Self-Control

Notes on the emergence of a symbolic society∗

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Togetherness with rationalization, individualization is considered to be one of the most important, constitutive and identifying elements of modernization. To wit, the latter is in fact often conceived as ‘rationalization + individualization’, and as such valued as a process that has not yet fulfilled all of its inherent promises of reason, self-determination and self-realization (Habermas, 1987: chapter XII). While this optimistic view of modernization was the target of the critique of reason (eg. Foucault, 1961) and, more recently, of postmodern critique, it was forcefully revived in the notion of post-traditional society (Giddens, 1994). According to Anthony Giddens, traditional society is characterized by ritual practice, unthinking tradition, formulaic truth, and strong authority, in short, by an excessive lack of both rationalization and individualization. In sharp contrast, post-traditional, reflexive modernization is based on autonomous individuals that act on the basis of a skeptical and pragmatic approach to propositional truth. This extremely sharp

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contrast between tradition and modernity also signals a return to early modernization theory (Alexander, 1995).

That societal diagnosis is based on a strong version of the individualization thesis. Different variants of that thesis circulate. They are erected around a number of fashionable buzz words that evoke meanings both plausible and pleasing to contemporary sensibilities, and they share a lack of clarity about what individualization exactly is. In this paper I propose an unambiguous definition of individualization, review relevant empirical evidence concerning the individualization thesis, and propose an alternative interpretation of post-traditional society.

1 Individualization in liquid modernity

Zygmunt Bauman situates individualization in what he calls “liquid modernity” (2005). Change, he argues, is so rapid and general nowadays, that behaviour can no longer condense into habit and routine. Therefore tradition and ritual become inoperative. People are constantly choosing, constantly constructing an identity. Their quest for identity is predicated upon the uniqueness of each individual: “I am who I am. Which means: a unique being, a one and only creature made in this peculiar way; so thoroughly unique that my uniqueness cannot be described using words that may have more than one referent” (Bauman, 2005:15). It is not altogether clear whether Bauman intends this as a description of a discourse or a vocabulary of motives (a normative vocabulary defining a situation) some contemporary men and women use to talk about the self, or as an actual description of a modernity in which individuals are effectively constantly choosing and constructing their uniqueness.

The latter is Giddens’ (1991) view. He conceives of identity construction as a reflexive project or an attempt of the individual to create a unity (or temporal continuity) on the basis of a chain of autonomous decisions. The emphasis on individual autonomy is also extremely strong in the work of Ulrich Beck. According to Beck it has even become impossible to predict political and social attitudes on the basis of class position or gender (1992:131). The relevance of such collective identities is dissolved in a “spiral of individualization”, making contemporary men and women into homo options (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1996). Presumably Beck supposes that the social processes that made collective identities relevant to understand and predict the feeling and thinking of individuals, have ceased to operate, making those identities and the variables with which sociologists try to measure them (such as class position, gender, and age) obsolete. "...I think we are living in a society...where our basic sociological concepts are becoming what I call ‘zombie categories’...living dead categories which govern our thinking but are not really able to capture the contemporary milieu (Beck in interview with Slater & Ritzer, 2001:262). These arguments, which trivialize structural constraints, do introduce inconsistencies and ambivalence in the work of both Giddens and Beck because as sociologists these authors find it difficult to posit the individual as an agency freed from any kind of social influence. Yet they do not resolve that tension by questioning their thesis of individualization, but by positing an extreme degree of rationalization or reflexivity which allows individuals to intellectually master the structural constraints and tensions in which they are caught and to deal with them through biographical and life time choices (Savage, 2000:103-4).

Contemporary men and women have been well prepared for such a societal diagnosis and such a radical interpretation of individualization, among other things by modernization theory (Alexander, 1995: chapter 1) and, long before that, by the canonical interpretation of the fall of the Ancien Régime as a giant step towards individual liberation, and the unfolding of reason. No doubt, the recurrent movements of left-wing anarchism and right-wing libertarianism also contribute to creating a mind set hospitable to the idea of a radical
individualization. These ideologies are based on the belief that a very desirable social order can spontaneously emerge from the autonomy of individuals. As Élie Halévy pointed out in his history and analysis of radical philosophy, this idea of a spontaneous fusion of interests played an important role in 18th century philosophy and in the development of utilitarian and liberal thought (1995, volume 1). As a consequence of the influence of utilitarianism on social science, that assumption is also present in sociological theory. According to Alexander it forms the basis of theories that "...explain social arrangements in any given historical moment as built up principally through the actions of the individuals in that particular interaction" (1982:94). Radical individualization theory gives a twist to this position by presenting it, not as a general, theoretical presupposition, but as an observation, that is as an observable condition realized in post-traditional society, albeit at the expense of some uncertainty, instability and personal responsibility.

The process described by Beck and Giddens, in which the individual gains autonomy because traditions wane, collective identities become obsolete, boundaries of class, ethnicity and nationality fade, and authority weakens, is akin to the way in which Marx (in the Communist Manifesto) envisioned the way in which capitalism dissolves traditional society: "all that is solid melts into air". Bauman's, "liquid modernity" almost literally repeats this metaphor. The nervous metaphorical quality of much of the contemporary writing about individualization does indeed remind one of the sense of swift change that accompanied early modernization: structures "liquefy", "melt", and "dissolve", which leads to "turbulence" and "volatility", as new "developments" "move" like "juggernauts" or "spiral", and individuals meet the turbulence by "choosing", "deciding", "hopping" and "zapping". We owe a different formulation of the same idea - and a specification of how the melting or liquefying can come about - to the advertisement expert, Emily Fogg Mead (the mother of Margaret Mead): "accompanying all the early stages of innovation" she observed "is a fear of wrong-doing, of disloyalty to ideals, and of the coming destruction of the foundation of society; but the next generation has no conscientious misgivings" (o.c. Leach, 1993:11).

The belief in individual autonomy does not only have a long intellectual pedigree, but also plays a very important legitimating role, both with regard to market capitalism and parliamentary democracy. The legitimation of those two forms of respectively economic and political coordination, is based on the thesis that individuals choose autonomously and through their autonomous choice both coordinate and legitimate the production of goods and the distribution of power. Of course, it is not because a belief fulfills an important legitimating function that it will be automatically widespread. Yet, the role of individualization theory with regard to those very important coordinating mechanisms implies that many people, disposing of important means, have a strong interest in embracing the idea of individualization and promoting the idea of autonomous choice.

