

Regression in the Service of the State: Reflections on Mass Violence¹

Abram de Swaan

Amsterdam School of Social Science Research
Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Abstract

In peaceful societies, violence is the epitome of evil, that is, the intentional infliction of physical harm upon others. The formation of the state decreased the frequency of violence, but it monopolized and presented violence as a mean to protect its inhabitants. The state consolidated the use of violence upon the vanquished or upon defenseless populations. This violence is 'massive annihilation.' The defense of the state has been used as a justification of the massive violence exerted by that same state. Killings have been presented as a matter of *Us* against *Them*. Group formation and maintenance imply inclusion and exclusion, which on their turn imply a socio-psychological condition of identification and a socio-psychological condition of desidentification. *Identification* is the process whereby people come to believe that they are more like one another. *Desidentification* implies that they come to believe that other people are less similar to them. Identification and desidentification imply the creation and maintenance of borders between groups. Societies may organize themselves in terms of divisions and they may restrict exchanges across them. Divisions reach language and people learn to watch their words, even in intimate circumstances, they learn to watch their thoughts and finally they learn not to think. That is when repression is complete, and repression has become self-repression. The process of separation on all levels of society and individual experience may be called *compartmenta-*

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lization. The study of this process and of its consequences requires of the observation of totalitarian regimes.

Key Words: Massive violence, identification, desidentification, compartmentalization, repression.

Regression in the Service of the State: Reflections on Mass Violence

In comparatively peaceful societies, such as the Netherlands, France, or even the USA, the epitome of evil is considered to be violence: the intentional infliction of physical harm upon others. This strong and almost unanimous rejection of violent behavior makes it all the more difficult to study the subject without taking up moral or political positions.

What is more, some discussions which at first sight appear to be entirely motivated by scientific considerations, barely hide an almost theological preoccupation with the origins of Evil and the Fall of Man. It once used to be said of the human kind that it existed somewhere between Beasts and Angels. Today it is located halfway between Chimpanzees and Bonobos. Ethology —the anagram of theology— has become today's theodicy.²

We now know much and much more about apes than we ever did, but we have learned hardly anything pertinent to the study of those other primates, us. Maybe, the most important lesson to be drawn is that of the variability in primate behavior: two species that are very closely related, Chimpanzees and Bonobos, and that live in immediately adjacent habitats, nevertheless display widely divergent social arrangements and have entirely different repertoires of violence and violence control.³ There might even be cultural differences between them in this respect.

The research certainly does make more plausible the notion that violent behavior is at the very least a possibility of human beings, especially of young adult males. This potential may lay dormant, it may never be activated, it may even be entirely absent in some individuals, but many human beings can and do at times resort to violence.⁴ That

2. I.e. '...a specific branch of theology and philosophy that attempts to reconcile the problem of evil.' (*Wikipedia*)

3. Cf. Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson (1996). *Demonic Males: Apes and the origins of Human Violence*. Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin.

4. Collins, R. (2008). *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory of Antagonistic Situations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Collins makes the counterpoint that human beings, males especially, do bluster and threaten, but

does not mean that they must, or that they need constantly to control an urge to attack or defend. It just means that under certain conditions human beings can behave quite violently towards each other. This capacity for violence may indeed have very deep evolutionary roots. And so, by the way, may the capacity to collaborate peacefully and to control violent impulses.⁵

There is much evidence for the very frequent incidence of rape and manslaughter in prehistoric societies, including evidence for the wholesale slaughter of one group by another (which is especially relevant for the present purpose). Lawrence Keeley recently inventoried the evidence from ethnology and archaeology (Keeley, 1996, p. 179⁶). He came to a rather bleak judgment about stateless societies: ‘The primitive world was certainly not more peaceful than the modern one. The only reasonable conclusion is that wars are actually more frequent in non-state societies than they are in state societies —especially modern nations.’

