theft. This exponential increase in the number of circulating com-

modities created, as a matter of course, a corresponding increase in criminal opportunities. At the same time, there was a reduction in situational controls as shops increasingly became 'self-service', densely populated neighbourhoods were replaced by sprawling suburban tracts or anonymous tower blocks, downtown areas became entertainment centres with no residents, and more and more well-stocked houses were left empty during the day while both wives and husbands went out to work. The coming of the motor car—which helped bring about this more spread-out, more mobile society—was itself a prime instance of its criminogenic properties. Within a few years, the spread of the automobile brought into existence a new and highly attractive target for crime, available on every city street at all times of the day and night, often completely unattended. Thefts of and from motor vehicles quickly became one of the largest categories of property crime.

Another ingredient for the 1960s rise in crime was the arrival of a large cohort of teenage males—the age group most prone to criminal behaviour. As a result of the changes described earlier, this generation of teenagers enjoyed greater affluence and mobility than earlier generations, as well as longer periods outside the disciplines of family life and full-time work. Teenagers were able to spend more time outside the home, had greater access to leisure activities, and were subject to less adult supervision, and more liable to spend time in subcultural settings such as clubs, cafes, discos, and street corners. This baby-boom generation, which grew up in a universalistic commercial culture and experienced a whole new level of desires, expectations, and demands for instant gratification, supplied most of the recruits for the crime-boom that followed in its wake.[44]

Finally, one should add that this period also saw a relaxation of informal social controls—in families, in neighbourhoods, in schools, on the streets—partly as a result of the new social ecology, partly as a consequence of cultural change. Social space became more stretched out, more anonymous and less well supervised, at the very time that it was becoming more heavily laden with criminal temptations and opportunities.[45] At more or less the same time, there was a questioning of traditional authorities, a relaxation of the norms governing conduct in the realm of sexuality and drug-use, and the spread of a more 'permissive', 'expressive' style of child-rearing. For some sections of the population, especially the emerging voices of the new youth culture, 'deviance' came to be a badge of freedom, and 'conformity' a sign of dull, normalized repression. The old categories of 'crime' and 'delinquency' became less obvious in their behavioural reference and less absolute in their moral force.

Taken together these social trends had a definite and pronounced effect upon crime. The high crime rates of the 1960s and 1970s were a precipitate of these social changes—an unplanned but altogether predictable product of the interaction of these elements.[46] Put more sociologically, the sharply increased crime rates were an emergent property of the converging social and psychological changes of the post-war period. The new social and cultural arrangements made late-modern society a more crime-prone society, at least until such time as new

crime-control practices could be put in place to counter these structural tendencies.

The coming of late modernity also had immediate practical consequences for the institutions of crime control and criminal justice, quite aside from the impact that higher crime rates would eventually have. The automobile, the telephone and the stretching out of social space prompted the 1960s shift to what Americans call '911 policing'—a reactive policing style that took police officers off the streets and out of communities, placed them in patrol cars, and concentrated on providing a rapid response to emergency calls.[47] The rise of the mass media, the universalizing of democratic claims, and what Edward Shils called the politics of 'mass society' put in place new laws and forms of accountability with regard to criminal justice authorities. The balance of power between the police and criminal suspects or between prison officials and prison inmates was altered slightly in favour of the latter and these institutions were subjected to greater levels of legal scrutiny and media exposure. Finally, the social deference and taken-for-granted moral authority that underpinned the idea of doing rehabilitative work with juveniles, in prisons and on probation ceased to be so readily available. As the ethics of work and duty lost their appeal and the idea of a moral consensus was progressively undermined, the idea that state employees could 'correct' deviants came to seem authoritarian and inappropriate rather than self-evidently humane. In the late modern context, the sullen, deep-seated resistance that working-class offenders and minority communities had often shown to the agents of the penal state, now took on an explicit, ideological aspect that made policing and punishing that much more difficult. The declining availability of work for ex-offenders after 1970 added further to the implausibility of the whole correctional project.[48]