It should not surprise us that an idea with such a long intellectual pedigree, with so many hopes pinned upon it, which is present in common theoretical presuppositions of sociology as well as in different ideologies, and which fulfills important legitimating functions, encounters an hospitable mind set and an enormous success. That success might even be enhanced by a lack of real individualization. There are indeed a couple of authors who consider the aspiration for individual self-determination and self-realization as central to, or even foundational for modern culture, but who consider individualism and the belief in individualization as a response, not to the realization of that aspiration, but to it's frustration. Simmel, for instance, was convinced that cities reduced the chances for individualization because they tended to standardise subjectivity, through what he called "objectified culture". That, according to Simmel, was the reason why fierce individualists like Nietzsche tended to hate and abhor the city,
while city dwellers adored thinkers like Nietzsche, precisely because his extreme individualism spoke to their frustrated desires and aspirations for subjective autonomy, exacerbated by a sinking space to realize them (1989: 249-252). A similar idea is advanced by Theodor Adorno (1967: 73-94), commenting on Veblen. He argued that the chances for individualisation become smaller due to the impact of standardised consumption, and as they do so, individualization is sought in ever greater participation in (standardized) consumption.

The thesis of individualization has at any rate become so popular that one finds it repeated in article upon article, but very rarely tested. "... (T)he individualization thesis has become so commonly accepted in the social sciences", Brannen and Nilson (2005:413) complain “that it is neither tested nor operationalized adequately through appropriate research designs and conceptualizations” Complainings about the stark contrast between the wide spread adoption of the thesis and its lack of empirical validation, are frequent indeed (eg. Schnell & Kohier, 1995; Savage, 2000: 105; Peeters & Scheepers, 2000; Elhardus & Glorieux, 2002; Brannen & Nilson, 2005).

2 What does individualization mean?

Clarifying the meaning of individualization therefore constitutes an important contribution to the discussion. Peters and Scheepers (2000) identify five possible meanings. We use these as a starting point. Individualization, according to Peters and Scheepers:

(1) manifests itself in weaker ties with “traditional” institutions such as family, church, union, and party;
(2) means decreased support for traditional values;
(3) is privatisation or the decreased importance of collective identities for one’s tastes, attitudes and practices;
(4) is fragmentation or less structure in people’s sets of tastes, attitudes and practices;
(5) is increased heterogeneity of the meanings, values and practices present in society.

I consider it ill advised to use the term individualization to denote the weakening of specific kinds of ties and memberships or to refer to the abandonment of specific sets of convictions and values (as in meanings 1 and 2). Doing so would equate lack of individualization with specific kinds of memberships and specific convictions, and would imply that the process can only occur with the waning of a specific social and cultural order. Meanings (1) and (2) can better be described as detraditionalization (Heelas, 1996), while the term individualization is better reserved to denote, not specific ties or convictions, but a mode of selecting ties and convictions. It seems equally inappropriate to equate individualization with greater heterogeneity of values, meaning and practices within a given society, for in that case one would have to consider the rise of Muslim fundamentalism in European societies as a strong case of individualization.

The remaining relevant meanings are ‘fragmentation’ and especially ‘privatisation’. Those are moreover the meanings commonly encountered in discussions of individualization. Individualization, thus defined, means:

- A greater autonomy of the individual, resulting in weak relationships between the individual’s tastes, convictions and practices on the one hand, his collective identities on the other. Phrased differently: the tastes, convictions, and practices of individuals are individual or, more precisely,
Individualization can also mean fragmentation, or a weakening of the extend to which the tastes, convictions and practices are structured or patterned through specific interrelations. This meaning is less central to the way in which Beck and Giddens conceptualize individualization, but plays an important role in the work of many authors (see below) who emphasize "bricolage", not in the sense intended by Lévi-Strauss (as making do with available material), but in the sense of making unique, idiosyncratic combinations of available (cultural) material. If individuals make unique combinations, then one will fail to find cultural patterns or structures at the level of the population.

Individualization in the two senses combined would mean that the relations between cultural materials on the one hand (meanings, tastes, conviction, practices...) and individuals on the other, approach randomness and show a high degree of destructuration. Borrowing an argument from cultural populism (McGuigan, 1991), Giddens (2003:397) renders this idea of randomness by claiming that the meaning of action is completely subjective, that any act is polysemic, and therefore escapes classification: "You have standardized and globalized merchandise, but people are doing all sorts of complex symbolic things when they're buying, and these relate as much to the individualization of the self as to standardization of behaviour". In this quote Giddens claims that standardization can go hand in hand with individualization, because he equates randomness and subjectivity. Standardization of production does indeed not imply standardization of consumption, but that is besides the point when dealing with standardization and individualization. The issue is rather what Giddens very vaguely refers to as "the complex symbolic things" consumers are doing. Individualization theory predicts that these "things" (whatever they are) will not be predictable on the basis of the collective identities of the consumers, and that they will not, when looking at a population of consumers, be patterned or structured in specific ways. Standardization or, more appropriately structuration, means that those "things" will be patterned in specific, recognizable ways, and that the patterns will be predictable on the basis of collective identities and the variables that express these. When formulated in this way, the individualization thesis does no longer rest on the untested assumption of unbounded polysemy, but is formulated in terms of testable hypotheses.

In what follows I review a number of research traditions that make it possible to empirically evaluate the theses of destructuration and individualization.

3 Evaluating individualization and destructuration

3.1 Postmodern politics?

At the end of the eighties, the individualization thesis played an important role in the postmodern interpretation of politics. Gibbens (1989) describes postmodern politics as no longer characterized by stable differences in values, but as a perpetual turbulence of preferences expressed by volatile voters (see also, Mair, 1989). The relatively stable alignments, which produced a structured relationship between cultural variations in beliefs, attitudes, and values on the one hand, the political landscape on the other – as for instance in the relationship between social class, attitudes with regard to equality and the left/right-party divide - are considered to be no longer possible (Reimer, 1989). In this thesis destructuration
of cultural elements and destructuration of the relation between those elements and social positions, are combined in a strong version of the individualization thesis.