In a recent publication, *War in Human Civilization*, Azar Gat (2006) surveys warfare in the course of human history.⁷ As Gat points out, stateless, irregular and small group warfare consisted mostly in raids, frequent, brief, but therefore no less murderous confrontations. ‘Group fighting grew in scale with the growth in size of the human groups themselves (Gat, 2006, p. 406⁸).’ Gat summarizes the secular development of warfare: ‘...overall mortality rates evidently decreased with the growth of the state and the transition from “warre” [à la Hobbes —Note added by de Swaan] to “war” (Gat, 2006, p. 408⁹. Italics added by de Swaan).’ That was, of course, a result of the state’s capacity to monopolize violence within its territory and to protect the inhabitants against violent outsiders, most of the time.

This more or less regular warfare was mostly a matter of organized combat between two opposing parties of armed males. But a different kind of violence occurred time and again, also perpetrated by armed men, but against vanquished opponents or entirely defenseless populations. This is the kind of violence that is denoted by the term ‘mass annihilation’.

And just as the gradual emergence of states, or rather the formation of a system of states, may have led to fewer casualties of war (on the whole and in the long run), it may have increased the frequency and the lethality of massacres. Organized armies of well-equipped soldiers, expedited by a distant state, could overcome the resistance of less co-

most of the time refrain from actual, physical attack.

5. Collins (2008, *Op. cit.*, p. 27) suggests that human beings may be ‘hard wired’, as he calls it, for cooperation.

6. Keeley, L. H. (1996). *War before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7. Gat, A. (2006). *War in Human Civilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8. Gat, A. (2006). p. 406.

9. Gat, A. (2006). p. 408. Italics added by de Swaan.

ordinated and armed opponents outside the state system with relative ease, and once they had defeated these enemy forces they could plunder, rape, rob, torture and kill without encountering much opposition. And they did, all too often.

Such genocidal episodes may sometimes appear chaotic and arbitrary, but that is because the victims try to resist, hide, escape, bribe, or beg for mercy. The perpetrators are usually armed men, in uniform or with the insignia of membership, who are following orders from their superiors and know quite well what they are doing and to whom they are doing it. They have been given a reason why they should kill and they may well consider it legitimate. Since they are better armed and organized, they do not run much risk (contrary to warfare, in which the means of violence are more evenly distributed) in carrying out their orders. They believe that they need not fear punishment for their deeds. (In fact, in many cases, they may be punished for refusing to kill).¹⁰ What is more, they may stand to profit from their violent acts.

Given our general assumption that human beings (not necessarily all of them, but many) have a potential for violent behavior which may well be partly coded for in their genetic makeup, these may be the conditions under which they may indeed act violently: (1) they believe their action is justified; (2) their peers and superiors support them in that belief; (3) they run less risk in acting violently than in refraining from it; (4) they think they will remain unpunished; and (5) they expect to gain booty, sex, or honor.

In addition, there is the quite general human inclination to comply with authority and to conform to prevailing standards; some violence specialists give orders or set the example and the others tend to follow them.¹¹

Finally, in such circumstances participation in the killing is also a matter of solidarity, of not letting one's comrades doing the dirty work and keeping one's own hands clean. Loyalty to one's companions, too, is a rather general human propensity, and it certainly binds comrades in arms, who stand together against their enemies, no matter how helpless they may be.¹²

10. The latter condition is not a necessary one: Browning mentions a few cases of refusal to carry out orders and shoot. These men were never punished for the fact. It is believed that no German was ever executed for refusing to kill unarmed citizens. Dissenters were, however, sometimes sent to the *Ostfront*, the Russian front.

11. This is of course the main pointy made by Stanley Milgram's experiments. See:
—Milgram, S. (1974). *Obedience to Authority; An Experimental View*. New York: Harper Collins.
—Zimbardo, P. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how Good People Turn Evil*. New York: Random House.
—Waller, J. (2003). *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

12. Browning, C. R. (1992; 2001). *Ordinary Men; Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. Harper Collins, Penguin.

Maybe one of the most painful points to realize is that the message of hatred that genocidal propagandists spread is also understood as a message of patriotism, mutual loyalty, readiness to sacrifice for the sake of the common struggle, in one word as a message of love, albeit strictly and exclusively for one's own kind, but love nevertheless.

Moreover, beating, maiming, and killing people may profoundly repel most people, but their abhorrence often becomes dulled over time, and for some it may at times even be pleasurable and exiting, it may come with a rush and a flash, and with a sense of power, of superhuman control over the lives of others, of invulnerability and invincibility. That does not at all exclude the opposite sensations of disgust, shame and remorse, of acute anxiety about revenge or retribution in this world or the afterlife.