Welfare institutions

To talk about the impact of late modernity upon the welfare state is to isolate one side of an inextricably interactive historical process. It was, after all, Britain's welfare state and America's New Deal equivalent that provided the basic institutional environment in which post-war capitalism flourished and social democracy established itself. It was the Keynesian state that regulated economic life, secured labour's living standards, fine-tuned the money supply, built highways, undertook capital investment, and generally managed prosperity. It was this same state that funded education, health, and housing, passed laws permitting divorce, and provided benefits to individuals who did not have a job or a family to support them. The welfare state was thus one of the engines that helped shape late modernity, leaving behind the boom–slump insecurities of the inter-war years and opening up the new culture of liberal individualism and social democracy.

But the historical irony of this process is that the very economic and social changes that the welfare state ushered in, would, in their turn, undermine the

effectiveness and legitimacy of welfarist forms of government. By the late 1970s the welfare state was being attacked on the basis of the late modern conditions that it had brought into being. Before discussing the anti-welfare politics of the 1980s and 1990s, I want to briefly describe the sources of this negative dynamic.[49]

The first element of this self-negating process was the feedback effect that followed the creation of welfare and social service agencies. It turned out that the institutions designed to meet the population's need for housing, or health care, or education, or social work or income support had a tendency to discover more and more unmet need, so that the problems appeared to become larger rather than smaller. So although budgets were regularly increased, they continually appeared inadequate. From the Second World War until the present, public expenditure on social services in the USA and the UK has had a built-in tendency to increase, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of gross domestic product.[50] But welfare problems did not get 'solved': instead they became an object of policy and administration and, in the process, became more visible, more complex, and more demanding of state funds. Even where welfare solutions were effective—e.g. in combating destitution, or malnutrition, or poor health and housing—this still tended to produce more rather than fewer cases.[51] People came to rely upon the state and its social services rather than on parents, husbands, moneylenders, or low-paying jobs. This development is usually described by its critics as 'dependency creating' but a better term might be *dependency shifting*, as individuals chose to become the claimants and clients of state agencies rather than accept more traditional and more personalistic forms of dependency.

The second self-negating dynamic was the tendency for expectations to rise. Three decades of post-war prosperity had provided the tax base for an expanding schedule of welfare services, but this prosperity also created problems for welfare state provision. For one thing, it continually raised the base line against which living standards were judged, particularly since 'relative deprivation' became the most common measure of social and psychological poverty. The consequence was that benefit levels in the 1960s and early 1970s reached levels that were far in excess of anything that Beveridge or Roosevelt had envisioned. Eventually expectations were raised to a point where it was all but impossible for state provision to meet them. Sustained prosperity and full employment gave working people a sense of affluence and security, and allowed them to enjoy a standard of living that was well above that supplied by state benefits. Over time, this led large sections of the middle class and skilled workers to regard state provision as unacceptably meagre in comparison to private housing, private health, private education, and private pensions. As one of its critics put it in 1981:

> The welfare state is withering away because it is being undermined by market forces in changing conditions of supply and demand. Consumers are increasingly able to pay for, and will therefore demand, better education, medicine, housing and pensions than the state supplies, and suppliers are increasingly able to provide alternatives in the market.[52]

In this way, the groups who had formed the central constituency and tax-base for the welfare state gradually began to dissociate themselves from it, to view it as a drain on their taxes, and to regard its institutions as being for the benefit of others rather than themselves.[53]

The third self-negating dynamic had to do with problems of big government and the unresponsive bureaucratic machinery that administered welfare benefits. The more the state did, the more unwieldy it appeared to become, both at the level of the individual client and in respect of the economy as a whole. The new consumer capitalism had given rise to a revolution of individuated tastes and a commercial service culture that by contrast made welfare agencies appear rigidly bureaucratic and unresponsive to client needs and preferences. Instead of empowering individuals and enhancing the social rights of citizenship, the system was prone to formalism, and to upholding the prerogatives of agency administrators and managers.[54] And at the level of the economy, the larger the share of economic behaviour that was directed by the state, the more the economy was subjected to political constraints that reduced the effects of 'market disciplines' and diminished the capacity of the economy to respond to exogenous forces such as shifts in global trade or the appearance of new technologies.