That application of the individualization thesis has been extensively researched, mainly because many sociologists and political scientists have been interested in the phenomenon of class based voting. Many authors conclude that the vote in the postwar period was structured along class lines - workers to the left, bourgeois to the right - but that, by the eighties that relationship had weakened beyond recognition (Inglehart, 1984; McLennan, 1984; Dalton, 1988; Minkenberg & Inglehart, 1989; Minkenberg, 1992). Such observations apparently support the theses of destructuration and individualization. However, a lot of evidence against such an interpretation has accumulated since then.

On the basis of the results of 8 British elections held between 1964 and 1997, Andersen, Yang & Heath (2006) conclude that, if one takes into account changes in class composition and party programs, class based voting did in fact not decline (similar conclusions are reached by Mcallister et. al., 2001; Andersen & Heath, 2002). Continued strong structuration of electorates in terms of standard sociological characteristics or variables is found by many authors (Derks, 2005; Elchardus & Pelleriaux, 1998; Beerten & Swyngedouw, 1998; Billiet & Swyngedouw, 1995; Eisinga, Lammers & Scheepers, 1994; Andersen & Evans, 2002). It has also been observed that the weakening of class-alignments or class based structuration, can be compensated by structuration or re-alignment on the basis of other characteristics than class. Those other bases of alignment are then usually found in stable cultural differences (Inglehart, 1977; Elchardus, 1996).

More important still, both for the identification of relevant sociological regularities and in order to correctly observe alignments and structuration, is the observation that the level of education is or has become much more important than occupation in identifying class position (Van Der Waal, Achterberg & Houtman, 2002; Houtman, 2000). When education is taken as an indicator of class, then class structuration of voting is strong, with no signs of a declining importance (Elchardus, 1994; Houtman, 2000; Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Achterberg, 2004, 2005).

As applied to voting and the structuration of the political landscape, the individualization thesis is falsified by a great number of findings. When taking into account the importance of education as a determinant of life chances, and when using it to define class position, class based voting turns out to be important. The individualization thesis, as elaborated in the theory of postmodern politics, can not account for that observation.

3.2 A destandardized life cycle?

The individualization thesis has also been widely applied to the life cycle. According to several authors a phase of radical destructuration or individualization of the life cycle was initiated in the 1970’s. The authors defending this position argue that a standardised life cycle is then increasingly being replaced by a life course in which individuals choose the timing and sequence of important life course transitions and do so in an idiosyncratic way (O’Rand, 1995; Scheepens, 1999; Marshall, 2001; Peters e.a., 1993; du Bois-Reymond & de Jong Gierveld, 1993; de Hart, 1992). As a consequence the timing of those transitions starts to show great variation (Liefbroer & Dykstra, 2000) and the sequence of the transitions becomes less rigid. The life cycle, as so many other things, is supposed to become fluid and reversible: students interrupt their studies to work for a few years, people in the labour force temporarily return to school, pensioners take up work again, people marry before finishing their studies.. (OECD, 2000; Hoge Raad voor Werkgelegenheid, 2001; Scheepens, 1999;
In short, the life cycle as an ordered sequence of transitions and stages is being replaced by a series of positions that are simultaneously accessible and between which individuals can increasingly hop and zap.

The transition towards residential independence has been observed to be strongly predictable on the basis of a few standard sociological characteristics (Elchardus, Rombauts, Smits, 2007). The way in which that transition is patterned is moreover strongly related to collective identities (Peters, Van Roojen et.al., 1993; Liefbroer et.al., 1993; Corijn, 1993). Conceptions of the ideal life cycle turn out, in sharp contrast to what one would expect on the basis of destructuration and individualization theory, to be characterized by an ordered series of transitions about whose strict timing and sequential order there is widespread consensus (Elchardus & Smits, 2006). Various empirical analyses have already pointed out that the events highlighted by the authors who claim that the standardized life cycle is disappearing, such as the reversal of the standard sequence or wide variation with regard to the timing of transitions, are in fact quite rare (Glorieux e.a., 2004; Breedveld, 1996; Aymard e.a., 1996). Yet, those events receive a lot of attention, and are often, without further ado, interpreted as the harbinger of major changes. Such claims are often based on qualitative research. It is therefore very likely that this research registers a change in the vocabulary of motives or in the discourse, rather than in the practices and decisions that produce the life course. Qualitative research registers the plausibility of the individualization thesis for populations in rich, detraditionalized societies, not its applicability to those societies. In their content analysis of diaries – a genre likely to reveal a shift in the vocabulary of motives – Wood and Zurcher observed between the 19th century and today a clear shift from mentioning duty as a motivating factor to using personal feelings as the explanation of their actions (1988: 126-127). The diaries reveal “...a lessening of concern with several key institution values such as work, religion, and duty...more a declining and muting of an older view of the world and conception of self, than...the emergence of a new conception of self and culture” (1988:130-131). The individualization thesis can be considered an attempt to provide a new conception, but while it might fit the new vocabulary of motives, it can not account for the resulting pattern of choices.

3.3 A “bricolage” of tastes?

Research dealing with the relationships between different tastes and/or cultural practices, usually finds them strongly structured into a limited number of meaningful dimensions (Christenson & Roberts, 1998; Tillekens, 1993; Tillekens & Mulder, 2005; Van Wel & Van der Gauwe, 1990, Stevens & Elchardus, 2001; van Eijck, 2001). Those patterns of taste and cultural practices do moreover show clear and strong relationships with social positions and collective identities (Hakanan & Wells, 1993; Tillekens, 1993; Elchardus, 1999; Stevens, 2001; van Eyck & Bargeman, 2004; Chad & Goldthorpe, 2005, 2007).

The systematic relationship between structures of symbols and structures of groups, is also attested by the existence of youth sub cultures (Laermans, 1999; Laermans, Vanhove & Smeyers, 2001). Laermans, Vanhove & Smeyers (2001) observed that there is a demand for temporal style consistency in such groups, which limits zapping and illustrates how group pressures can contribute to a strong structuration of cultural elements (see also Elchardus & Siongers, 2007).