And, finally, if a perpetrator would be free to stop his murderous activities, to give them up would mean to recognize that they are wrong. And at that point, entirely different social and psychological dynamics would begin to manifest themselves.

So far, the argument proceeded in the micro- or meso-sociological context of small groups bent on the destruction of their defenseless victims. But such lethal episodes occur within the setting of a wider society, or in the confrontations between different societies. It is this macro-sociological frame and its development over much longer periods of time that shapes much of the specific killing episodes that are the subject here.

First of all, many instances of mass killing occur in times of war, its inception or aftermath. Even the Indonesian killings of 1965 were justified as a preventive campaign, to forestall a *coup d'État* and the bloody revolution that would result from it. The mass exterminations by the Stalinist and Maoist regimes were legitimated as preemptive attacks to prevent the other side from starting a civil war. And, in the midst of a World War, the Nazi regime presented itself as acting in self-defense against the war that International Jewry had proclaimed against it.

Thus, no matter how unequal the balance of force between the perpetrators and their prospective victims may be, the killings are invariably presented as a matter of *Us against Them*, of necessary self-defense or justified retribution by one party against an implacably hostile other side, in a situation where violence has already become unavoidable.

Such separations between in- and outsiders are a universal characteristic of all human group-formation, and one that the human species shares with social species such as other primate species. Group formation and group maintenance imply inclusion and at the same time exclusion, i.e. intense inside vs. limited outside interaction, spatial separation, and above all the socio-psychological correlate of identification on the one hand and desidentification on the other. *Identification* may simply be described as the process whereby people come to believe that they are more like one another in morally and affective relevant respects and, conversely, *desidentification* implies that they come to believe that other people are less similar to them in these relevant aspects. Thus, these processes of identification and desidentification are about the creation and maintenance of borders between groups.

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In the course of human history these circles of identification have much widened, from the early foraging groups, that may have numbered at most a few hundred individuals who were related to one another and most likely had some knowledge of their *kinship ties*; they accordingly identified with one another on the basis of blood bonds. Once sedentary agriculture emerged, and people started living in villages a second criterion of identification emerged, next to kinship, *proximity*. To this very day, the rhetoric of identification, also in circles that count millions and hundreds of millions of individuals, proceeds in terms that refer to these two dimensions: ‘blood and soil’. The idea of kinship is activated with such expressions as ‘brothers in arms’, ‘sisters in the faith’, ‘the father of the fatherland’, ‘the mother country,’ etc. But the notion of proximity echoes in the term ‘neighbor’, and literally, *prochain*, *Nächste*, *naaste*. These two dimensions of identification apparently have kept their mobilizing potential to this very day. There may have been other identifications, monastic, dynastic, military, that over longer distances bound people together, but they did not affect the great mass of people. And religious affinity may at times have superimposed its own patterns of identification. Only in a rather advanced stage of state formation did new dimensions of identification arise: ‘nation’, and later ‘race’ and ‘class’. Of these, nation has turned out to be the most lasting and potent common denominator. But even these ‘modern’ identifications are activated by the atavistic terminology of kin and proximity, of brothers, mothers, and neighbors (‘comrade’ refers to sharing a room, ‘companion’ to sharing bread). Apparently people have learned to identify with one another and desidentify from still other people in ever widening circles, but on the basis of rudimentary mechanisms that may well have been there from the dawn of hominid evolution.

In a case study of hate propaganda on the eve of the Rwandan genocide¹³, I have tried to show that the distinction between ‘Hutu’s’ and ‘Tutsi’s’ was quite old indeed, that its origins were shrouded in legend, that in the course of time the two complementary categories came to take on quite different meanings, which partly remained valid so that a complicated, multi-layered, inconsistent, fluid complex of meanings resulted, that yet could elicit very strong emotional and moral reactions. The propaganda campaign of the extreme Hutu power movement, *interahamwe*, set out to transform these convoluted patterns of identification into one absolute, immutable dichotomy that overrode anything else in the imagination of the Hutu’s about the Tutsi’s. Partly, it harked back to traditional folk tales, but another part was taken directly from Nazi-propaganda. Such processes of identification and desidentification take on a dynamics of their own, when the other party feels compelled to respond and defend itself. And this may accelerate the process of mutual desidentification.