Finally, and most ironically, the institutionalization of the welfare state, together with the prolonged period of prosperity that it brought in its wake, had the effect of concealing the economic and political problems that welfarism had been designed to address and highlighting instead a whole series of problems that it appeared to create. The welfare state's success tended to undermine its credibility. As collective memories of depression, mass unemployment and destitution began to fade, the state appeared to many to be the problem rather than the solution.[55]

Political discourse and the meaning of late modernity

The changes brought about by the forces of late modernity in respect of crime, welfare, and every other aspect of social life appear in retrospect to have a material reality that is indisputable. But for those living through these changes their precise meaning and political implications were far from obvious. People in the post-war decades were very conscious that they were living through a period of rapid social change and there was an extensive, often anxious, literature reflecting on modernization and its discontents. There were, of course, many ways to 'read' and respond to these social developments, and different currents of thought emerged in relation to them. As we will see, from the 1970s onwards, British and American political culture was characterized by a predominantly reactionary attitude towards late modernity and the social changes it ushered in: that is to say, by an attitude that generally regretted the changes and aspired to reverse them where possible. But it is worth pausing to recall that up until that point, the leading current of political thought was a social democratic one that

largely embraced late modernity as an embodiment of economic progress and democratic social change.

The progressive reading

At least until the early 1970s the UK and US governments tended to view the direction in which social change was headed as an achievement rather than a problem. The governing parties of this period aimed not only to deliver continuing prosperity and full employment through a highly regulated economy but also to push ahead with a social agenda of extended welfare, expanded civil rights, and enhanced personal freedoms. There was, of course, deep-seated opposition to this agenda, particularly from traditionally conservative constituencies such as the Tory shires in England and the southern states in the USA, and from those sectors of capital and commerce that resisted regulation. But this opposition had less influence at the national level and was not formulated as an organized political ideology. The politics of expansion were in office. *Economic control* and *social liberation* were the watchwords of the day.

To the extent that the welfare state was problematized in these years, it was not in the name of a free market alternative, but in the cause of expanding its services and provision, allowing more community control and participation and taming the big government bureaucracies.[56] The standard critique of the welfare state was that it was not doing enough, that its benefits were too meagre, its procedures too demeaning, its decision-making too inflexible, its experts insufficiently accountable. The preferred, progressive solutions involved transforming claims into social rights and entitlements, making benefits universal rather than means-tested, reforming the bureaucracy to make it more responsive, and rendering the whole process less patronizing and more empowering for clients and for poor communities. By the late 1960s this critical framework was a well-established and increasingly influential position in social policy circles. A few years later, radical critics of criminal justice would, as we have seen, launch a critique of correctionalism in essentially the same terms.

Even the problem of rising crime rates failed to evoke much doubt or hesitation in the social democratic worldview. Although British and American crime rates increased every year from the mid-1950s onwards, and attracted much anxious commentary, the problem was often played down by government officials and treated with scepticism by criminological experts. Government reports attributed the rising rates to the dislocations of wartime, or the continuing problems of poverty and relative deprivation. Criminologists pointed to the pitfalls of official statistics, the effects of labelling and enforcement, or the media's over-reporting and moral panics. Many policy-makers and experts remained committed to the belief that the beneficial effects of welfare and prosperity would eventually reach into the inner cities and the poorest communities and remedy the crime problem. The penal-welfare paradigm and its criminological analysis thus continued to shape practical reasoning

until the early 1970s, despite the emergence of facts that tended to contradict its claims.[57]

The same penal-welfare paradigm shaped the predominant ways in which criminal justice institutions were regarded. Right up until the mid-1970s the most vocal reform proposals were for the improvement of rehabilitative services, the reduction of oppressive controls, and the recognition of the rights of suspects and prisoners. The demand was to criminalize less, to minimize the use of custody, to humanize the prison, and where possible to deal with offenders in the community. Radical proposals such as 'non-interventionism' and even 'abolitionism' emerged in these years—at the very height of the crime wave—and were influential in shaping the practice of juvenile justice, police cautioning, and prosecutorial diversion. This situation in which crime rates were rising and penal levels were being decreased would strike many subsequent commentators as absurd and self-defeating. But it made perfect sense within the prevailing penal-welfare framework which assumed that crime was primarily responsive to welfare interventions rather than to punitive ones.[58] To the extent that the penal-welfare framework was seriously challenged during these years, it was a challenge from the left, pointing to the system's inadequate provision of treatment programmes and the limits of its individualistic, correctionalist approach.