Many more examples of applications of the individualization thesis could be offered, for the thesis has been applied to almost all areas of sociological research. Yet, the proponents of the individualization thesis offer almost no
empirical evidence in favor of their position, while, as in the examples briefly reviewed, a lot of evidence is accumulating against it. The implications of this evidence are often doubted, due to the extreme vagueness with which the individualization thesis is formulated. It is not clear how weak the structuration of cultural systems and the relationships between those structures and the standard sociological characteristics of actors should be, in order to speak of destructure or individualization. The ‘where’ and the ‘when’ of individualization is usually left unspecified (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005:421). That vagueness of the thesis is often used to dismiss its falsifications, usually with the argument that individualization is a process, and that the persistence of (even strong) structuration does not invalidate the thesis that a process of individualization and the attendant destructure is under way and will, someday, somewhere, become statistically impressive. To address that argument one needs longitudinal evidence. Proponents of the individualization thesis fail to provide this. Van de Beer correctly assumed that if individualization occurs, then the attitudes of the Dutch should, over time, become less predictable on the basis of the same set of standard sociological variables. He tested this hypothesis using the recurrent surveys of the attitudes of the Dutch population, taken at regular interval between 1970 and 2000. He observed, not a decline of predictability, but a quite important increase (2004: 29-32). Other longitudinal evidence can be gathered in research on naming practices. Different researchers describe and document a strong detraditionalization of the way in which first names are given (Gerhards and Hackenbroch, 2000; Lieberson, 2000; Wolffsohn and Brenchenmacher, 2001). Naming practices can therefore be used to see if detraditionalization does indeed give rise to individualization. Gerhards and Hackenbroch (2000) test this hypothesis and find no significant weakening of the relationship between social position and the choice of first names between 1894 and 1994 in the city of Gerolstein (Germany).

4 Detraditionalization

From the point of view of the individual, isolated in his self-observation, every choice can easily appear as highly original and absolutely unique. From the individual’s point of view, the difference between the vocabulary of motives used to account for a choice on the one hand, and the way in which such a choice fits into a pattern of choices on the other hand, is not visible. It is the task of sociology to create that visibility. A pattern of choices can only become visible when looking at the choices made by different individuals or by a single individual over time, or by a single individual confronted with different objects of choice. When that point of view is taken, patterns and structures emerge, whose qualities can be analyzed. The empirical discussion about individualization can in fact only be situated at that level of observation. It becomes an absurd discussion when it is situated in the self-centered discourse of motives. When patterns of choices, and not only the account or justification of past activities, are rendered visible, empirical evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the individualization thesis should be rejected.

That is a surprising observation, because detraditionalization is a very real development. A significant number of societies can, as Giddens suggests, be described as post-traditional. Over the last, long half century, from the end of WWII to the beginning of the 21st century, a number of economically developed countries have undergone changes that have profoundly altered the social role of culture and the relationship between the individual and society. Economic growth, measured on the basis of GDP per capita, has been spectacular in several societies, increasing individual consumption, broadening the potential range of consumer choices, and lessening the pressure of material concerns. In many countries economic development has reached a level at which scarcity has lost much of its sting. It is, for instance, quite significant that from a certain level of
economic development or GDP on – situated around 15,000 Euro per year and capita – further economic growth no longer contributes to individual well being or happiness (Layard, 2005; Elchardus & Smits, 2007). This signals a seminal shift in the way the citizens of those countries relate to scarcity, and to the economy. Using the label Daniel Bell introduced (somewhat prematurely) in the Coming of Post-Industrial Society, many rich countries can now be described as post-economic.

The decreased relevance of scarcity for the thinking, acting and feeling of individuals is no doubt greater in countries where the riches are more equally distributed, and especially in countries that reduce uncertainty and the threat of scarcity through strong social security provisions. While the development of the welfare state, as measured on the basis of social expenditures, is strongly related to the level of economic development, as measured by GDP\(^1\), welfare states are certainly not equally developed in all rich societies (De Beer, Vrooman & Wildeboer Schut, 2000).

In the same post WWII period, many countries also witnessed, at least among the native populations, not necessarily among recent immigrants, a strong decline of the influence of religion. Against the backdrop of the sociological tradition, this development is usually considered in the light of secularization theory which, in turn, is seen as part of a more encompassing modernization process (Wilson, 1982; Wallis & Bruce, 1992). Following Weber, secularization is understood as a privatization of religion or a loss of the public and political relevance of religion (Yamane, 1997; Dobbelaeere, 1995; Münch, 1990; Casanova, 1994). This meaning already implies that organized religion can be used less to inspire legislation or direct morals and ethics. Yet, over the last half century and in several societies, one witnesses much more than secularization understood as differentiation. There is clearly a lessening of belief, showing itself in, among other things, the decline of belief in God, the emptying of the churches and temples, and the decreasing participation in the rituals of the faithful. Secularization looked at in this way should, as Wilson suggests, be considered as a process by which “religious institutions... lose their social significance” (1982:149), and hence their capacity to significantly influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of people. In a number of societies religions seems to have lost their monopoly, and even their hold on the sacred.

Some authors claim that the emptying of the churches does not tell us very much about the vitality of belief. Yet, Davie’s (2000) thesis that one should clearly distinguish between ‘belonging’ and ‘believing’ is empirically not convincing. On the basis of wave 4 of the World Value Survey one observes strong correlations between belonging and believing, both in a larger sample of 69 countries for which data are available \((r=.71)\), and for the more homogeneous group of OCDE countries \((r=.65)\).

There has certainly been, again among the native populations, a decline in the authority that can be derived from religious office or from an integer position with regard to religious doctrine or political ideology. More generally the acceptability of being other-directed, and of receiving commands has declined, as has the willingness to instill sensitivity to such modes of direction in children (Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Kohn, Kazimiers, Slomczynski & Schoenbach, 1986). Kohn and his collaborators ascribe this to changes in the nature of work; people experiencing less supervision and more self-direction in their jobs, value non-directive relationships, make self-direction into an experience that enhances self-worth, and instill sensitivity to self-direction in their children. The shift away from

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\(^1\) In Waves 3 and 4 of World Value Survey the two indicators show a cross-national correlation of .82
more authoritative to more intimate and democratic relations in the family has been noted by different authors (Brinkgreve, 2004a, 2004b). Giddens paints a very rosy picture of this development: “It is the quality of the relationship which comes to the fore, with a stress upon intimacy replacing that of parental authoritativeness. Sensitivity and understanding are asked for on both sides (Giddens, 1997:98). Whether the shift can be so positively portrayed is uncertain, but a different way of relating to others, based less on sensitivity to command, more on a correspondence between the behavioral orientations of different persons, has certainly taken place.

Giddens is also right in claiming that tradition and fixed roles have lost their self-evident character, and therefore much of their capacity to orient behavior (Giddens, 1990:102).