13. On the basis of the rich material collected by Chrétien and his Rwandan collaborators. Chrétien, J. P. (1995). *Rwanda: Les Médias du Génocide*. Paris: Karthala.

Apparently, political movements and especially states can refashion the lines of identification that unite people and divide them from others (but they do need quite a bit of intimidation to make people ‘toe the line’). Characteristically, there is a preoccupation with whoever (even whatever) does not seem to clearly belong on one side or the other of the division. Such people are ‘impure’, they are considered threatening, as ‘spies’ and ‘traitors’, or even more atavistically, as sources of contamination.

Thus, a society may gradually come to be organized entirely along these dividing lines, and in every respect: social contacts and economic exchange across the dividing lines are abolished, a spatial segregation is brought about with forced displacements, walls, designated zones, and as long as the segregation is not yet complete there may be temporal restrictions on movement. Such divisions are reproduced in the language, people learn to watch their words, even in intimate circumstances, they learn to watch their thoughts and finally to change them or even not to think certain thoughts. That is when repression is complete, and repression has become self-repression. Such a process of separation on all levels of society and individual experience may be called *compartmentalization*.

It can now be understood why some campaigns of massive annihilation could occur without requiring much effort to bring about desidentification among the dominant population. In these cases, the target population was unknown and alien from the outset, it already lived in another society. This of course, is the case with all those conquered populations that became the object of large scale destruction by the victorious armies of European states. The murder of many millions of Indians never made much of an impression in the home countries, because these two worlds were already entirely compartmentalized. Only soldiers, adventurers or merchants moved in and out of the other compartment; and priests, who indeed, sometimes got in the way.¹⁴ But for the inhabitants of the mother countries the faraway victims were literally from another world, out of sight and almost entirely out of mind.

Even in the twentieth century the German colonial army could annihilate an entire nation, the Herero’s in South Western Africa (now Namibia)¹⁵; the Belgians could

14. Kiernan, B. (2007). *Blood and Soil. A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Cf. p. 82 and sqq., and the accounts of the ‘Spanish conquest of the New World’ (pp. 72-100), and of ‘Settler Colonialism’ (pp. 165-392).

15. See:

—Silvester, J. and Gewald, J-B. (2003). Introduction. In: J. Silvester and J-B, Gewald (Eds.). *Words cannot be found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*. Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill

—Silvester, J. and Gewald, J-B. (2003). *Footsteps and Tears*, pp. xiii-xxxvii.

—Hull, Isabel V. (2003). Military Culture and the Production of “Final Solutions” in the Colonies. In: Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Eds.) *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-28.

bring about the deaths of millions of Congolese without it causing much of an impact at home (to this very day).¹⁶ But then, these two European countries, Germany and Belgium were latecomers to the great European expansion and in a hurry to occupy their share of Africa.

In order to study compartmentalization as an achievement of modern political movements and the government apparatus they conquered, one should turn to the totalitarian regimes of the mid-twentieth century. Here, the enemies of the regime lived in the midst of the majority population. It required enormous social and political effort to gradually separate them on every dimension in a process of total compartmentalization, in Hitler's Germany, in Stalin's Soviet Union and Mao's China or Pol Pot's Cambodia. Maybe the most complete compartmentalization was achieved by the Nazi's in Western Europe and parts of Poland, where they succeeded in separating the Jews almost completely from the rest of the population, isolating them in closed ghettos, abolishing almost all contacts with the rest of society, next deporting them rather discretely, mostly out of the view of the other citizens, and then exterminating them in well-shielded annihilation camps, out of sight and out of mind for the rest of the population, in a location where the killing specialists were effectively (but not entirely) screened off from the rest of the world.

Elsewhere, the compartmentalization was less neat and not nearly as complete, nor were the killers as perfectly isolated in their work. Still, this did not prevent them from going about their murderous routines. In fact, in Eastern Europe under the Nazi's, Cambodia, Indonesia, or Rwanda, killings seem to have occurred within sight of passersby and villagers who happened to be around, without them themselves being targets. This '*mise en scene*' of mass murder, the remoteness from outsiders, the shielding from the sight and hearing of others, in one word, the spatial compartmentalization, is a major feature of what social psychologists have called the 'situation'. It has, however, hardly been studied, since these aspects do not seem particularly important to historians and are mentioned only in passing in trial documents or witnesses' accounts.