The political discourse of social democracy thus embraced late modernity, downplayed the problems of crime and the limits of the welfare state, and offered a vision of the future that stayed faithful to the fundamental values and assumptions of welfarism. It was precisely because of this constancy in the face of change that social democracy would come to appear so completely out of touch once political attitudes took a reactionary turn in the 1980s and 1990s.

The political watershed of the 1970s

Social democratic politicians may have refused to rethink their commitments in the light of late modern developments, but by the early 1970s, many voters were reconsidering their own allegiances. Even prior to the recession of 1973, sections of the working population in Britain and America had experienced a change in their economic position that had made them think differently about the welfare state and their relation to it. Voters who had previously been strong supporters of social democratic parties increasingly took the view that the welfare state no longer worked to their benefit. There was a sense of shifting actuarial interests as people became conscious that, in all probability, they would not have need of many of the state benefits that their ever-increasing tax contributions were paying for. For these recently arrived middle classes, there was also a growing anxiety that their hard-won success could be undermined by a dynamic of change that appeared to be running out of control. Social issues such as growing crime, worsening race relations, family breakdown, growing welfare rolls, and the decline of 'traditional values'—together with concerns about high taxes, inflation, and declining economic performance—created a growing anxiety about

the effects of change that conservative politicians began to pick up on and articulate.[59] One sees this from the mid-1960s onwards in the speeches of presidential candidates Goldwater and Nixon, even though the Republican party would remain Keynesian in its basic economic policies until Ronald Reagan took office in 1981. In the UK, the post-war social democratic consensus remained intact until the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979, but as early as the late 1960s Conservative politicians such Enoch Powell began to articulate a reactionary (and sometimes racist) social vision that drew a great deal of popular attention.

These gradual shifts of interest and sentiment, which took place from the mid-1960s onwards, formed the background for the major political realignment that was eventually to follow. But it was not until the tumultuous events and economic collapse of the following decade, and the rapid shifts of public opinion that followed, that these underlying conditions were given clear political expression. Televised images of urban race riots, violent civil rights struggles, anti-war demonstrations, political assassinations, and worsening street crime reshaped the attitudes of the middle-American public in the late 1960s, just as stories of 'mugging' and increased street crime, militant trade unionism, chronic industrial disputes, and long lines of unemployed workers eventually convinced many British voters that the politics of social democratic centrism had had its day. Together with the devastating economic impact of the mid-1970s recession, these factors triggered the collapse of the post-war political settlement.[60] As social democratic governments around the world tried in vain to steer a Keynesian course out of the recession, the parties of the right grasped their opportunity. At the end of the decade, Republican and Conservative governments swept into office on platforms that were explicitly hostile to welfarism and 'big government', to the 'permissive culture' of 1960s, and to the 'consensus politics' of social democracy that had governed for a quarter of a century.

What is striking about both the Reagan and the Thatcher election victories is that they owed less to the appeal of their economic policies—which at that stage were conspicuously underdeveloped—than to their ability to articulate popular discontent. Hostility towards 'tax and spend' government, undeserving welfare recipients, 'soft on crime' polices, unelected trade unions who were running the country, the break-up of the family, the breakdown of law and order—these were focal points for a populist politics that commanded widespread support. Appealing to the social conservatism of 'hard-working', 'respectable' (and largely white) middle classes, 'New Right' politicians blamed the shiftless poor for victimizing 'decent' society—for crime on the streets, welfare expenditure, high taxes, industrial militancy—and blamed the liberal elites for licensing a permissive culture and the anti-social behaviour it encouraged.[61]