I shall refer to all these changes - post-scarcity, decline of religious belief and belonging, the loss of self evident traditions and of traditional conceptions of roles and ethics, the rise of self-direction as a mode of relating to the world – as detradiation. They are much more characteristic of the native populations of rich economies, than of recent immigrants, and have certainly not taken place to the same degree in all rich societies. Among the group of rich countries some are characterized by a weak development of the welfare state, making scarcity more poignant for large parts of their population (eg. the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan). There is also considerable variation in religious belonging and believing at each given level of economic development, so much in fact that many authors question the strong relationship between modernization and secularization (eg. Stark, 1997; Stark & Iannacconne, 1994; Finke & Stark, 1992; Greeley, 1989; Hadden, 1987). Because there is, as predicted by Wilson, a relationship between religiousness and uncertainty, religiousness tend to be lower in countries with strong social security provisions (1982:149).

Among rich societies one can therefore distinguish groups that differ significantly in the degree to which they can be considered post-traditional. Among the societies characterized by a high level of economic development, a strong welfare state, a low level of religiousness, and a low level of traditional ethics, are North-Western European countries like Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Societies like Ireland, the United States, Italy and Portugal combine high levels of economic development with weak welfare states, and relatively high levels of religiousness and traditional ethics. The United States is certainly a highly developed modern society, yet it might not be correct to view it as a post-traditional society. It can, using the label Dietrich Rueschemeyer (1969) introduced to describe relatively stable combination of modern features and traditional ones, be more aptly described as ‘partially modernized’.

The conditions of post-traditional modernity are much more clearly present in North-Western Europe. Yet, many falsifications of the individualization thesis I have reviewed, come from exactly those countries, particularly from Belgium and the Netherlands, and to a lesser extend Germany. This indicates that one can not, as the proponents of the individualization thesis do, equate detradiation and individualization. However plausible, and at first sight convincing it is to see an autonomous, self-directing, self-realizing individual emerging from the ashes of scarcity, religious belief, tradition, and authority, the diagnosis of individualization is empirically untenable.

5 Shifts in the mode of social control

There is a need for a new interpretation of post-traditional society. The thesis I want to defend is that detradiation should be considered as a change in
the mode of social control. From a mode of social control based on scarcity (the threat of poverty), religious belief and authority, religiously or ideologically inspired ethics, self-evident tradition, traditional role behavior, and sensitivity to other-directedness, a number of modernized societies have made the transition to a new mode of social control. This new mode of social control is centered around the self. It is, literally, self-control: control of the self through the self. The self is socially constructed as a choosing individual. Social control is exercised by forming, appealing to and activating those factors that influence the choices individuals make, such as knowledge, competence, taste, convictions, frames, routines, meaning and other elements of culture. In what follows I will clarify the notion of social control as it is used here, describe the institutional and technological changes that have created the possibility of the new mode of social control, and draw, under the form of a set of hypotheses, some (preliminary) implications from the emergence of self-control.

Very often the concept of social control is used in a narrow sense and applied to criminality. While such application can be fruitful for the study of crime, the association is misleading because social control then becomes viewed as a reaction to deviance. This is unfortunate for two reasons. In the realm of crime the idea of a (legally enforced) consensus about what is permissible and what is deviant, is not completely out of place, and as a consequence social control is, in that narrow sense, often conceived of as oriented towards a particular conception of order. In reality social control is multiple, emerging from different points in society, oriented toward different objectives, with the power to control very unevenly distributed between a great number of controlling agencies who often hold different and conflicting world views, have different and conflicting goals, interests and desires. Secondly, when applied to criminality the difference between the deviant and the normal is often assumed to be given prior to the operation of social control. Instead, as, among others, the work of Foucault has clarified, social control is also involved in making that distinction and is particularly relevant when making such distinctions, and drawing symbolic boundaries.

Melossi relates the development of social control theory to the particular context in which state theory developed in the United States in the early 20th century. "General will was not a presupposition of democracy. It had to be constructed in the thousand practical articulations of a complex industrial society, and it was focused around the concept of social control..." (1990: 99). Melossi considers George Herbert Mead and John Dewey as the foremost American theorists of social control. He credits them with the theses that:

- there is no privileged position from which social control is exercised over society, and
- "social control is a function of social interaction, where self and social control are but two faces of the same process" (1990:118).

Those two positions - the absence of a privileged controlling position and the ubiquitousness of social control - are absolutely crucial. Quite often the concept of social control is intimately linked to inequalities of power, and considered as a one sided relationship in which a powerful agent controls a weak or less powerful object. Social control then seems to emanate from a central controlling agency, a kind of Big Brother. That is a debilitating view. Of course, the possibility of

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2 Ulrich Beck too sees individualization as a weakening of particular constraining forms and a re-embedding in new ones (1992: 128). Beck does however not conceive of the latter as a mode of control, but as a commitment of the individual; a commitment to particular choices and life styles individuals are able to make thanks to their high degree of reflexivity.
making other people’s behavior predictable and of increasing the probability that the behavior of others will conform to one’s expectations, is very unequally distributed. It is furthermore possible that one can, on the basis of that inequality, and in a systematic way, delineate class like categories of people with very unequal means of social control. Yet, before focusing on that inequality and on the way in which it is structured into classes, it is important to first look at how social control is exerted, and at how the means and modes of social control vary with the type of society. Social control should in the first place be regarded as a function of social interaction\(^3\). Power is not so much the application of negative sanctions, but consists primarily in “...furnishing the subject of power with motives to action” (Melossi:1990:170). This form of power becomes crucial in post-traditional society, where control becomes self-control.

Two long term developments of the modes of social control are well documented in the sociological literature. Durkheim, rejecting both utilitarianism and Marxism, thought that the state and the market could not account for social order\(^4\). Needed in addition to those coordinating mechanisms that appeal to interest and fear, is, according to Durkheim, an appeal to morality or to what Parsons would later call internalized values. Parsons, on the basis of Durkheim’s rejection of utilitarianism and Freud’s notion of introjection, elaborated that idea in a theory of social sanctions and their symbolization. Sanctions based on interest (reward) and fear (power), are supplemented by sanctions based on internalized values (activation of value commitment) and solidarity or feelings of community (influence) (Parsons & Shils, 1951; Parsons,1967, chapters 10 & 11; 1973, technical appendix). The notion of internalized sanctions allows for a view of individual motivation as socially constructed: “Only in the figurative sense does an individual have patterns of value orientation. In a strict sense he is, among other things, a system of such patterns” (Parsons & Shils, 1951: 66). The idea of an individual constituted by patterns of value orientations will later be expressed by Foucault as an individual constituted by discourse. In his opening lecture for the Collège de France (December 2, 1970) he expressed this poetically: "Plutôt que de prendre la parole, j’aurais voulu être enveloppe par elle...”. In Surveiller et punir Michel Foucault describes the evolution of the penal system as a shift from external to internalized sanctions. Punishment is no longer addressed to the body but to the “soul”, the “will”, the “dispositions” (1975:22). Foucault criticizes Durkheim’s view of penal evolution because it interprets this shift as a consequence of individualization, while it should, according to Foucault, and to social control theory one might add, be viewed as a way in which the individual is constituted and de possibility to exert power over the individual is created (1975:22).