At the same token, the temporal compartmentalization, the setting of specific times (hours of the day, days of the week) for perpetrating the killings and stopping them until the next shift, defines another aspect of the situation: how do the murderers get into and out of their murderous routines (if routinized they have become) and then into them, once again? How do the killers differentiate between members of the target population and those whom they consider to belong on their own side? Are they at pains to avoid misidentifications or don't they care very much one way or another? What do they do during time off? How do they relate to their fellow killers during killing hours and when they are off? How do they represent their practices to their spouses, children, friends? When they

16. Hochschild, A. (1999). *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin.

go about their killing task, do they construct it as a ‘frenzy’, a ‘trance’, or as ‘just another hard job’?

The testimony from survivors does not reveal much about these details, since —understandably— they may not have seemed very significant to them, nor to those who listen to their tale. Moreover, they were not in a position to observe how the perpetrators live when they are off the job. Legal testimony and interrogations of the perpetrators tend to pass over many of these aspects if they are not directly relevant in establishing the guilt of the accused. Even though these mass killings nowadays occur, even if not under our very eyes, yet in full view of electronic observation by airplanes and satellites (and telephone listening devices) not much is known of what actually goes on in the killing fields, how such mass murders are framed and carried out.

The best strategy to find out more about the mundane realities of mass murder is to comb perpetrators’ testimonies for details that are recorded, rather haphazardly, as part of trial documents that do not aim at thick ethnographic description, but at the condemnation (or as the case may be, at the exculpation) of the perpetrators.

Such data would provide an ethnography of the social and personal life of perpetrators of extreme and massive violence. They would provide insight into *the social regulation of personal affect regulation* under most extreme circumstances. At its core, this is a reformulation of the *problematique* Norbert Elias has posed under the somewhat unfortunate designation of the civilizing process (and *decivilization*).¹⁷

Clearly, in the course of centuries the domestic pacification that came with the European process of state formation brought long periods of peace which allowed people to interact in a non-violent way, but also imposed increasing controls of violent impulses upon of them.¹⁸ In fact, in the course of seven centuries, the rate of lethal crimes steadily diminished throughout Western Europe. Deadly quarrels, cruel rituals and bloody contests gradually disappeared from everyday experience. By the nineteenth century most Europeans, even men, even young men, rarely or ever fought, let alone wounded or killed one another. Cruelty and violence became increasingly abhorrent to a majority of citizens, probably more so in the higher echelons of society. It is this ‘softening of mores’ (adoucissement

17. See:

—Elias, N. (1973). *La Civilisation des Moeurs*. Paris: Calman-Levy

—Elias, N. (1975) [1939]. *La Dynamique de l’Occident*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy.

See also the critical discussion of Elias’ ideas on violence in Michel Wieviorka:

—Wieviorka, M. (2004). *La Violence*. Paris: Balland, pp. 196-201.

18. For recent evidence, see:

—Muchembled, R. (2008). *Une Histoire de la Violence; De la fin du Moyen Âge à nos jours*. Paris: Éds. Du Seuil.

See the very first sentence (Muchembled, 2008), p.7): ‘Du XIII^e au XXI^e siècle, la violence physique et la brutalité des rapports humains suivent une trajectoire déclinante dans toute l’Europe de l’Ouest’.

sement des moeurs) that allowed more subtle, more flexible and more considerate modes of expression and interaction, taking into account more people (e.g. even house servants and the poor), reckoning more with the future, and handling with greater precision time, money, possessions, and one's own body.

All the same, violent episodes did not disappear from society entirely. Violent crimes continued to be committed, even if at a lower rate. Not much is known about the levels of domestic violence, but the phenomenon certainly did not disappear entirely. But as violence disappeared from everyday social life, it continued 'behind the wings', (*hinter den Kulissen*). The slaughter of animals for example, once an omnipresent feature of rural life, is now carried out in special, secluded slaughterhouses, beyond the perception of the average consumer.