Whereas post-war governments had taken it as their responsibility to deliver full employment and generalized prosperity, these New Right governments quickly abandoned both of these undertakings. Claiming that unemployment, like prosperity, was a market-generated phenomenon that reflected the underlying health of the economy—rather than a policy outcome in the grasp of the

nation-state—these governments stood back and allowed market forces to operate largely unchecked, while simultaneously imposing severe public expenditure cuts.[62] The predicable result was the rapid collapse of industrial production and the re-emergence of structural unemployment on a massive scale not seen since the 1930s. Both of these phenomena were turned to political effect as the Reagan and Thatcher governments took steps to weaken the trade unions, shift power back towards managers and capital, deregulate economic life, reverse the 'rights revolution', and 'roll back' the welfare state. Within a few short years, the progressive politics of the post-war decades had been displaced by political regimes that defined themselves in reaction to the welfare state and the social and cultural currents of late modernity.[63]

The reactionary reading of late modernity

The political projects of the Thatcher and Reagan governments differed over time and from each other. However coherent they appear in retrospect, they were in fact more opportunistic, more contradictory, and less fully implemented than either their supporters or their critics supposed. Nevertheless, the policies and political ideologies of these governments had a thematic unity that allows us to characterize them, in a way that is abstract but not altogether inaccurate, as *reactionary* in a quite specific sense.[64]

They were reactionary in that their policies were marked by a profound antipathy to the economic and social revolution that had transformed Britain and America in the post-war decades: that is to say, to the politics of the welfare state and to the culture of late modernity. Both governments were absolutely committed to undoing many of the social arrangements that had been established in these years, and to attacking the economic and political orthodoxies that underpinned them. The often contradictory combination of what came to be known as 'neo-liberalism' (the re-assertion of market disciplines) and 'neo-conservatism' (the re-assertion of moral disciplines), the commitment to 'rolling back the state' while simultaneously building a state apparatus that is stronger and more authoritarian than before—these were the contradictory positions that lay at the heart of the Thatcher and Reagan regimes.[65] They made ideological sense, and commanded extensive popular support—in spite of their incoherence—because together they represented a reversal of the progressive revolution of the post-war decades and a promise that the market would re-establish the economic prosperity that the interventionist state had failed to maintain. The framework of Keynesian social democracy ceased to be a catch-all solution and became, instead, the key problem to be attacked by government policy. Its faulty economic assumptions and permissive styles of thought lay at the root of all the new social and economic ills—low productivity, high taxes and inflation, the culture of dependency, declining respect for authority, the crisis of the family.[66] The achievements of the welfare state were systematically discredited or forgotten, and instead its limitations and failures came to stand centre-stage.

Throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s, these New Right politics dominated social and economic policy in the USA and the UK. Reversing the solidaristic solutions of the welfare state, with its concern for social equality, social security, and social justice, the new neo-liberal politics insisted on market fundamentalism and an unquestioning faith in the value of competition, enterprise, and incentives, as well as in the salutary effects of inequality and exposure to risk.[67] To this end, governments in both countries passed laws to tame the trade unions, reduce labour costs, deregulate finance, privatize the public sector, extend market competition and reduce welfare benefits. Tax rates for the rich were greatly reduced, and the resulting state deficits brought about further cuts in social spending. The result was a widening of inequalities and a skewed structure of incentives that encouraged the rich to work by making them richer and compelled the poor to work by making them poorer.[68]

Neo-conservatism introduced into political culture a strikingly *anti-modern* concern for the themes of tradition, order, hierarchy, and authority. These themes were most clearly articulated by the American religious right, which developed as a political force from the mid-1970s onwards. But they were also argued with great force and influence by 'neo-con' intellectuals such as Irving Kristol, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Charles Murray, and James Q. Wilson, and by their British equivalents Roger Scruton, Digby Anderson, Norman Dennis, and Sir Keith Joseph. This brand of moral conservatism was implacably opposed to the liberal culture of the 1960s, and to the democratizing, liberating themes of the 'permissive era', which were blamed for all of the social and economic ills of the subsequent decades. By the 1980s, the demand to get 'back to basics', to restore 'family values' and to re-impose 'individual responsibility' had become familiar themes on both sides of the Atlantic. So too were calls for more discipline in schools and families, an end to 'libertarian license' in art and culture, condemnation of the new sexual morality, and a generalized return to a more orderly, more disciplined, more tightly controlled society.[69]