The second development is less familiar. Contemporary social control has also shifted from being limiting and constraining to being enabling. It concerns less the power to interdict and censor, more the power to create a desired human type. The forms of control that, for instance, Goffman described in Asylums

\(^3\) Melossi (1990: 118) regards this not so much as a description of how social control works, but as a kind of utopian ideal. My position is quite different. I hold the thesis that social control is a function of interaction, to be an accurate description of the mode of control emerging in late modern societies. This is a mode of control in which the self is constituted and controlled at the same time. If this mode of social control were to be completely successful – which modes of control never are - it would indeed be utopian, in the specific sense that the quest for self-control would lead to the behavior desired by the controlling agents. Most people would consider such a state far from desirable.

\(^4\) The thesis is succinctly expressed in his comments on Gaston Richard’s Essai sur l’origine du droit (Durkheim, 1975).
(1968) and Foucault in *Surveiller et punir*, are very much based on the power to monitor and constrain the individuals’ movements in time and space. The newer form of social control is based on the capacity and the power to influence life styles and to create patterns of behavior that the acting subjects experience as meaningful and rewarding expressions of their selves (see also Melossi, 1990:170-171). Policy becomes more and more a matter of influencing life styles. Life style governance is still to some extent carried out by interdictions (e.g. no smoking in restaurants and pubs), but increasingly demands more effective means of influencing the choices individuals make, and of molding their life styles, and the meaning they attach to them.

These various developments put communication at the core of social control. Social control now operates mainly via confrontation with organized sets of symbols or cultural structures. The centrality of communication and of symbolic mediation focuses attention on the importance of language, broadly understood, as a ‘vocabulary of motive’ or as a ‘language’ in the sense Bellah et. al. use that term in *Habits of the Heart* (1985:334). Melossi (1990:145) defines social control as “...the process of presenting an individual with symbolic contents that enclose, implicitly or explicitly, recommendations for actions – a process that will be more effective, as those symbolic contents remain uncontested due to their deep roots in the emotional luggage of the individual” (1990:145).

The symbolic contents in which the contemporary individual is caught, give meaning. They create a specific representation of the world, constitute the world in which one has to act, and create the cultural toolkit that makes acting in the world possible. They evoke feelings and emotions, mobilize views of how one should act, and conceptions of how it is rewarding to act. D’Andrade calls this the four functions of meaning: *the representational, the constitutive, the evocative and the directive* (1984:96). Self-control operates by socializing the individual into meanings and by confronting him with cultural structures that confirm the meanings, and activates their different functions.

### 6 The conditions of the symbolic society

The new mode of social control could be realized as detradiotinalization proceeded and as the institutional and technical conditions of the full-fledged operation of the new mode of control were realized. Its history is contemporary to modernization. Yet, many of its institutional and technological conditions were realized in a protracted way, often at dazzling speed, in the post WWII period. In many countries a very intense phase of transition seems to run from the 50ties through the 70ties. A detailed description of the rise of the new mode of social control, fall outside the scope of this paper. Suffice to mention some of the important institutional and technological conditions.

- An important condition has been the expansion of education. The prolongation of schooling, as well as the shift from knowledge to competence or the broadening of the school’s role from cognitive tasks to character formation, values education, the teaching of social skills, the propagation of democratic citizenship values, have profoundly altered the experience of schooling and the role of schooling in society. Education now reaches more people, for a longer period of time and with a broader range of concerns. In many post-traditional societies a fifth to a quarter of life is spent in schools, and most of those societies do not find this sufficient, but witness the emergence of policies in favor of life long learning.

- The growing importance of the mass-media and especially of television, have also profoundly altered the symbolic environment of contemporary men and women. Television did not even exist in the early 50ties, but was generalized over almost all households by the 80ties. In Belgium,
estimates of the average number of hours the adult population (18-75) watches television vary, depending on the way it is measured, but range from around 13 to around 20 hours per week. This means that people born after 1960 are extremely likely to have, at the end of their lives, spent more time watching television than they ever spent working.

- The probability of being confronted with advertisements has also increased and advertising has become more sophisticated. From the point of view of cultural sociology, the focus should not be on advertising as such, but on the system comprising commodities, packaging, advertisement, comment, and display. Culturally relevant is the system of symbols and meanings realized by activities such as marketing, design, mall construction, advertising, that are carried out by magazines, media giants, department stores, chain stores, mail order stores, e-bussiness etc. I will call this the 'system of goods'. It is an activity to which most societies devote more means than to education. Leach (1993) describes this complex as a culture in itself, a "culture of desire". Following Leis et al. advertising can be considered as a specific way of drawing on existing cultural models, attaching and applying them to goods and services, and recycling the cultural models (2005:5). These authors identify a specific trend in advertising. This goes from a very rationalistic period (1890-1910) in which meaning is equated with utility and utility is presented as pure use value, to the recent period (1990-2000) in which products are presented as life style scripts and as the props for self-construction (in the sense of construction of the self).

Schooling, mass-media, and advertising are based on communication. They produce symbols; engulf people in the systems of symbols they create, and diffuse. In that sense, the post-traditional societies in which schooling, the mass-media, and goods have undergone the developments just described, can be labeled "symbolic societies". Of course, all societies are symbolic societies. All interaction is symbolically mediated and all cultures symbolically occupy space, time and person in order to consolidate their order. Yet, the extent to which that is the case in a number of contemporary societies, the resources these societies devote to the production and diffusion of symbols, as well as the high proportion of the labor force that is mainly manipulating symbols, warrants the label "symbolic society". It draws attention to the core resource of these societies.