However, episodes of mass violence have occurred time and again, mostly far away from the home society in remote lands, across the seas. It is this gross imbalance between the resources of violence on either side (and, as a consequence, between the number of victims) that characterizes these bloody episodes as 'democides' of one kind or another.

Time and again, the very states that had succeeded in pacifying domestic society, initiated campaigns of sustained and massive violence against specific groups within or outside their borders. But these violent episodes were mostly screened off from civil society, where citizens continued their peaceful ways. The grand and bloody colonial expeditions which the democracies of Western Europe carried out in the course of the nineteenth century, an ocean away from the mother country, hardly disturbed the domestic peace of mind. The genocidal campaigns of the Germans in Namibia or the Belgians in the Congo remained largely unknown at home. Later instances of mass violence remained equally shielded from the rest of society. This *compartmentalization* operated in every sense of the word: the target group was sharply differentiated from the rest of the population, the killing was carried out in remote places by appointed specialists, the information was tightly controlled, The events, even when they became known—and something always transpired— were repressed both in the social and the personal sense. Censorship made sure that people would not hear the news and people themselves tried not to know what they nevertheless could not help knowing. This allowed the vast majority of citizens to carry on with their daily affairs, *as if nothing had happened*.

In the meantime the state recruited specialists in violence and organized militias to carry out mass annihilation in societies that had been pacified to a high degree. Young men with violent inclinations may have been the first to join, but the evidence suggests that the perpetrators were often not especially violence prone.¹⁹ Rather, it appears that the quite strict regulation of violent impulses that prevailed in the rest of society was

19. This is of course the thesis of Christopher Browning (2001). *Ordinary Men; Reserve Police Battalion and the Final Solution in Poland*, London & New York: Penguin & Harper Collins, 2001.

suspended for these recruits and another regime of controls was installed especially for them, again separately from civil society as usual.

Thus, an extraordinary mode of social regulation is imposed on the personal modes of affect regulation of the perpetrators. In fact, the members of the killing squads were encouraged to strongly identify with one another, and to desidentify from their prospective victims equally strongly, to despise and hate them and prepare themselves for rape, arson and murder. In many respects, they were prompted to 'let go', to follow their violent impulses as long as they were directed against the enemy: '*a regression in service of the state*' (with an allusion to Freud's 'regression in the service of the ego' during psychoanalysis).

Within a given society during a particular period a certain regime of social regulation of the personal regulation of affects may prevail. In the course of time, this regulatory regime shapes the personal modes of affect regulation of those within its reach: over a certain period, a pacified society may engender persons with a high threshold of aggression, a general aversion of cruelty and a strong inhibition on aggressive impulses. Under such conditions, a stronger degree of compartmentalization is required to carry through mass annihilations, while civil society continues in its relatively pacified ways. It may also require more indoctrination and more training for recruits to reorganize their personal mode of affect regulation and follow their violent inclinations without undue inner conflict, i.e. to regress to the level of destructive behavior which serve the interests of the state.

In other societies, or for other categories within one and the same society, the degree of pacification achieved by the state is much lower. The social regulation of the personal regulation of affect may not nearly be so strict. Young men may be allowed to fight in all sorts of situations. Since they can expect to be attacked, they must be ready to defend themselves and even attack their rivals first. Under this regime, the personal modes of affect control will be quite different indeed from those under conditions of advanced pacification. The population, even though the vast majority suffers from this rampant violence, is more accustomed and better prepared for it. As a result, episodes of organized, large scale violence need not be as carefully shielded off from the rest of society and compartmentalization is less elaborate. Suitable perpetrators are more easily recruited, since they need not transform their personal modes of affect regulation as profoundly as their peers in more pacified societies.

This argument allows to bridge the dichotomy between 'disposition' as a personal inclination and 'situation' as a social context. A social regime is a 'situation' indeed, but one which, while it lasts, in the course of time, shapes the personal dispositions of its subjects, especially of young males. The reasoning also allows to transcend another opposition, this time between the notion of a generalized civilizing process on the one hand and an equally encompassing decivilizing process on the other. Both developments may occur at the same time, even within one society, under neatly compartmentalized regimes for the social regulation of personal affect regulation.

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