These conservative calls for tighter order and control ought to have clashed head on with the policies of deregulation and market freedom that were, at precisely the same time, releasing individuals and companies from the grip of social regulation and moral restraint. That they did not is testimony to the success of their supporters in representing the problem of immoral behaviour as, in effect, a problem of poor people's conduct. Despite the all-encompassing rhetoric, the actual policy proposals that emerged made it clear that the need for more social control was not a generalized one, undoing the culture of late modernity, but instead a much more focused, much more specific demand, targeted on particular groups and particular behaviours. The well-to-do could continue to enjoy the personal freedoms and moral individualism delivered by post-war social change—indeed they could enjoy even more freedoms and choices as society became more marketized. But the poor must become more disciplined. Thus the new conservatism proclaimed a moral message exhorting everyone to return to the values of family, work, abstinence, and self-control,

but in practice its real moral disciplines fastened onto the behaviour of unemployed workers, welfare mothers, immigrants, offenders, and drug users.

If the watchwords of post-war social democracy had been *economic control and social liberation*, the new politics of the 1980s put in place a quite different framework of *economic freedom and social control*.[70] And though this reactionary movement claimed to be undoing the political and cultural regime that had been developing since the war, in reality its assault upon late modernity took a very particularized form and left the major social arrangements largely untouched.

The conservative call for a return to moral discipline and traditional values did result in a renewed discipline and a tightening of controls, but these were directed mainly at poor individuals and marginalized communities and did nothing to constrain the great majority of citizens. The neo-liberal call for an extension of market freedoms and the dismantling of the 'nanny state' certainly produced more freedom for those with the resources to benefit from a deregulated market, but it also resulted in chronic unemployment for the weakest sectors of the workforce and a growing sense of insecurity for the rest. The irony here was that even with meaner, more restrictive benefits, the fact of massive unemployment ensured that social spending was higher at the end of Reagan and Thatcher's terms than at the beginning. Moreover, the welfare programmes that most benefited the middle classes—cheap mortgages, social security, tax breaks, and education subsidies—remained firmly and expensively in place.[71]

The politics of the 1980s and 1990s were heavily class-based in their impacts, even as they claimed to be generalized in their intent. And although the rich and the employed middle classes derived huge economic benefits from these new arrangements, the ending of solidaristic politics and the opening of class and race divisions had definite social costs that affected them too. Not the least of these was that the new politics produced a cultural mood that was defensive, ambivalent, and insecure, in stark contrast to the confident, emancipatory culture of a few decades before. Introduced in the name of freedom, the politics of reaction gave rise to widespread insecurities, and would eventually produce a renewed obsession with control. One reason for this was that even those who were well placed to take economic risks and reap their rewards were less comfortable with other kinds of risks—such as the threat of crime and violence—that were inherent in the deregulated society. There was a dim but widespread awareness that the costs of the new market freedoms were largely being born by the poorest most vulnerable groups. And even if some could justify this by notions of desert and economic utility, it was hard to forget the implicit dangers involved in amassing a sizeable population of dispossessed youths and disaffected minorities.[72]

In this situation, insecurity, group hostility, and some measure of bad conscience flourished and played a role in focusing discontent. Perhaps the pluralism of late modernity meant that living with 'difference' was everyone's irreversible fate and reactionary politics could do little to change this. As Émile

Durkheim long ago pointed out, social arrangements of this kind pose acute problems of social order and call for the creation of governmental institutions and civic associations that can build social solidarity and ensure moral regulation.[73] Complex societies need more organization, not less, and while markets can organize economic efficiencies, they do little to bring about moral restraint, social integration, or a sense of group belonging. In the absence of such initiatives, the new culture of diversity remained a source of frustration to many, and a constant source of grumbling cultural commentary. Among polite society at least, lipservice to multiculturalism and individual rights meant that objections to other people's lifestyles tended to be muted and displaced. But there were some behaviours and some people that did not have to be tolerated, and new and more coercive policies of social and penal control increasingly targeted these.[74]