In the symbolic society social control is realized to an important degree through schooling, the mass-media and the system of goods. These institutions can however only exert control when the focus of the controlling activity, the self, is amenable to it. The object of control has to be created in a way that makes it fit the mode of social control. Therefore the rise of the symbolic society rests not only on the expansion of schooling, mass-media and the system of goods, but also and more importantly on the creation of a new self. A crucial element of the new mode of control is the creation of a form of self-sufficiency. There is, in order to make the new mode of control operational, a need for a vocabulary of motives and a set of practices that support self-sufficiency, and present the self as the seat and criterion of knowledge, value, authenticity, and legitimation. Such a self can only be conjured on the ruins of a dying, older order in which religions and ideologies laid claim to values and legitimating capacities. This self has a long

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5 Leach, following Marx's interpretation, considers the rise of this culture of desire, as a cause of detraditionalization: "...it readily subverted whatever custom, value, or folk idea that came within its reach. Science, too, was radical but not intrinsically hostile to custom or tradition or religion. Market capitalism was hostile..." (1993:5).
history, in which, as Weber argued, the Reformation played an important role. Still, the self needed for self-control is quite specific and seems to be a more recent development. Among other things the humanistic psychology of C.R.Rogers has played an important role in propagating it and the techniques of its creation (1965). The foundation of that psychology is the denial of social control. It is based on the premise that there is no problem of order, because order emerges spontaneously from the actions of autonomous individuals able to be authentic, true to their selves. Such is the starting point of all legitimating strategies of control. Every full fledged mode of control creates its core principle or fiction – God, the utility maximizing individual, the inevitable course of history, the autonomous self... – and defends that founding fiction against doubt and critique. A mode of social control defends its core, constitutes it as truth or, using this term in its Durkheimian sense, as sacred. The sacred seat of the spontaneous (and happy) order is, in Roger's case, the autonomous self. Everything is already in the self. Learning doesn't add anything to the self, but offers the self opportunities for self-realization and self-unfolding (Rogers, 1981).

In the introduction to his *Histoire de la sexualité* (1884:18) Foucault raises the question whether critique of a new mode of control is not part and parcel of that mode of control. He did so in the context of the modern, critical discourse on the repression of sexuality, wondering «...whether the critical discourse...is not part of the same historical development of what it criticizes...»⁶. That observation certainly applies to the new mode of social control. The discourse of individualism criticizes social control, especially of the traditional type, but at the same time contributes to the creation of a self that is easily amenable to the new form of social control.

7 The symbolic society, some likely tendencies and characteristics

In order to further clarify the notion of the symbolic society I will, under the form of hypotheses, list some likely tendencies and characteristics of this type of society. Even though it is possible to cite quite some evidence for some of those hypotheses, I will refrain from doing so. Within the scope of this paper it is not possible to adequately review the available evidence. Doing that is moreover not the purpose. The hypotheses are intended to clarify the interpretation of post-traditional society proposed here, and to offer a means of testing that interpretation.

1. In the analysis of variations in taste, attitudes, practices and behavior, socio-economic conditions and religious affiliation and practice are likely to loose explanatory power, while variables measuring schooling and media use are likely to become more important. Socio-economic conditions and religious belief and practice can retain strong effects in the case of small, extreme groups (eg. the poor, and fundamentalists), but will become less important in explaining variations in the population at large. Within the post-traditional societies the shift towards the symbolic society is gradual and follows the realization of the conditions. This means that its tendencies will hold more for young people than for the old who were raised in a more traditional society.

2. Collective identities such as gender, age, social class (socio-economic condition) can remain important but the way in which they influence the thinking, feeling and acting of people has changed. Their relationship with tastes, attitudes, practices and behavior will not so much be due to self evident tradition, religiously or philosophically inspired ethical conceptions,

⁶ “le discours critique...ne fait-il pas partie du même réseau historique que ce qu'il dénonce...”
or material conditions, but to the effects of differentiation in the socializing practices, such as tracking in schools and market segmentation of the media. The differentiation of the educational system and the segmentation of media publics and the system of goods, become important device to encode gender, class and other collective identities into the late modern selves. It therefore becomes important to device detailed measures of the various types of schooling, media use and media preference, as well as measures of variations in the way people are confronted with the system of goods.

3. Recomposition of older forms, such as class, age and gender specificity, through differentiated and segmented processes of communication, is a feature of the symbolic society. It also operates with regard to cultural forms or tools. In a sense and ironically the symbolic society re-traditionalizes, not by stimulating traditionalism, but by appealing to and rhetorically mobilizing familiar cultural structures. The many cultural structures which are part of the 'cultural toolkit' (Swidler, 1986) or the "cultural unconscious" (Alexander, 2003), are likely to influence the form of the symbol systems with which the post-traditional selves are confronted, and in terms of which their reality is represented and constituted, their feelings evoked and their reactions and actions directed.

The shift within cultural sociology, from a so called Parsonian approach in which values were related to action in terms of commitment and personal reactivity, to an understanding of action in terms of rhetorically mobilized cultural structures, is not so much a matter of sociological theory as of social change.

4. Institutions that can socialize and influence are likely to be important in the symbolic society. Therefore the family will, despite detraditionalization and the high divorce rate, remain important. The influence of the family is however likely to be due not only to its direct socializing influence, but also and to an important degree, to the way in which it orients its children towards specific educational settings, forms of media use, and confrontations with the system of goods. In the symbolic society institutions that can exert a socializing influence, are likely to be mobilized to exert such influence. For that reason participation in voluntary associations and in all kinds of cultural activities will be promoted, and such participation will be expected to contribute to valued attitudes, tastes, and practices.