A central outcome of the politics of the 1980s was thus a hardening of social divisions.[75] As neo-liberal policies reinforced rather than resisted the stratification produced by the global economy and a dualized labour market, stark new divisions emerged in the populations of the USA and the UK. The social and economic distance between the jobless and those in work, blacks and whites, affluent suburbs and strife-torn inner cities, consumers in a booming private sector and claimants left behind in collapsing public institutions grew ever greater in these years, until it became a commonplace of political and social commentary. In place of the solidaristic ideals of the Great Society or the Welfare State there emerged a deeply divided society—variously described as 'the dualized society', the 'thirty, thirty, forty society', the 'seduced and the repressed', or, in the USA where social divisions were overlayed by racial ones, 'American Apartheid'—with one sector being deregulated in the name of market enterprise, the other being disciplined in the name of traditional morality.[76] These new divisions worked to further undermine the old solidarities and collective identities upon which the welfare state had depended. The possibilities of inter-class identification, of mutual sympathy across income divides, of a shared citizenship and mutual regard—these became increasingly unlikely as the lives and adaptive cultures of the poor began to look altogether alien in the eyes of the well-to-do.[77]

In this new social context, it was hardly surprising to find that social problems such as violence, street crime, and drug abuse worsened, particularly in those areas where economic and social disadvantage were concentrated. So although property crimes in the USA began to decline after their peak in 1982, homicides and violent crime rose sharply in the second half of the 1980s, particularly among young people, and often in association with the growing market in hard drugs. In Britain under Mrs. Thatcher's law and order administration, the crime rate doubled in a decade.[78]

But more important for our purposes is the way in which crime came to take on a new and strategic significance in the political culture of this period. Crime—together with associated 'underclass' behaviours such as drugs abuse, teenage pregnancy, single parenthood, and welfare dependency—came to

function as a rhetorical legitimation for social and economic policies that effectively punished the poor and as a justification for the development of strong disciplinary state. In the political discourse of this period, social accounts of the crime problem come to be completely discredited.[79] Such accounts, so it was said, denied individual responsibility, excused moral fault, watered down punishment, encouraged bad behaviour and in that respect were emblematic of all that was wrong with welfarism. Crime came to be seen instead as a problem of indiscipline, a lack of self-control or social control, a matter of wicked individuals who needed to be deterred and who deserved to be punished. Instead of indicating need or deprivation, crime was a matter of anti-social cultures or personalities, and of rational individual choice in the face of lax law enforcement and lenient punishment regimes.

In this watershed period, effective crime control came to be viewed as a matter of imposing more controls, increasing disincentives, and, if necessary, segregating the dangerous sector of the population. The recurrent image of the offender ceased to be that of the needy delinquent or the feckless misfit and became much more threatening—a matter of career criminals, crackheads, thugs, and predators—and at the same time much more racialized.[80] And the compassionate sensibility that used to temper punishment now increasingly enhanced it, as the sympathy invoked by political rhetoric centred exclusively on the victim and the fearful public, rather than the offender. Instead of idealism and humanity, penal policy discussions increasingly evoked cynicism about rehabilitative treatment, a distrust of penological experts, and a new righteousness about the importance and efficacy of punishment. If 'radical non-interventionism' epitomized the progressive ideal of the 1960s, the term that best captures the new right's ideal is that of 'zero tolerance'. In the political reaction against the welfare state and late modernity, crime acted as a lens through which to view the poor—as undeserving, deviant, dangerous, different—and as a barrier to lingering sentiments of fellow feeling and compassion. In this reactionary vision, the underlying problem of order was viewed not as a Durkheimian problem of solidarity but as a Hobbesian problem of order, to which the solution was to be a focused, disciplinary version of the Leviathan State.