5. The nature of conflicts is likely to change in the symbolic society. The general proposition is that recurrent conflicts or cleavages arise around control of the means of social control and between groups that differ with regard to their experience of the controlling practices. In the post-traditional society class conflicts and religious conflicts are therefore likely to abate, while new conflicts are likely to emerge. Different axes of new conflicts can be distinguished.

a. Some will find their origin in resistance to the new mode of social control. This can take the form of a defense of the controlling function of scarcity and poverty, as in the critique on the welfare state (eg. Gilder, 1981; Murrey, 1984). The welfare state is then accused of rendering people lazy, irresponsible and of maintaining them in poverty and inciting them to crime. The proponents of this thesis expects that the controlling function of scarcity and the controlling threat of poverty will be restored when the welfare state is rolled back, and that crime and poverty will decline as a result. Another form of resistance takes the form of an attempt to maintain or restore the controlling power of tradition and religion. This is, since the fall of the Ancien Régime, the source much of modern
conservatism (Mannheim, 1971:132-222; Nisbet, 1968). It manifests itself, among other things, in Christian fundamentalism in the United States. As a matter of fact, these movements of resistance, which want to restore authority and the controlling power of scarcity, tradition and religion, are much more likely in a partially modernized society like the United States than in full fledged post-traditional societies like those of north-western Europe.

b. A quite different form of resistance is introduced by migration. This is a process whereby a population raised in the old form of social control, based on religious belief, respect for tradition and negation of the self, is confronted with a native population raised and trained for self-control. Migration is a process whereby individuals are catapulted from a traditional society to a symbolic society. This is the situation of many Muslim immigrants in Europe, and it is confounded by the tendency of some migrants to adhere to a traditionalized version of their culture and corresponding mode of social control. Conflicts between natives and immigrants in Europe are not, so the thesis of the symbolic society suggests, a consequence of incompatibilities between the Christian heritage and Islam, but of a confrontation between two different modes of social control. From the point of view of people sensitive to the traditional mode of control, the symbolic society is decadent; from the point of view of people sensitive to self-control, the Muslim immigrants are culturally backward.

c. The differences in tastes, attitudes and practices between people with different educational experiences and divergent media uses and preferences, are likely to become important, and give rise to tensions. It is likely that these differences and tensions will express themselves in conflicts and in conflicting political positions. In symbolic societies polarization is likely to arise between people with widely divergent levels or types of education and with divergent media uses and preferences. This social and cultural polarization is likely to express itself in voting and the rise of new parties.

d. Finally, conflicts are likely to arise around the control of the means of social control. The system of goods is controlled by private enterprises. In most economically developed societies public control of the mass media, eg. public television, has been supplemented by or replaced by privately owned media. Much of the media is now under control of a limited number of very large, multinational concerns. The school system, of which large parts in many societies remain under public control or control by the societal community, appears in that respect as an anachronism. It is likely that the educational systems, beginning with its more profitable segments, will become the focus of privatization.

6. The governance of symbolic societies will have to increasingly focus on self-control. Collective goals will have to be increasingly achieved by influencing the citizens’ life styles. From doing this by way of law and constraint – techniques of the old mode of control – governance is likely to evolve more and more in the direction of influencing the self. Where public control of the educational system exists, the schools are likely to be increasingly charged with the formation of life styles that are desirable in terms of their consequences for health, environmental impact, safety, economic performance, mobility etc. Governance is also likely to increasingly use the techniques developed in public relations, marketing and advertising to achieve public goals through influence and control of
the selves of the citizens. Governance will shift from the control of organizations – as described in Max Weber’s bureaucratic organization – towards the steering of networks of interdependencies, of ‘opinion’, ‘consumers’, ‘the electorate’. Citizenship will become less a matter of rights, more a matter of appropriate life styles. This shift from emancipatory to life style politics was already diagnosed by Giddens in the early nineties. Of course, he conceived of life style politics not as a way of social control, but as a consequence of individualization and rationalization. In a somewhat strange return to functionalism and extreme (Parsonian) integration of individual motive and system needs, he envisions individuals who consciously and spontaneously internalize systemic tensions into a self-actualizing life style: “Life style politics ... is a politics of self-actualization in a reflectively ordered environment, where that reflectivity links self and body to systems of global scope” (1991:214).

7. Proponents of the individualization thesis ascribe the success of therapeutic approaches to a void left by detrudtionalization (XXXcf Beck). According to this view people in post-traditional societies experience meaningfulness and anomie, and therapy steps in to help them. I think it makes much more sense to view the rise of therapy culture (Nolan, 1988; Furedi, 2004) as part of the emergence of a new mode of social control. It is a consequence of an order centered around the self. Furedi emphasizes this link when he reports the legitimation provided by the notion of reflexivity: “...therapy comes to be used as an instrument of self-conscious planning of the life course under conditions that continually generate uncertainty” (Furedi, 2004:86). But that uncertainty is, of course, produced by the therapy culture itself (Furedi, 2004: 107-114). Viewed in this way therapy culture is an element in the creation of a self amenable to the new mode of social control.

8. Valued knowledge in the symbolic society is knowledge that contributes to self-control. Since the new mode of social control has a strong vested interest in the fiction of the autonomous individual, tendencies to deny the existence of external influences will be strong. This means that there will be a strong preference for theories and forms of knowledge that situate the explanation of behavior within the self. Sociological individualization theory is such a form of knowledge, but psychological theories are likely to succeed better, since they are better equipped to deny the validity of anything that transcends the subjectivity of the individual. It is however very likely that this form of knowledge will be sought in the genetic make up of the organism that carries the self or in the legacy of psychological evolution. Both genetic and evolutionary explanations of behavior and culture are likely to become popular.

9. Such knowledge is also likely to become practical. Control of the self will be pursued by control of its natural substratum, the body. “Le premier et le plus naturel objet technique, et en même temps moyen technique de l'homme, c'est son corps”. This insight of Marcel Mauss (1950:372) will be realized with consequences he did not anticipate: witness the large extend to which chirurgical and pharmaceutical techniques are already used to pursue values of efficacy, beauty, performance, intelligence, and well being.

10. As the different tendencies hypothesized here materialize, new forms of resistance are likely to grow. Governance of self and life styles, when based on law and constraint, is likely to give rise to libertarian reactions. Such governance will indeed be resented as an intolerable infringement of the autonomous individual. This libertarian critique, which can come from both the left and the right, is likely to illustrate Foucault’s thesis that a critical discourse can be part and parcel of the tendencies criticized. It is
likely to strengthen belief in the autonomous self and to hasten the shift towards more subtle means of control, better adapted to the symbolic society. More progressive forms of critique are possible. An expected and obvious one is the critique of choice, and the rejection of the assumption – crucial to self-control – that more choice contributes to happiness. That assumption was the target of Barry Schwartz’ critique in *The Paradox of Choice* (2004). It indicates a modest way of trying to gain control over the conditions of one’s happiness. A radical reaction to self-control can only emerge from the insight that since the factors controlling the self transcend the self, controlling them can only be a collective pursuit. Radicalism is the symbolic society can therefore only mean that collectivities try to achieve control of the means of self-control.

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